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Remote work and work-life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic: a scoping review

Parsons, Alyssa Andrea

2023
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Remote Work and Work-Life Balance during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Scoping Review

Student name: Alyssa Andrea Parsons

Student number: 1929985

Supervisor: Professor Fiona Donald

Submitted on: 12 June 2023

Declaration:

I declare that this scoping review is my own work completed and submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Organisational Psychology (PSYC7002A) in the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities, at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. This scoping review has been completed unaided and has not been submitted prior.



Signed

12/06/2023

Date

Abstract

Orientation: The COVID-19 pandemic brought about an abrupt shift from on-site work to remote work. While some employees were ready for the shift and were positively impacted, many were not fully prepared to work from home which brought about increased levels of stress and emotional exhaustion as well as a disequilibrium in their work and home lives.

Research Purpose: The objective of this scoping review is to gain a more in-depth understanding of the impact that working from home had on the work-life balance of employees across the world during the COVID-19 pandemic. As remote and hybrid work are likely to remain options for some organisations in the future, it is important to identify the implications for work-life balance.

Research Design, Approach and Method: A scoping review was conducted and adhered to a methodological framework involving five stages that ranged from identifying the research questions and choosing suitable articles to review, to summarizing and reporting the results. The reporting section of this scoping review used the protocols of the preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR). The seventeen articles included in this review were published between 2020 and 2022 and were collected for inclusion in this review between April 2022 and October 2022.

Preliminary Findings: Stress, gender differences, emotional exhaustion and alterations in working hours affected how employees working from home during the pandemic were able to establish work-life balance. It was seen that increased stress and emotional exhaustion had negative relationships with work-home balance. In terms of gender, the differing social roles and attitudes of men and women and what they perceived as important played an important role in how they were able to create a balance between their home and work lives. Alterations in working hours had differing results in how they influenced remotely working employees' work-life balance with some studies finding positive relationships and others negative.

Practical Implications: The findings shed light on the factors that influenced employees' work-life balance while working remotely during the COVID-19 Pandemic. They provided valuable insights into how employees were able to or struggled to establish a balance between their work and their personal life. This has implications for future hybrid and remote work for organisations.

Contributions: This review was done on literature from various industries involving a variety of demographics and provided more perspectives than those that have already been uncovered. Many variables including those that were not commonly studied in relation to work-life were highlighted which allows more focus on other potential antecedents, moderators and mediators of work-life balance that were not previously considered. This review has uncovered the gaps of and practical implications of previous studies which will potentially aid in the improvement of future research

K*eywords: COVID-19, Employees, Gender Differences, Pandemic, Remote Work, Stress, Work-Home balance*

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) is a highly transmissible respiratory disease that was discovered in Wuhan, China in the year 2020 that was quickly declared by the World Health Organisation as a pandemic (Shereen et al., 2020). The high transmission rate of the disease and the increasing death rate, which reached a peak of 503 862 deaths worldwide by June 2020, triggered global lockdowns beginning in March 2020 which caused high volumes of panic and uncertainty (Onyeaka et al., 2021). The initiation of the lockdowns by governments and authoritative bodies in different countries were done at both a domestic and an international level. The domestic level involved the restriction of movement of individuals in the country and limiting social interaction while the international level involved the restriction of movement of individuals as well as goods into the country (Onyeaka et al., 2021). The restrictive measures that were imposed by these lockdowns had severe effects on the economies of many countries including the shift that many employees had to make to working from home. Bertoni et al. (2021) mention that the lockdowns brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic forced people to work from home which in turn led to a working environment that blurred boundaries with family life due to the drastic change that family and work arrangements had to undergo.

Though remote working was not a new phenomenon in the world of work prior to the pandemic, it had been uncommon (Bick et al., 2021). There are many terms for remote work such as telework, virtual work and working from home whereby employees work in a location other than their normal working environment to complete job tasks. A survey conducted in European countries found that only 10% of employees had arrangements to work from home with the other 90% working strictly from the office prior to the pandemic (Bertoni et al., 2021). A study in Japan on remote work during the pandemic concluded that since the onset of the lockdowns, the number of individuals working remotely had increased by 28% (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2021). This leap into working from home so suddenly brought about lowered productivity, increased stress, negative effects on mental health and an overall imbalance and blurred boundaries in the work and home domains of employees (Chu et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2021). It is these reasons as well as the fact that these results were mainly collected during the peak of the pandemic before individuals had a chance to adjust to working away from the office full time that prompted this scoping review about

remote work and work-life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic to further investigate to what extent employees managed to instil a work and home balance.

1.2 Statement of the problem and aim

The emergence of COVID-19 in the year 2020 has brought long-lasting changes to the way that work is done (Kaushik, 2020). Mandatory lockdowns issued in every country across the world forced many employees to work from home and develop a new way of working that not many people were accustomed to (Onyeaka et al., 2021). Though remote work is not a new concept, most individuals had worked from their offices which meant that working from home or other locations out of office was a big adjustment especially since the personal lives of people differed greatly (Bertoni et al., 2021). Aspects such as dealing with unfamiliar technology, having to manage boundaries between work and home and having to adapt spaces at home and remote locations into adequate working environments are some of the challenges that employed individuals had to face during the pandemic (Zhang et al., 2021). In addition to the shift of some organisations into a virtual space, schools also shut down which meant that children stayed at home with their parents while their parents worked remotely, which also impacted their balance between home and work. By working at home, many employees were likely faced with role conflicts in trying to juggle their responsibilities at home while also trying to keep up with their work responsibilities at the same time in the same place since work and home became one which would have made establishing a balance between work and home life all the more difficult (Dizaho & Othman, 2015).

An important point to take note in addition to individuals interacting with unfamiliar technology and uncertain circumstances as mentioned above, is that the technological advancements and increased use of technology that came with working from home was experienced differently between developed and developing countries as countries in the global south have always had to play catch up (Bertoni et al., 2021; Chukwunonso, 2018). Authors such as Gottlieb et al. (2021) have studied the feasibility of developing country populations working from home and have highlighted that those countries experienced remote work during the pandemic very differently. This review thus consists of the important aim of investigating how different populations from different countries experienced remote work and how it affected their work-life balance as well as aiming to discover the differences in the variables that were focused on in studies from the global north versus the global south.

The mention and focus on the positive outcomes that emerged from remote work during the pandemic such as increased leisure time for some employees and the ability to be more in control of their work for others is something to be cognisant of which this review aims to highlight (Takami, 2021). A study conducted prior to the pandemic by Felstead and Henseke (2017) suggests that working remotely is likely to have an overall negative effect on employee work-life balance, but it should be noted that studies regarding work-life balance in relation to remote work are fairly limited before the pandemic. Further investigation into the impact of remote work on employees' work-life balance is crucial, as there are valuable lessons to be learnt. This research can benefit not only employers in understanding how to be more accommodating to employees facing major disruptions, but also themselves in developing effective coping strategies for dealing with such challenges. In addition, as prior mentioned, remote work and working from home were mainly uncommon before the emergence of COVD-19 and as a result, there is not much literature studying work-life balance while working remotely outside of the pandemic which further highlights the importance of this review.

According to a study by Barrero et al. (2021), after the pandemic, remote work and hybrid work will still be relevant to many organisations. The hybrid approach to work has been defined by Sokolic (2022) as a blended working system consisting of a mix of both in-office work and remote work from other locations such as one's home. A survey called "The Survey of Working Arrangements and Attitudes" was administered in America whereby the overall response from working individuals was that they would still be working partly from home even when the pandemic ends (Barrero et al., 2021). Returning to in-office work after the disruption that COVID-19 brought about that forced employees to work from home will take time to get used to and having a hybrid approach will help employees ease away from fully working from home (Green et al., 2021). Depending on the productivity of employees during the period they worked from home and how well the coped, some organisations may choose to either remain working from home or adopt a system where their employees work from home part time (Green et al., 2021). Some business owners and CEO's had varied responses in regard to the continuation of remote work post pandemic with some leaning toward a full return to the office and others suggesting a more hybrid approach (Barrero et al, 2021). Since many employees will possibly still be partly working from home or remotely even after the pandemic has subsided, the aim of this scoping review is to investigate the extent to which employees were able to establish work-life balance during the pandemic while working from home as well as the factors that affected work-life balance.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The focus of this section in on the theoretical frameworks and will cover theories that relate to work-life balance and specifically what influences it. An array of theories including The Work-Home Resources Model, The Conservation of Resources Theory, Role Theory and Boundary Theory have been expanded upon (Ashforth et al., 2000, Biddle, 1986; ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). These theories have been selected for this study as they fit within the topic of remote work and work-life balance during COVID-19 and have components that can aid in investigating the topic and research questions further. Most of these theories have also been used in other research studies focusing on work-life balance both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.1.1 Work-Home Resource Model

ten Brummelhuis and Bakker (2012) speak of the Work-Home Resource Model and explain in depth how there can be the onset of conflict between two domains. This conflict can be explained by contextual resources and contextual demands. Contextual resources particularly involve the enrichment of the work-home processes through resources having the ability to produce additional resources (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Contextual demands in contrast are aspects of social contexts, such as physical and social, that involve the requirement of continuous exertion of effort either mentally or physically as explained by ten Brummelhuis and Bakker (2012). This model is beneficial in this review as it provides the benefit of pinpointing the enrichment brought about for employees by particular contextual resources in the process of working from home and which contextual demands are igniting conflicts between an employee's home and work domains. since the sudden onset of remote work brought with it previously unknown stressors which could be perceived as demands, this model can be of assistance in examining and bringing to light what aspects of working from home are detrimentally causing work-life imbalances for employees due to the pandemic.

2.1.2 Conservation of Resources Theory

Dealing with stress is a frequent occurrence in the lives of many employees, and there are reports of stress levels being exacerbated by working remotely as well as other frustrations during the pandemic (Sandoval-Reyes et al., 2021). One theory that can prove helpful in

investigating employee stress in relation to its effects on their work-life balance was one formulated by Hobfoll (1989) called the Conservation of Resources Theory (COR Theory) which has been used to explain well-being and stress in humans. Delving deeper in the explanations of stress felt by different individuals in their respective environments and exactly how the stress-induced reactions can affect their well-being is something this theory excels at (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Resources are the crux of this theory and have been mentioned by ten Brummelhuis and Bakker (2012) as being either tangible or non-tangible aspects that an individual categorises as being important. Tangible resources include objects such as a house while non-tangible resources include individual aspects such as personality and energy such as time. The Conservation of Resources Theory includes many assumptions with the first assumption being that in order not to let stress and its subsequent reactions affect resource retention, an individual must put in good amounts of effort to retain them (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012).

The second assumption revolves around resource caravans which include the generation of new resources from previous ones such as the learning of a new skill that stemmed from a pre-existing skill (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). The belief that there is the likelihood of avoidance of problematic situations for individuals who have access to more resources is what the third assumption highlights which paves the way for assumption four (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). The fourth assumption has to do with individuals that have more resources having better problem-solving skills than those with fewer resources as mentioned by ten Brummelhuis and Bakker (2012). The next assumption branches off of assumption three and four in stating that the more resources a person has, the less they will suffer from resource drain as a result of stress (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). The next two assumptions are spoken of by ten Brummelhuis and Bakker (2012) in relation to the circumstantial retention of the influence of resources and how an individual is based off the value of the resources in their possession. The reason why this theory fits in this scoping review is because during the remote working period of the pandemic, employees had resources that were highly challenged such as their time, their job-related skills and many more. This theory can aid in further investigating how the challenging of resources, depletion of resources and strive for new resources for an employee while they work remotely can in turn impact their work-life balance.

2.1.3 The Theory of Social Roles and Role Theory

The taking up of a particular position in different situational contexts is what Biddle (1986) defines a social role as. Social roles are accompanied by social expectations which are aspects required to be fulfilled by individuals in relation to their capacity of the position they take up at any particular moment (Biddle, 1986). Different social roles include mother, teacher, brother, friend and many more. In an individual playing different roles, the evident time gaps between the commencement of different roles are something to take into consideration since some roles cannot overlap (Biddle, 1986). This overlapping of roles can lead to conflict which happens in circumstances whereby there is no mutual coinciding of an individual's roles which in turn can lead to stress and tension (Biddle, 1986). There are different levels of role theory such as organisational role theory which consists of the careful planning of an individual's situational roles based on tasks in that moment that require completion in a hierarchical structure (Biddle, 1986). Cognitive role theory is the other level of role theory mentioned by Biddle (1986) in contrast with organisational role theory which comprises of expectations in relation to one's roles that have a particular relation to upbringing which may involve religion or societal norms. Role theory is useful in this scoping review as it will aid in the understanding of the different roles that employees working from home had to fulfil. Individual roles being blurred was mentioned by the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (2021) to be something that had a high impact on the equilibrium that employees had the chance to build between their work and home life which is something that this theory may prove helpful in dissecting in this review.

2.1.4 Boundary Theory

An individual taking initiative and attempting to sustain boundaries through creating order within their environment to keep a smooth flow within their lives is described by Ashforth et al. (2000) as the boundary theory. Creating boundaries in circumstances where there is the overlapping of roles that cause conflict with each other is seen as being a mental process that individuals undergo either consciously or unconsciously (Ashforth et al, 2000). The boundary creation allows for the individual to strive for success in different area of their life in an independent way which can be done using role boundaries. A role boundary is whereby an individual separates each role that they find themselves in from each other to achieve the independence that was spoken of previously (Ashforth et al., 2000). Flexibility and permeability can be used in the creation of role boundaries with the former referring to

individual's roles having the ability to flow into each other and the latter referring to when one role is able to physically allow another role within it (Ashforth et al., 2000). This theory highlights an important aspect of this review in trying to understand how employees were able to separate the different roles they possessed in order to create harmony between their work domains and their personal domains when work and home became the same place.

The theories expanded on above contain elements such as stress, boundaries, roles as well as demands and resources that are all components to work life balance in one way or another. Some of the elements such as stress form part of the antecedents, moderators, mediators of work-life balance and others such as boundaries, roles as well as demands and resources can be used to further unpack the different components of work life balance and how it can be successfully established. The elements in these theories have been used in this review to further unpack and expand on the findings of the included articles to discuss their relevance and to highlight instances where they could have been used to a greater extent to further substantiate the results. Some of the components of the theories have been further discussed in the literature review section below.

2.2 Literature Review

This section provides the outlining of literature that is focused work-life balance and remote work and provides some considerations as to how pre-pandemic literature could relate to the work-life balance of employees working from home during the peak of COVID-19. This literature review covers the aspects and components of work-life balance such as its antecedents, mediators, moderators, relates to it as well as a section covering remote work and some literature on establishing a work-life balance while working remotely that was conducted prior to the pandemic

2.2.1 Remote work

Working remotely is a practical concept that has been around for a long time but was previously associated with particular jobs and employment sectors (Muralidhar et al., 2020). Remote work has been described as the completion of job tasks by an employee in an appropriate environment of their choice such as in their home. Remote work in this review adopts the definition of an individual working specifically from their home. There are tools that are required to work remotely depending on the type of job being done, for example employees may need access to a computer, wireless internet as well as certain computer programmes to

complete their tasks (Muralidhar et al., 2020). An important factor to mention regarding remote work is that there are lowered levels of supervision since the employee is not on the site of the job and due to this, trust between the employee and their employer and colleagues is integral (Muralidhar et al., 2020). It has been indicated by Klopotek (2017) that remote work affords employees task freedom on their own terms that provides autonomy over their work in terms of working hours and workload which has been directly linked in a positive manner to positive work attitudes and productivity.

Contrastingly, these are also things that employees may have less control over depending on organisational and supervisor support as well as healthy communication which in turn may negatively affect productivity (Fapohunda, 2014). During the COVID-19 pandemic, organisations had no option but to move their business fully remote which left many individuals working from home which may or may not have been the best option for them personally. It is therefore important to look further at how remote work played a role in either worsening or improving employees' work-life balance with consideration and focus paid to the COVID-19 context. In this review, employees that shifted from office work to conducting work in a remote fashion will be focused on in an attempt to further unpack how this shift both positively and negatively impacted employees in both their work and home domains.

2.2.2 Work-Life Balance

A highly accepted definition of work-life balance has been outlined by Muralidhar et al. (2020) as the presence of an individually perceived equilibrium between the personal life of an individual and their work life that is unique to each persons' circumstance. An individual who possesses this equilibrium can give the necessary effort to both their life domain and their work domain without one being compromised or given priority over the other. Low stress levels, good work performance, overall happiness and high levels of psychological well-being and motivation have all been associated with employees who have a healthy work-life balance. Another definition of work-life balance has been outlined by Greenhaus et al. (2003) in stating that the equilibrium between work and personal life is an individuals' overall equal satisfaction of both domains that leads to as little conflict between the two domains as possible. In attempting to create harmony between work and home, the balancing of roles is required as well as the successful setting of boundaries between those roles to fulfil them as effectively as possible (Yavuz Askakal, 2021). All of these definitions will be taken into account in this scoping review.

AlHazemi and Ali (2016) mention that there is a four-dimensional split within work-life balance into components including work-to-family/non-work enhancement, work-to-family/ non-work conflict, family/non-work-to-work enhancement and family/ non-work-to-work conflict. These components are categorised as work-life balance determinants and need to be taken into consideration for an individual to establish an individual perceived equilibrium between their family life and their work life. It is important to keep in mind that the concept of work-life balance is one that is dynamic and never stagnant and is highly dependent on what kind of a lifestyle someone leads which is why investigating the work-life balance of employees working remotely during the pandemic is important since it was a change to their everyday lives. An example of this change is given by Bertoni at al., (2021) in mentioning that as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic there has been a shift in the way that work has been done including the increased use of technology (Bertoni et al., 2021). By understanding the antecedents as well as the individual and organisational outcomes of work-life balance, further comprehension of how work-life balance was impacted by the pandemic.

2.2.3 Antecedents of work life balance

The antecedents of work-life balance can be looked at as factors that aid in the establishment of work-life balance (Dizaho & Othman, 2015). Antecedents of work-life balance are important to be cognisant of because they influence an employee's loyalty, their performance as well as their overall work satisfaction and well-being which in turn is likely to impact their work-life balance. Dizaho and Othman (2015) mention that top management being committed and passionate about positively influencing employee well-being and work-life balance is an important determining factor relating to the extent to which employees establish balance between their work and home domains. The development of organisational programs and the implementation of initiatives and exhibiting work-family culture are some of the things that top management have done that have proven successful in promoting a work-life balance for their employees (Dizaho & Othman, 2015). In relation to organisational support and remote work, it has been mentioned by Bentley et al. (2015) in their study in New Zealand that organisational and supervisor support are needed to a higher extent for employees who work remotely or from home. Support from supervisors was observed in the study to aid in maintaining employee well-being and lessen the negative effects of the isolation that remote working employees felt.

Another influential antecedent for work-life balance is the number of hours an employee spends working. Having reasonable and somewhat flexible working hours has been mentioned to be effective practices that promote work-life balance (Galea et al., 2014). The International Labour Organization (2020) stated that the remote work brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic led to more flexible working hours for employees but an implication of this was that some individuals found themselves working more hours remotely than they would on-site. When an employee has enough time to fulfil their job demands while also being able to address their family responsibilities, employee satisfaction and well-being are said to be positively impacted (Dizaho & Othman, 2015). In relation to working from home, work-life balance can be improved by providing extra leisure time and allowing for extra flexibility but can also be worsened if an employee finds themselves working overtime frequently. Holly and Mohnen (2012) did a study on how hours that employees work affect their work-life balance and came to the conclusion that over the decade prior to their study, employees were working more hours than before with increases in hours worked overtime. There was the expression of lowered work satisfaction due to the number of hours that employees had to work.

Employee responsibilities outside of work have a big impact on their work life balance which is why it is an important antecedent to address (Sheikh et al., 2018). Apart from work, employees have other roles they play that require their care and attention and must manage home demands in addition to their work demands. Having extensive responsibilities in the home domain can negatively impact an employee's stress levels and in turn lead to difficulties in establishing a balance between work and home (Dizaho & Othman, 2015). Authors such as Gajendran and Harrison (2007) have brough to light that the negative impact that employee responsibilities have on work-life balance is exacerbated when employees work from home. Working from home has been observed to blur the boundaries between the work domain and the home domain and while some people have divulged that this boundary blur helps them manage their responsibilities better, others have revealed that it brings more of a stress to their work-life balance (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007).

It is important to keep in mind that men and women have been viewed to generally have different experiences of work because of the differing cultural and social roles that they hold (Fapohunda, 2014). Traditionally for women, the role of home-maker, including handling childcare and domestic tasks is expected of them while men have been issued the role of provider and breadwinner which all have an effect on their work life and though this is changing, it is a narrative that is still present in many societies and households. Karkoulian et

al. (2016) mentioned that work-life balance is a concept very gendered, with women generally facing more disturbances from their personal lives that negatively impact their ability to focus on work. An interesting finding that was brought about in the same study was that women had a more positive attitude as compared to men and this aided in the successful establishment of a work-life balance. In his study, Connell (2005) found that for married individuals, the unequal distribution of tasks made the establishment of work-life balance difficult, especially since the women were said to be more focused on the household while men were more focused on their jobs. In addition to this, remote work provided the opportunity for multi-tasking where both home responsibilities such as childcare could be done in tandem with an employees work which in turn was observed to lower leisure hours especially for women (Grant et al., 2013).

2.2.4 Individual and organisational outcomes of work-life balance

Work-life balance can have an influence and in turn be influenced by many individual outcomes for employees such as life satisfaction, job satisfaction, and well-being. Well-being has been defined by Kashyap et al. (2016) as a mindset and physical state that is positive as well as an overall good quality of life. Well-being is seen to be determined by the ability an individual has to fulfil all of the demands in their life. Issahaku et al. (2020) did a general study at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana with a sample that consisted of 291 individuals with the aim of investigating how work-life balance and the psychological well-being of employees are related. The results of this study found that work-life balance had a significant positive impact on an individual's well-being (Issahaku et al., 2020). Much like those with positive impacts, some antecedents of work-life balance have the potential to cause imbalances between an employee's domains which in turn can worsen their overall well-being. For example, if an employee is working more hours than they can handle, it is likely to have negative impacts on their personal life while working an amount of time that is reasonable and flexible can greatly improve an employee's balance between their work and home life (Kashyap et al, 2016). Studies examining remote work and its effects on well-being such as one by Grant et al. (2013) have suggested that bringing work activities into one's personal domain that is viewed as a place of peace and rest can have unfavourable effects on employee psychological well-being. This study also found linkages between lowered well-being and feelings of isolation reported by remote working employees due to lack of colleague interaction and inability to form meaningful professional relationships (Grant et al., 2013).

Job satisfaction is the positive or negative attitudes an individual has regarding their job, role and working environment at a particular point in time (Kashyap et al., 2016). Regarding the individual outcomes of job satisfaction, a study by Shadab and Arif (2015) using a large sample of data from a hospital in Pakistan concluded that the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction was positive because it was observed that employees who were able to build a work-life balance had higher levels of job satisfaction. This study also focused on working hours which is another important antecedent of work-life balance and found that employees who worked more hours had less time to give to their families which led to imbalances in their work and life domains and in turn negatively impacted job satisfaction as a result (Shadab & Arif, 2015). A report by the International Labour Organisation (2017) highlights that job satisfaction can be both positively and negatively impacted by working from home which has many benefits such as more employee autonomy and independence but also leads to longer working hours which in turn heightens employee exhaustion and work dissatisfaction.

Life satisfaction is described as the positive or negative way an individual views their life at a particular point in time (Kashyap et al., 2016). Susi and Jawaharrani (2015) found that the higher an individual's work-life balance is, the higher their life satisfaction is which shows that the two have a positive relationship. The study consisted of 491 working adults in Bangalore city and indicated that employees that had high life satisfaction experienced low interference between their personal lives and their work lives (Susi & Jawaharrani, 2015). Job satisfaction has been positively linked to other concepts such as productivity and performance such that it has been observed that he higher the individuals job satisfaction, the higher the productivity and performance which then also impacted other factors such as increased employee efficiency. This shows that work-life balance can act as a catalyst in the employee outcomes it affects (Susi & Jawaharrani, 2015). Similarly to job satisfaction, remote work brings with it both negative and positive impacts for life satisfaction (International labour Organisation, 2017). The positive impacts include factors such as less time and money spent on commuting and the opportunity to work in the familiar and comfortable environment of one's home while the negative impacts include longer working hours and a lack of boundaries between the domains of work and personal life (International labour Organisation, 2017).

As well as affecting individual outcomes, some of which were discussed above, work-life balance has an impact on organisational level factors such as employee efficiency and productivity, employee work engagement, organisational commitment and organisational

performance. Employee engagement is regarded as the positive relationship that an employee has with their organisation and work environment that leads to positive working behaviours (Žnidaršič & Bernik, 2021). It was revealed that a healthy work-life balance leads to employees having higher levels of engagement with their work in the organisation due to the perceptions that the organisation is understanding of other commitments and responsibilities outside of work (Žnidaršič & Bernik, 2021). Similar conclusions were made by Iqbal et al. (2017) where their findings suggested that there was a positive relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement. A number of studies including ones conducted by Dutcher (2012) and Bloom et al. (2015) have examined the relationship between productivity and remote work and have found that working from home positively impacts an employee's productivity. In these studies, higher productivity was linked to individuals having higher autonomy over their jobs and being able to work on a more flexible schedule. Other studies have found that working from home either has no effect on productivity or the difference between working in the office and working from home is not significant (Olson, 1989).

Organisational performance is linked directly to employee engagement and individual job performance due to the fact that it is related to the individual doing the job and effective job performance has direct effects on how an organisation functions (Thevanes & Harikaran, 2020). Higher work-life balance often leads to higher organisational performance due to work-life balance bringing about factors such as life satisfaction which give employees motivation to perform better at work which indicates a positive relationship. Wolor et al. (2020) discovered that though there are measures that can be taken by an employee to establish a work-life balance while working remotely, organisations and top leadership paying attention to aspects such as e-training can encourage their workforce to have a positive relationship with remote work and this will hopefully translate to increased individual job performance. It is therefore essential that organisations provide their employees with the adequate support in establishing a work-life balance as failure to do so has been seen to negatively impact employee morale and in turn decrease employee performance which will overall negatively impact the organisation (Wolor et al., 2020).

Productivity is another organisational outcome of work-life balance that has a direct link to organisational performance. A study done by Fapohunda (2014) in Nigeria with a sample of 200 bank employees found that the relationship between work-life balance and organisational productivity as positive similar to the relationship between satisfaction and work-life balance. It was mentioned in the study that work-life balance programmes that organisations initiate can

highly positively influence an employee's ability to establish a healthy work-life balance which in turn can provide many benefits for the organisation. Due to some employees experiencing inadequate working hours accompanied by large amounts of work pressure and inflexible work schedules, their organisational productivity suffers (Fapohunda, 2014). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2020) highlighted that during the pandemic, working remotely could either have increased work performance or decreased it depending on each employees' subjective experiences which would have directly impacted productivity. In trying to ensure optimal levels of organisational productivity, establishing a good work-life balance is imperative and in turn will positively impact other outcomes such as work satisfaction (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2020).

2.2.5 Moderators and mediators of work-life balance

A moderator is a variable that influences the relationship that is shared between two other variables (Field, 2018). Age and gender were shown to be factors that were highly influential on work-life balance when work-life balance had a relationship with other factors such as flexible working hours and occupational stress (Ruan, 2020). Literature on gender in relation to work-life balance highlighted that men and women have been viewed to generally have different experiences of work as a result of women having the role of home-maker while men being viewed as the breadwinner of the household (Fapohunda, 2014).

A study done by Ruan (2020) suggested that work-life balance while working from home was predicted in a positive way by flexible working hours such that increased working hours led to a better work-life balance. It was found in the same study that both age and gender as moderators did not significantly impact the relationship between flexible working hours and work life balance. Ruan (2020) found that occupational stress had a negative relationship to work-life balance such that increased stress led to a more unequal equilibrium between work and home. In this negative relationship between occupational stress and work-life balance, while the moderating impact of gender was not significant, age was found to be a significant moderator. It was suggested that the younger an individual is, stress has a greater negative impact on the balance between their work and life domains. Steen (2017) defines stress as the unconscious human reaction to fear, anxiety, threats or change that can manifest both psychologically and physically and in relation to the workplace, experiences of stress are related back to circumstances revolving around the work environment. High levels of workplace stress have been seen to negatively impact employees by resulting in low

productivity and decreased levels of well-being, low morale and can negatively affect an employees' ability to cope with job demands (Ruan, 2020).

A mediator is a variable that can explain the relationship between two other variables in regard to their relationship with the mediator (Field, 2018). Work-life balance has been identified to be a mediator of both job satisfaction and life satisfaction in their relationships with other variables such as work-life conflict and occupational stress. Ruan (2020) concluded that in the relationship between job satisfaction and work stress, work life balance was found to be a mediator since lower work-life balance was associated with higher stress and higher work-life balance with high job satisfaction. This can be substantiated by a study that was carried out by Pattusamy and Jacob (2015) that indicated that work-life balance proved to be a mediator between job satisfaction and work-family conflict and it was suggested that job satisfaction had a positive relationship with work life balance while having negatively related to work-family conflict.

2.2.6 Remote work and work-life balance

As previously mentioned, working from home is a concept that was not extremely common but has become a normal occurrence since the emergence of COVID-19 (Vyas & Butakhieo, 2021). To have a well-rounded view at remote work and its impact on work-life balance, it is also important to consider studies relating to the topic that were conducted before the onset of the pandemic in order to provide some contrast. Felstead and Helsenke (2017) conducted a quantitative cross-sectional study utilising surveys with random sampling of employed individuals working remotely in the United Kingdom. The study had the objective of assessing how work is becoming less commonly attached to an office and examine the effects that remote work has not only on work-life balance of employees but also on their well-being. The results of this study indicated that individuals working remotely from their homes had to put in more effort in regarding their work and found themselves working more hours than they usually would in-office (Felstead & Helsenke, 2017). More positive results were also produced in that remotely working employees present with high organisational commitment and high job and life satisfaction. Grant et al. (2013) interestingly found in their qualitative cross-sectional study based in the United Kingdom that a positive factor that some employees linked to working from home is that they took less sick leave when they worked from home. The authors obtained their sample group through convenience sampling as their participants volunteered to be a part of the study. A reason for employees using less sick leave was not explicitly provided but it

was suggested that the flexibility of remote work gave them more hours to work flexibly and thus make more much needed income (Grant et al., 2013).

Also focusing on working from home and work-life balance was a qualitative cross-sectional study conducted by Crosbie and Moore (2004). This study had the main aim of examining whether working from home improved an individual's ability to find a balance more easily between their work and home domains. The sample consisted of employees in a variety of industries who worked from home and was mainly female but the sampling technique was not clearly defined. It was found that while working from home, participants found it difficult to establish boundaries between their work and home lives and experienced a situation where they could not find a peaceful place to rest at home because they felt that their work lives invaded their personal lives (Crosbie & Moore, 2004). The participants also divulged that homeworking required a very robust mental and emotional well-being especially since finding time for self-care was difficult because of the long working hours that they were subjected to (Crosbie & Moore, 2004). A positive sentiment about working from home that echoed from all the participants in this study was that working from home allowed them to be more present in their households and allowed them more flexible time that then granted them the chance to more successfully complete their home responsibilities. Crosbie & Moore (2004) mentioned that the content felt with having the opportunity to complete home responsibilities more flexibly was brought forth by the female participants and this gender difference was not the only one found. It was suggested that men viewed themselves in more of a provider light than that of a home-maker and therefore were found to experience less boundary overlap between work and home than the women participants. Another author that found a gender difference in the perceptions and experiences of remote work in regard to work-life balance was Grant et al. (2013) who found that women mostly struggled with household chores and responsibilities while men mentioned not having quality time with their family as a difficulty they faced.

PricewaterhouseCoopers (2016) reported that though remote work was not something many businesses had ventured into, high satisfaction, increased productivity and increased happiness was experienced by the employees who did have the opportunity to work from home. This was mainly due to the flexibility that was provided from working from home. Similarly, a quantitative cross-sectional study conducted by Maruyama et al. (2009) in the United Kingdom indicated that most, if not all, of the participants included in the study felt that working remotely or working from home brought positive impact to their work-life balance. The sampling technique was not explicitly stated but the article alluded it to be convenience sampling. The

main aim of this research was to identify factors and variables that had an influence on the work life balance of employees working from home and an interesting result that was yielded showed that even though most individuals indicated that working from home meant longer working hours as compared to working at the office, they still reported feeling a higher work-life balance which was also a result of less commuting to work and increased job flexibility (Maruyama et al., 2009). The same study highlighted that the main hindrances brought about by remote work to employee's work life balance was more family conflict due to blurred boundaries between their work and home domains which is a finding that was also made in other studies such as the one by Crosbie and Moore (2007) and Felstead and Helsenke (2017). Other studies have also highlighted longer working hours as having a negative association with remote work which has likely been heightened due to technological innovation and employees now having the ability to connect with colleagues globally which then brings in the factor of time differences (Vernon, 2005, as cited in Grant et al., 2013).

Other authors that corroborate the findings that work flexibility improves work like balance include Hill et al. (1998) who conducted a mixed method study with the aim of investigating how work life balance was influenced by virtual work in either negative or positive ways. The sample in the study included IBM employees but the countries and location were not specified (Hill et al., 1998). The sampling technique was also not stated but due to the nature and sample of the study, it is likely to be convenience sampling. It was reported in the results of their study that working from home and working remotely aided in the achievement of home responsibilities due to the flexibility that out of office work offered.

Hochschild (1997) found the same theme in their qualitative study by mentioning that working from home allowed more time and effort to be put into one's home-care and parenting but the study also found that working from home led to more procrastination in completing home responsibilities as employees were more focused on competing their work tasks. Much like the previously mentioned studies by Crosbie and Moore (2007), Maruyama et al. (2009), Felstead and Helsenke (2017), the findings brought forth by Hill et al. (1998) draw attention to the fact that working from home leads to blurred boundaries and that the longer working hours subject employees to the trap of over-working and workaholism. In regard to time spent working and its effects, Grant et al. (2013) touched on how long working hours and having to play many roles at once was something that caused a lot of fatigue for employees. Gottlieb et al., (2018) were able to link increases in stress levels to role conflicts for employees working from home which in turn was observed to negatively affect subjective well-being.

The literature review above has covered and unpacked many factors relating back to remote work and work life balance which are the key variables in this scoping review that can be applied to more current literature. Definitions of both work life balance and remote work have been explored with a focus on the antecedents, moderators and mediators of work-life balance that were then linked to a remote working context. An especially insightful section provided by this literature review examined work-life balance and remote work in pre-pandemic times of which was used further on to compare data on similar studies conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. This not only aided in providing a comparative view but also aided in the identification of gaps, limitations as well as implications on how the work-life balance can be improved for individuals working from home.

The following research questions to be addressed in the scoping review were identified:

1. What research has been conducted on remote work and work-life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What research designs and theoretical approaches were used?
3. What variables have been included in the studies (e.g., individual and organisational variables) and what were the findings?

All three of the research questions outlined above are driven by the desire to bring forth a higher level of understanding of how the large change of employees moving from working in office to working from home influence employees ability to establish a work-life balance. These research questions will not only aid in identifying the gaps present in the existing literature but will also highlight similarities between working from home pre and post pandemic. In answering these research questions, both practical and theoretical implications will be identified as well as suggestions for future research and any area that the articles included were lacking or did not cover adequately.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Methodology

A scoping review is the type of research that was conducted. A scoping review is a piece of writing that studies the concepts of an area of study that are deemed to be most important as well as investigating the most influential main sources of evidence available within a specific research area (Arksey & O'Malley, 2007). This scoping review is categorised as mixed method as it looks at studies of different research designs such as quantitative, qualitative and it also takes into consideration mixed method studies that have been conducted in the area (Smith & Bazis, 2021). This mixed-method scoping review served the purpose of summarising the findings within available research and examines the nature of existing studies conducted on the topic of remote work and work-life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic across various countries. The outcomes that were achieved by this scoping review are consistent with Arksey and O'Malley's (2007) reasons as to why scoping reviews are conducted.

3.1.1 Procedure: Review Process

The framework used in this scoping review involve five stages that ranged from identifying the research questions and choosing suitable articles to review, to summarizing and reporting the results all which were adhered to. The reporting section of this scoping review was done using the protocols of the preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses extension for Scoping Reviews which is referred to by the acronym "PRISMA-ScR" (Tricco et al., 2018). The PRISMA-ScR checklist (*See Appendix A)* was incorporated into this piece of writing to verify the title, introduction, methods, results, and discussion.

Scoping reviews have been highlighted by Arksey and O'Malley (2007) to provide a way of analysing literature in a methodical and rigorous manner that allows for full transparency and replicability. Reliability and validity are viewed as good within scoping reviews due to its checklist nature that provides standardised reporting and reduces biases (Tricco et al., 2016). The use of the PRISMA-ScR allows for the assurance of validity and reliability for the same reasons as those listed for a scoping review with the addition of the requirement of systematically assessing chosen research articles to assess validity and reliability before use in a scoping review (Tricco et al., 2018).

3.1.2 Stages 1 and 2

Stage 1 of conducting this scoping review included identifying the research questions and stage 2 encompassed identifying relevant studies in order to conduct the reviews (Arksey & O'Malley, 2007). Stage 2 was conducted through the use of a multitude of databases to retrieve research articles for this scoping review including Researchgate, Emerald Insight, Google Scholar, Routledge, Sciendo, Sage Journals, Psychnet, Science Direct, Springer link, University of Kent, PLOS, MDPI, Digital Commons, Proquest, sabinet, Psychinfo and Ebscohost. The articles were found by searching the key words "Work-life balance", "Remote Work" (and synonyms such as "Telework" and "Virtual work") and "COVID-19 Pandemic" in the databases to obtain relevant and appropriate articles.

Additionally, there was use of specific search terms such as "Working from home and work life balance during the pandemic", "Maintaining a work-life balance while working from home during COVID-19", "How COVID-16 affected employee work-life balance during the pandemic", "Work-life balance of employees during the COVID-19 Pandemic", etc. Words such as "telework", "remote work and their synonyms were grouped together with "COVID-19" and "Pandemic" as well as "Work-life balance" when searching in each database. To produce results within the required time period (Data collected from 2020 to 2022), the searches were filtered by the year they were published. There was also the examination of reference lists of key articles to find any other relevant sources of information for this mixed-method scoping review. The data search revealed mainly quantitative articles but also some qualitative and mixed method studies which is why a mixed method approach was used in this scoping review to incorporate the various methodologies of existing studies.

3.1.3 Stage 3

Stage 3 encompassed refining the research articles that were in the review through looking at eligibility criteria. The final sample of articles in this scoping review was collected using inclusion and exclusion criteria that was particularly based on the nature of the review being conducted which in this case involved remote work and work-life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic (Arksey & O'Malley, 2007). These are summarised in table 1. With regard to the type of studies required, since this scoping review used a mixed method approach, one inclusion criterion was that studies used must be quantitative, qualitative, or mixed method studies. Literature reviews, thought pieces, systematic reviews and other scoping reviews were

excluded in the final sample of articles that were used, although their reference lists were used to identify additional articles. *See Appendix C for a table of articles that were excluded due to not meeting the inclusion criteria.*

An important criteria for the articles used in this scoping review was that they were published in English and had been peer reviewed and it was particularly critical that they contained data collected only between the years 2020 and 2022. The samples in the articles had to contain samples from any demographic in terms of gender, race and economic sector and were focused in either developed or developing countries to gain a variety of perspectives., the samples were to only consist of adults 18 years and older that were partially or fully working at home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 1: Article Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	**Exclusion Criteria**
Quantitative methodology, qualitative methodology or mixed method.	Literature reviews, systematic reviews, thought pieces and scoping reviews.
Data collected from 2020 to 2022. (October 20th, 2020, was the date of the last search)	Data collected before 2020 when the COVID 19 pandemic started.
Peer reviewed journal articles.	Articles that are not peer reviewed, such as unpublished dissertations and theses, newspapers and magazine articles.
Sample consisting of adults who worked both fully and partly from home before as well as during the COVID 19 pandemic.	Samples of individuals under the age of 18 that did not work fully or partly at home during the pandemic.
Studies that were published in English.	Studies that were published in other languages apart from English.
Samples of all genders, demographics, and economic sectors.	
Articles focused on both developed and developing countries.	

3.1.4 Stage 4

In stage 4, important information was recorded that was found in the final sample of articles which involved the interpretation of data in accordance with key themes found (Arksey & O'Malley, 2007). The data obtained in the final sample for this mixed method scoping review was charted and included information about the author of each study, the aims and methodology of the study, the sample group as well as the outcomes of each study and the highlights of any important results and additional aspects such as research designs and gaps. This process of charting helped with deciding what key information from each study was recorded and used within the scoping review

3.1.5 Stage 5

Once the charting stage of the scoping review was completed, the last stage which included reporting and summarising of the results was completed (Arksey & O'Malley, 2007). This stage stemmed directly from the charting stage in that it helped in the development of the narrative account of the findings within the literature. In this piece of writing, tables were used to examine the nature as well as the geographic, race, gender, and economic sector distribution of the articles in the final sample. A table of the basic characteristics was produced with careful attention paid to being mindful of the reporting strategy to maintain as much clarity and direction as possible. Making sure to keep a consistent form of reporting made it easier to identify comparisons and contrasts within the final sample of literature (Arksey & O'Malley, 2007).

3.1.6 Sample

38 articles were collected from 17 academic databases and of those 38, 17 were found to have fallen in line completely with the inclusion criteria (Table 1) through screening the abstracts and total contents of the papers. Thus, a total of 21 articles were excluded due to not meeting the correct criteria that would enable them to be included in the review (Figure 1). Among the 17 articles included in the review, one was a mixed method study, 3 were qualitative studies and 13 were quantitative studies. 17.65% of the articles were from 2020, 58.82% of the articles were from 2021 and 23.53% of the articles were from 2022. *See Appendix B for an article selection flowchart (Figure 1).*.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Findings

This section entails unpacking the results of the articles that met the inclusion criteria for the review. The results are structured according to the research questions and a table has been provided for each section containing information within the articles that will aid in answering a particular research question. As previously mentioned, reliability and validity are viewed as good within scoping reviews and the instances of biases are low (Tricco et al., 2016,)

4.1.1 Research Question 1: Research conducted on remote work and work-life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic

This research question focused on the main aims of the studies done on remote work and work-life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic. The geographical location of the studies included in this review were also expanded upon as well as trends that were discovered in regard to the type of variables that were studied in certain locations and what the sample groups consisted of. In Table 2 below, a brief outline of the results are given and were unpacked in more detailed further on in this section.

Table 2 : Outline of the location and main aims of the included articles

Author (Year)	Title	Country	Main Aims
Al-Habaibeh et al. (2021)	"Challenges and opportunities of remotely working from home during Covid-19 pandemic"	United Kingdom (Global North)	To identify the challenges and opportunities that remote work brought with it
Bhumika (2020)	'Challenges for work-life balance during COVID-19 induced nationwide lockdown: exploring gender difference in emotional exhaustion in the Indian setting"	India (Global South)	To explore the experiences of the relationship between work-life balance and emotional exhaustion of individuals that worked form home during COVID-19
Chu et al. (2022)	"Learning from work-home issues during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Balance speaks louder than words"	Hong Kong (Global North)	To investigate the effect that work-life balance, company support and company support during the COVID-19

			pandemic had on employee psychological well-being while working from home
Sandoval-Reyes et al. (2021)	"Remote Work, Work Stress, and Work-Life during Pandemic Times: A Latin America Situation"	Latin America (Global South)	To determine the effect that remote work had on work stress and work-life balance during COVID-19. The relationship between remote work and work stress included expansion on productivity, satisfaction and engagement.
Gigauri (2020)	"Remote Working Concerns During the COVID-19 Pandemic"	Georgia (Global North)	To examine well-being Human Resource Management initiatives during COVID-19 as well as investigating perceptions of work-life balance
Manzoor and Hamid (2021)	"Work-Life balance during COVID-19 Lockdown: Experiences of Women Academicians of Kashmir"	India (Global South)	To examine to a higher degree the work-life balance challenges that were faced by women academicians that worked from home during COVID-19
Takami (2021)	"Working from Home and Work-Life Balance during COVID-19: The Latest Changes and Challenges in Japan"	Japan (Global North)	To understand the change in how people used their time while working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic and how it affected their work-life balance
Lonska et al. (2021)	"Work-Life Balance of the Employed population During the Emergency Situation of COVID-19 in Latvia"	Latvia (Global South)	To evaluate work-life balance in relation to the flexibility of working from home and how family influenced employee productivity during COVID-19
Singh et al. (2022)	"An Empirical Study on the Impact Of Covid 19 on Work-Life Balance of Teaching Employees in Higher Education Sector"	India (Global South)	To study the relationship of teaching professionals designation, remote work and social responsibilities with their work-life balance
Tejero et al. (2021)	"Factors associated with work-life balance and productivity before and during work-from home"	Philippines (Global South)	To understand psychosocial factors related to working from home and examine their relationship with productivity and work-life balance

Babu (2021)	"Pandemic and work-life balance An exploration on how employees of Big4 accounting firms manage their work lives during COVID 19"	Not specified	To look closer at Big 4 accounting firms and better understand what factors influenced the work-life balance of their employees during COVID-19 and assess the impact on job efficiency
Tusl et al. (2021)	"The impact of the COVID 19 crisis on work and private life, mental well-being and self-rated health in German and Swiss employees"	Germany (Global North)	To examine the perceived vs the actual impact on work-life balance and mental well-being that the COVID-19 pandemic had on employees
Bukowska et al. (2022)	"The Workplace and Work-life Balance During COVID-19"	Poland (Global North)	To identify the work-life balance and relationship between work-life and private life during COVID-19 experienced by employees
Srimulyani and Hermanto (2022)	"Work life balance before and during work from home in a COVID-19 pandemic situation"	Indonesia (Global South)	To examine how the work life balance of Indonesian teachers changed before and after working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic and to analyse the implications of working from home
Hjalmsdottir and Bjarnaddottir (2020)	"I have turned into a foreman here at home Families and work life balance in times of COVID-19 in a gender equality paradise"	Iceland (Global North)	To look at gendered work-life balance experiences of employees in Iceland in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and how this affects the gendered division of household labour
Naz et al. (2021)	"Managing the porous boundaries Impact of working from home on work life balance of university teachers during COVID 19"	Pakistan (Global South)	To address how shifting from a classroom setting to working from home has impacted the gender equalities associated with work-home balance
Uddin (2021)	"Addressing work-life balance challenges of working-women during COVID-19 in Bangladesh"	Bangladesh (Global South)	To understand the challenges faced by Bangladeshi women as they worked at home during the pandemic and to conceptualise their work-life balance

All 17 articles included in this review had the aim of studying aspects of work-life balance of employees working from home during the pandemic (Table 2). Of the 17 articles included, the sample groups came from fourteen countries in total, seven of which are located in the global north, nine located in the global south and one that had a sample group from different locations. Studies that utilised samples of individuals in the Global north focused mainly on psychological factors such as well-being while organisational variables such as productivity and efficiency were found in studies in countries in the Global South. Most of the studies included additional variables that were studied in relation to work-life balance while only a few solely focused on work-life balance. The studies that had specific sample groups like teachers and lecturers were found to have been conducted in the global South while studies in the global north had more general sample groups from different industries and sectors without any specified gender, industry or job requirements. Regarding the studies that were more focused on gender differences, one was conducted in a developed country and the other was conducted in a developing country and both focused on similar variables which likely positively contributes to the generalisability of the results.

A few articles studied remote work more generally and looked at work-life balance as an output variable or as a challenge faced during the pandemic such as Uddin (2021) who conducted a study that was aimed at investigating the challenges that Bangladeshi women faced in trying to establish a work-life balance. Similarly, Manzoor and Hamid (2021) aimed at examining the work-life balance challenges faced by female academicians in Kashmir. These studies were not only similar in their main research aims but were also similar in the fact that they were conducted in developing/underdeveloped countries in the same continent but differed in some of the variables that were considered. Contrastingly, Al-Habaibeh et al. (2021) aimed at studying the challenges and opportunities that arose due to remote work whereby work-life balance was constituted as challenge and almost a secondary variable as opposed to being the main focus. This study was conducted in the United Kingdom which is a developed country as opposed to the two prior mentioned studies by Manzoor and Hamid (2021) and Uddin (2021). Bukowska et al. (2020) studied work-life balance more generally through aiming to understand the work-life balance of employees working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this study there was no focus on a specific gender or a specific industry.

Some of the articles included in this review consider psychological variables in addition to studying work-life balance as a variable on its own. An example of this is the study conducted by Bhumika (2021) that aimed to investigate how emotional exhaustion and work-life balance were related during the pandemic and the study by Tusl et al. (2021) that had the main aim of

understanding how COVID-19 affected employee mental well-being and work-life balance as they worked remotely. Chu et al. (2021) addressed work-life balance and psychological well-being from a different lens by aiming to examine how psychological well-being was impacted during the pandemic by work-life balance and company support as employees worked remotely from home. Gigauri (2020) studied well-being from a different perspective by investigating well-being human resource initiatives instead of directly observing the well-being of the employees as opposed to the other studies in this review. All of the studies that considered the aforementioned psychological variables were all conducted in developed economies that are situated in the global north.

Three of the studies focused on educators as their sample group and come from countries that are situated in the global south. The study by Naz et al. (2021) took place in Pakistan with the aim of investigating how work-life balance was influenced in a gendered manner by the abrupt change from a classroom setting to working at home due to COVID-19. While not focused on teachers, Hjalmsdottir and Bjarnaddottir (2020) also did a study that had gender comparisons which was conducted in Iceland that aimed at understanding how the gendered nature of work-life balance affected how household chores were divided while employees were working from home. On the other hand, Singh et al. (2021) conducted their study with the aim of analysing how work-life balance was related to remote work and social life. Naz et al. (2021) had aims relating to many other additional variables as well as how employees established while Srimulyani & Hemanto (2021) conducted a more general study about the work-life balance of teachers in Indonesia and also aimed to investigate the implications that the teachers faced while working from home.

Another popular aim in the articles included in this review involved the investigation of organisational variables. Lonska et al. (2021) aimed to investigate how working hour flexibility impacted work-life balance as well as study how an employee's family impacted their productivity in Latvia. Although Takami (2021) did not particularly investigate productivity, Similarly to Lonska et al. (2021), the study was aimed at understanding how employees use their time while working from home and how it affected their equilibrium between home and work as a result. Sandoval-Reyes et al. (2021) did a study in Latin America that had the aim of examining productivity, satisfaction and engagement in regard to the relationship between remote work and work-life balance while Babu's (2021) study aimed to examine how job-efficiency was impacted by work-life balance. Additionally, Tejero et al. (2021) aimed to understand the relationship between work-life balance and productivity of employees in the

Philippines and how that relationship is affected by the psychosocial factors of remote work. The studies by Sandoval-Reyes et al. (2021), Tejero et al. (2021) and Lonska et al. (2021) were conducted in countries in the Global South while Babu (2021) did not mention a particular country/ies that their sample came from but simply stated that the data was collected from Big4 firms.

4.1.2 Research Question 2: Research methods and theoretical approaches used in studies on remote work and work-life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic

Research question 2 has been broken up into two sections. The first section (Research question 2.1) speaks directly to the research designs that were used in studies conducted during the pandemic that investigated work-life balance while working remotely during the government mandated lockdown orders at the peak of COVID-19. Much like research question 1, the country and sample group have been included to a minimal degree and trends regarding these have been identified. In addition to this, the sampling techniques and nature of data collection of the studies (i.e., cross-sectional or longitudinal) were also expanded upon in order to get a broader idea of how the study was conducted.

The second section (Research question 2.2) focused solely on the theories and theoretical approaches used in the 17 articles included in this scoping review. Trends were identified relating to which theories seemed to be more popular than others, which articles utilised theoretical approaches and which did not, as well as which articles included theories but did not explicitly use them to substantiate or ground their findings.

4.1.2.1 Research Question 2.1: Research methods used in studies on remote work and work-life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic

Table 3: Outline of research designs, sampling techniques and theoretical approaches of the included articles

Author (Year)	Title	Research Design	Participants	Sampling Technique	Theoretical Approaches
Al-Habaibeh et al. (2021)	"Challenges and opportunities of remotely working from home during Covid-19 pandemic"	Mixed Method (Cross-Sectional)	212 (50.5% Male and 49.5% Female) employed individuals (81.6% full-time, 7.1% part-time, 2.8% self-employed and 8.5% studying)	Virtual Snowball Sampling	• Self-determination Theory • Disaster Management Framework • Rogers Innovation Diffusion Theory
Bhumika (2020)	"Challenges for work-life balance during COVID-19 induced nationwide lockdown: exploring gender difference in emotional	Quantitative (Cross-Sectional)	180 (51.7% Male and 48.3% female) full-time employed individuals that lived with more than 3 family members during the COVID-19 Lockdown	Convenience Sampling	• Boundary Theory • Gender Role Theory

	exhaustion in the Indian setting"				
Chu et al. (2022)	"Learning from work-home issues during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Balance speaks louder than words"	Quantitative (Cross-Sectional)	500 (42.4% Male & 57.6% Female) full-time employed individuals (27.5% manager grade or above, 72.4% non-manager grade or below) above 18 years of age	Virtual Snowball Sampling	• Stress Mindset Theory
Sandoval-Reyes et al. (2021)	"Remote Work, Work Stress, and Work-Life during Pandemic Times: A Latin America Situation"	Quantitative (Cross-Sectional)	1285 (54.8% Columbia, 39.7% Ecuador, 5.5% other) individuals who were teleworking during COVID-19 (68.5% married, 49.3% resided with children)	Convenience Sampling	None
Gigauri (2020)	"Remote Working Concerns During the COVID-19 Pandemic"	Quantitative (Cross-Sectional)	150 Human resource Managers from multiple organisations in various industries (46% large companies, 54% small companies)	Virtual Random Sampling	• Boundary Theory
Manzoor and Hamid (2021)	"Work-Life balance during COVID-19 Lockdown: Experiences of Women Academicians of Kashmir"	Qualitative (Cross-Sectional)	25 female academicians that worked in the Department of Higher Education that had a minimum of one child below 15 years of age	Purposive Sampling	None
Takami (2021)	"Working from Home and Work-Life Balance during COVID-19: The Latest Changes and Challenges in Japan"	Quantitative (Cross-Sectional)	4882 (4307 fulltime privately employed individuals and 575 individuals working freelance	Convenience Sampling	None

Lonska et al. (2021)	"Work-Life Balance of the Employed population During the Emergency Situation of COVID-19 in Latvia"	Quantitative (Cross-Sectional)	1006 (20.3% Male and 79.7% Female), 48.3% of whom worked remotely during the first COVID-19 lockdown	Snowball Sampling	None
Singh et al. (2022)	"An Empirical Study on the Impact Of Covid 19 on Work-Life Balance of Teaching Employees in Higher Education Sector"	Quantitative (Cross-Sectional)	136 (47.8% Male and 52.2% Female) with the majority falling in the age range of 25-35 years	Convenience Sampling	None
Tejero et al. (2021)	"Factors associated with work-life balance and productivity before and during work-from home"	Quantitative (Cross-Sectional)	318 employees from various sectors and industries (38.36% Male and 61.64% Female)	Convenience Sampling	None
Babu (2021)	"Pandemic and work-life balance An exploration on how employees of Big4 accounting firms manage their work lives during COVID 19"	Quantitative (Cross-Sectional)	100 (41% Male and 59% Female) with the main age group being between 20 – 25 years (75% Single and 25% Married)	Convenience Sampling	None
Tusl et al. (2021)	"The impact of the COVID 19 crisis on work and private life, mental well-being and self-rated health in German and Swiss employees"	Quantitative (Cross-Sectional)	2118 (55% Male and 45% Female) from Germany (77%) and Switzerland (23%). 28% lived alone and 72& lived with others.	Virtual Convenience Sampling	None

Bukowska et al. (2022)	"The Workplace and Work-life Balance During COVID-19"	Quantitative (Cross-Sectional)	120 (29% Male and 71% Female) with the majority have over 10 years' experience with their current employer and working in an organisation with over 250 employees	Virtual Convenience Sampling	• Work-Family Border Theory
Srimulyani and Hermanto (2022)	"Work life balance before and during work from home in a COVID-19 pandemic situation"	Quantitative (Cross-Sectional)	108 (52 university lecturers and 56 school teachers).	Purposive Sampling, Snowball Sampling	• Work-Family Border Theory
Hjalmsdottir and Bjarnaddottir (2020)	"I have turned into a foreman here at home Families and work life balance	Qualitative (Longitudinal)	47 (7 Males and 40 Females)	Convenience Sampling	• Theories of gendered aspects of emotional labour
Naz et al. (2021)	Managing the porous boundaries Impact of working from home on work life balance of university teachers during COVID 19	Quantitative (Cross-Sectional)	128 (31.3% Male and 68.8% Female) with the majority above the age of 35	Convenience Sampling	• Theory of Role Balance
Uddin (2021)	"Addressing work-life balance challenges of working-women during COVID-19 in Bangladesh"	Qualitative (Cross-Sectional)	22 employed women aged between 27 and 52. The majority had more than 10 year of working experience and 86% had dependents	Snowball Sampling	• Role Congruity theory

More than 50% of the studies included in this review made use of a quantitative research design with only three studies adopting a qualitative design and one using a mixed method design (Table 3). Both the quantitative and qualitative studies were conducted in regions situated in both the global north and the global south while the only mixed method study in this review was conducted in the United Kingdom which is in the global north. The sample groups in the quantitative studies were centred toward the general employed population with only a few articles having very specific sample groups such as teachers and employees working in Big 4 accounting firms. In relation to the qualitative studies, one article had a sample group that was less specific and focused on the general employed population and the other focused specifically on women. The mixed method study also consisted of a sample group of the employed population with no focus on gender, industry or job position which shows that most of the studies in this review focused on the general employed public who worked at home during the pandemic.

Thirteen of the studies used a quantitative design including Bhumika (2020) who conducted a quantitative study that examined emotional exhaustion specifically related to the balance between work and life of individuals in India that worked remotely during the pandemic, while also examining the impacts of participative leadership. Similar quantitative studies include those by Gigauri (2020) who investigated how work-life balance was perceived by different employees during the pandemic in Georgia and a study done by Takami (2021) who examined the work-life balance of employees in Japan during the pandemic. Lonska et al. (2021) also studied the balance between work-life and personal life of the employed population in Latvia during COVID-19 through a quantitative study while Bukowska et al. (2022) conducted a study with similar variables in Poland. Srimulyani and Hermanto (2022) contrastingly, did a comparative study in Indonesia that investigated the work-life balance of employees before the pandemic and compared it to their work-life balance after working from home during the pandemic.

Other quantitative studies such as those by Chu et al. (2022) and Tusl et al. (2021) focused on other variables such as well-being in relation to work-life balance of employees working from home amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Sandoval-Reyes et al. (2021) particularly looked at stress that employees experienced while working from home while Tejero et al. (2021) wrote an article that studied work-life balance particularly in relation to how it relates to the productivity of employees in the Philippines. There were also other quantitative studies done that examined the relationship between work-life balance and remote work that had more specific sample groups such as an article written by Naz et al. (2021) that particularly focused

on university teachers. Other studies in the education sector included that of Singh et al. (2021) who examined the work-life balance of teaching employees in India. Naz et al. (2021) studied how work-life balance was associated with gender inequalities regarding university teachers in Pakistan. Babu (2021) on the other hand, studied work-life balance of Big 4 accounting firm employees which differed from many other studies that had more general sample groups with no targeted focus on specific industries, occupations or job positions.

The articles included in the review contained three qualitative studies. One done by Hjalmsdottir and Bjarnadottir (2020) examined the work-life balance of employees in Iceland and had both male and female participants, but the results of the study were mainly steered towards the female participants. The second qualitative study was conducted by Uddin (2021) that focused particularly on women where the main aim was to understand the challenges faced by Bangladeshi women during COVID-19 as they worked from home. Both articles were somewhat similar to some of the quantitative studies outlined previously but differed mainly in the research design. Manzoor and Hamid (2021) conducted a qualitative study that focused on women academicians in Kashmir much like the quantitative studies by Naz et al. (2021) and Singh et al. (2021). The only mixed method study that was included in this review that fit the inclusion criteria focused on the challenges and opportunities that working from home during the pandemic brought with it in the United Kingdom and was conducted by Al-Habaibeh et al. (2021).

Almost all of the articles included in this review followed cross-sectional designs. A cross-sectional design is a type of research design that investigates a phenomenon at a single point in time and no data is collected at any other time after the original data collection (Wang & Cheng, 2020). In the cross-sectional study done by Al-habaibeh et at. (2021), the sample consisted of 212 employed individuals, 50.5% of whom were male and 49.5% of whom were female and while the sampling technique was not explicitly stated, the sample was likely obtained via virtual convenience sampling. The data was collected at the very beginning of the pandemic through the use of a survey that was completed online (Al-Habaibeh, 2021). Bhumika (2020) also conducted a cross-sectional and administered an online survey to their participants much like Al-habaibeh et al. (2021). The participants in Bhumika's (2020) study included 180 individuals who were employed full time with 51.7% being Male and 48.3% being female. In their cross-sectional study, Chu et al. (2022) obtained their sample using a purposive sampling technique and much like Al-habaibeh et al. (2021) and Bhumika (2020), they used a survey to collect their responses. The sample group in the study by Chu et al. (2022)

consisted of 500 individuals, 42.4% men and 57.6% women, working in different positions in different sectors.

Lonska et al. (2021) also conducted a cross-sectional study and made use of surveys like many of the other articles included in this review. Snowball sampling was used and a total of 1006 participants were included in the study with a distribution of 20.3% Male and 79.7% Female. The sample group in the study included 25 women working in the academic sector who worked from home during the pandemic. Sandoval-Reyes et al. (2021) collected the sample group in their cross-sectional study through convenience sampling and had a final sample group of 1285 employees. Unlike Al-habaibeh et al. (2021), Bhumika (2020) and Chu et al. (2022), the gender ratio was not given. The authors distributed a questionnaire as their method of data collection (Sandoval-Reyes et al, 2021). Muck like Sandoval-Reyes et al. (2021), Gigauri (2020) also made use of a questionnaire in their cross-sectional study to obtain their data. The sampling technique utilised was virtual random sampling through social media and a total of 150 individuals were surveyed but a breakdown of the specifics and demographic data of the participants was not provided (Gigauri, 2020). A questionnaire was also used by Singh et al. (2022) as the method of data collection in their cross-sectional study. The authors had a total of 136 participants, 47.8% Male and 52.2% Female, who mainly fell between the ages of 25-35 years who were obtained using a convenience sampling technique (Singh et al., 2022).

Other authors that conducted a cross-sectional include Tejero et al. (2021). The authors employed a convenience sampling technique much like Singh et al. (2022) and conducted their study using the questionnaire responses of 318 participants consisting of 38.36% male and 61.64% female (Tejero et al., 2021). Babu (2021) also made use of convenience sampling for their cross-sectional study and obtained a total sample of 100 individuals, 41% men and 59% women. A questionnaire was administered to collect primary data from the participants and additional, secondary data was collected from pre-existing sources such as magazines and journals (Babu, 2021). Another study that used a cross-sectional design was one conducted by Naz et al. (2021). A total of 128 survey responses were collected from a sample group that was 31% male and 69% female who were obtained through a convenience sampling technique (Naz et al., 2021). Contrastingly to the cross-sectional studies that used real time survey responses (Bhumika, 2020; Al-Habaibeh et al., 2021; Naz et al., 2021), Takami (2021) used the pre-existing results from a survey that took place the previous year in 2020 when COVID-19 first emerged. A final sample of 4882 individuals was obtained by convenience sampling much like the studies by Gigauri (2020) and Sandoval-Reyes et al. (2021) but the demographic data was not provided. Similarly to Chu et al. (2022), Manzoor and Hamid (2021) used a purposive

sampling technique to procure their sample group for their cross-sectional study. In comparison to a few of the other studies mentioned above, Manzoor and Hamid (2021) used interviews as opposed to surveys of questionnaires as the study was qualitative rather that quantitative.

Tusl et al. (2021) in addition to all of the previously mentioned studies used a cross sectional design and used convenience sampling to obtain their sample group. The final sample consisted of 2118 individual with 55% being men and 45% being women who answered an online survey that was the chosen data collection method for the study (Tusl et al., 2021). Bukowska et al. (2022) are another example of authors who conducted a cross-sectional study and made use of a convenience sampling technique similarly to Tusl et al. (2021). The authors obtained a final sample of 120 participants with the demographics being 29% male and 71% female who answered a 20-question questionnaire. Srimulyani and Hermanto (2022) conducted a cross-sectional study through the use of a questionnaire. The study had 108 overall participants although both purposive sampling and snowball sampling are listed as the sampling technique so it cannot be certain which technique was used or if both were jointly used to obtain the participants (Srimulyani & Hermanto, 2022). The last cross-sectional study within the articles in this review is one conducted by Uddin (2021) who used convenience sampling to procure a sample group of 22 women from which the data was collected from via an online questionnaire. In contrast to the other 16 articles included in this study that used a cross-sectional design, the study by Hjalmsdottir and Bjarnaddottir (2020) used a longitudinal design. The study made use of convenient sampling to obtain their sample group and utilised participant diaries over 2 weeks as the chosen data collection method.

4.1.2.2 Research Question 2.2: Theoretical approaches used in studies on remote work and work-life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic

As seen in Table 3, 47% of the articles included in this review did not use a theoretical approach and if an approach was used, it was not made explicit. The commonly mentioned theories included boundary theory, role theory and work-family border theory while the less common theories were self-determination theory, disaster management framework, Roger's innovation diffusion theory, stress mindset theory and theories of gendered aspects of emotional labour. This section is structured in such a way that each paragraph will expand on one theory and the articles in which that particular theory is included.

Boundary theory appeared in two articles including Bhumika (2020) and Gigauri (2020). Bhumika (2020) made mention of the boundary theory within the theoretical background of their research and used the theory to highlight the notion that even though working remotely

had advantages, it presented some challenges as well. It was mentioned in relation to the theory that because work was had to be executed in the home environment due to lockdown orders and company policies, it became difficult for employees to prevent the two domains from interfering with each other. Bhumika (2020) integrated this theory into addressing one of their hypotheses and was able to conclude that participative leadership, which was one of the variables they studied, aided in reducing an employees work life interfering with their home life. Gigauri (2020) spoke of remote work being one of the key reasons as to why employees roles are being blurred but did not specifically reference boundary theory. The study used blurred roles to introduce one of their practical implications of the need for attention to be paid to well-being but it is possible that substantiating their reasoning more deeply within the theory would have strengthened their claims (Gigauri, 2020).

Gender role theory is another theory that was covered in the study by Bhumika (2020). This theory was used to further examine how work interference with personal life, personal life interference with work and emotional exhaustion related to each other. The author hypothesized that gender would moderate both the relationships between personal life and work interference with exhaustion but the hypothesis could not be substantiated (Bhumika, 2020). Due to this, the way in which remote work during the pandemic brought about changes to gender roles in comparison to the gender roles suggested by the gender role theory could not be examined further. Naz et al. (2021) also made use of a theory involving social roles called the theory of role balance. The definition of work-life balance in this study included creating an equilibrium between an individuals' unique social domains in both their work and home domains and that a lack of balance between roles brings about role conflict. The use of this theory in the article helped to draw the conclusion that high participation in work related roles is likely to positively affect an employees' social life but there was no mention of the effect on work life that high engagement in personal roles has (Naz et al., 2021). Uddin (2021) made the same mention of the role conflicts that can come about due to an imbalance between work roles and personal roles as Naz et al. (2021) although the study was solely focused on female participants. The use of the role congruity theory of prejudice towards female leaders aided in supporting the achievement of the aim of exploring the challenges of women in Bangladesh that were faced as they worked from home during the pandemic (Uddin, 2021).

The work family border theory was included in a few of the included studies. Bukowska et al. (2021) referenced the work family border theory in their reference list but made no explicit mention of the theory in the body of their article. Though not explicitly mentioned, a research aim that the inclusion of this theory may have attempted to achieve is to understand whether it

was possible for employees working from home during the pandemic to establish a work-life balance was but this was not made clear. The study was able to establish that more than half (68%) of the participants mentioned were able to establish a work-life balance while working remotely but this once again was not explicitly linked to the theory (Bukowska et al., 2021). Other authors that included the work-family border theory were Srimulyani and Hermanto (2022) where the theory was referenced but not explicitly mentioned or clearly linked to any aim or research question much like the study by Bukowska et al. (2021).

Stress mindset theory was used by Takami (2021) to more closely examine how psychological well-being related back to company support, supervisor trust and work-life balance as stress relievers. The theory was able to help the author conclude that because stress can either positively or negatively affect an employees' productivity, it is important for individuals to learn to cope with stress although it is easier for some than for others. The hypothesis related to this was that high stress levels would have a negative relationship to an employees work productivity but this was unable to be substantiated (Takami, 2021). Though not directly related to stress and stress theories, Hjalmsdottir and Bjarnaddottir (2020), applied theories of gendered aspects of emotional labour in order to understand the gendered manner of work-life balance, stress and mental work for women who worked at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. This theory was used in the study to understand how women also performed duties related to emotional labour in addition to other duties in order to keep peace and harmony within the family (Hjalmsdottir & Bjarnaddottir, 2020).

In their study, Al-Habaibeh et al. (2021) made use of the self-determination theory to understand how employees were able to adapt to the shift from working in office to working remotely from home. In the study, employee adjustment was pegged to be as a result of the intrinsic motivational factors such as self-satisfaction and extrinsic motivational factors such as remote work providing the opportunity for employees to continue receiving a salary. This was also considered to be a theoretical implication that this study contributes to existing literature (Al-Habaibeh et al., 2021). Additionally, the authors were able to expand on the disaster management framework as a theoretical approach and deduced that having strict performance measures and more stringently managing performance is a strategy that could provide for increased adaptation and innovation in times of crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Al-Habaibeh et al., 2021)

4.1.3 Research Question 3: Variables and findings in studies on remote work and work-life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic

This research question identified and expanded on the variables that were used in the studies on remote work and work life balance during the pandemic as well as the main findings of each article in relation to the variables identified. The trends in the variables studied were outlined in respect to which variables were studied more commonly than others within the articles included in this review. Some of the participant demographics such as gender have been detailed to provide more clarity on the context of the study and to allow for the consideration of generalisability.

Table 4: Outline of the participants, variables studied and main findings of the included articles

Author (Year)	Title	Participants	Variables Studied	Findings
Al-Habaibeh et al. (2021)	"Challenges and opportunities of remotely working from home during Covid-19 pandemic"	212 (50.5% Male and 49.5% Female) employed individuals (81.6% full-time, 7.1% part-time, 2.8% self-employed and 8.5% studying)	• Challenges faced by employees while working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic • Age • Resources	Individuals were able to adapt to remote work but at different paces and the main challenges included lack of face-to-face communication and an increase in workload.
Bhumika (2020)	"Challenges for work-life balance during COVID-19 induced nationwide lockdown: exploring gender difference in emotional exhaustion in the Indian setting"	180 (51.7% Male and 48.3% female) full-time employed individuals that lived with more than 3 family members during the COVID-19 Lockdown	• Well-being • Organisational Leadership	Emotional exhaustion was felt to a higher degree by women compared to men but the relationship between work-life balance and emotional exhaustion did not differ by gender. I was also found that participative leadership helped to improve work-life balance and in turn reduced employee emotional exhaustion
Chu et al. (2022)	"Learning from work-home issues during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Balance speaks louder than words"	500 (42.4% Male & 57.6% Female) full-time employed individuals (27.5% manager grade or above, 72.4% non-manager grade or below) above 18 years of age	• Well-being • Stress • Company Support • Productivity • Non-work Activities • Happiness • Supervisor Trust	High stress levels negatively affected work-life balance. Participating in non-work activities during working hours relieved stress. Having a good work-life balance was the only thing that have a great effect on promoting positive psychological well-being. Working

				from home did not directly translate to a healthy work-life balance.
Sandoval-Reyes et al. (2021)	"Remote Work, Work Stress, and Work-Life during Pandemic Times: A Latin America Situation"	1285 (54.8% Columbia, 39.7% Ecuador, 5.5% other) individuals who were teleworking during COVID-19 (68.5% married, 49.3% resided with children)	• Stress • Work Satisfaction • Productivity	Perceived stress was increased due to remote work and work-life balanced was reduced while productivity increased. Gender acted as a moderator in the relationship between perceived stress and productivity.
Gigauri (2020)	"Remote Working Concerns During the COVID-19 Pandemic"	150 Human resource Managers from multiple organisations in various industries (46% large companies, 54% small companies)	• Well-being	The digital management of employees during remote work due to COVID-19 caused disruption in work-life balance
Manzoor and Hamid (2021)	"Work-Life balance during COVID-19 Lockdown: Experiences of Women Academicians of Kashmir"	25 female academicians that worked in the Department of Higher Education that had a minimum of one child below 15 years of age	• Work related issues • Family Issues • Personal Issues	It was found that the academicians had difficulty switching to online platforms. They were faced with erratic work schedules that included long working hours. There was the presence of role conflict and social relationship were hard to maintain. These issue all played a role in negatively affecting the participants work life balance.
Takami (2021)	"Working from Home and Work-Life Balance during COVID-19: The Latest Changes and Challenges in Japan"	4882 (4307 fulltime privately employed individuals and 575 individuals working freelance	• Working hours • Life Satisfaction • Income	Individual who worked from home during the pandemic experienced increases household chores and childcare. Increased hours spent on childcare and household chores were not moderated by gender. It was suggested that working from home improved life satisfaction
Lonska et al. (2021)	"Work-Life Balance of the Employed population During the	1006 (20.3% Male and 79.7% Female), 48.3% of whom worked remotely	• Age • Children	Perceptions of work-life balance did not differ greatly according to age or gender. The effect that working from

	Emergency Situation of COVID-19 in Lativa"	during the first COVID-19 lockdown		home had on men and women differed from country to country
Singh et al. (2022)	"An Empirical Study on the Impact Of Covid 19 on Work-Life Balance of Teaching Employees in Higher Education Sector"	136 (47.8% Male and 52.2% Female) with the majority falling in the age range of 25-35 years	• Stress	Remote working was deemed to negatively affect work-life balance as well as employee mental health. The study also found that more effective remote work policies are necessary to nurture work-life balance
Tejero et al. (2021)	"Factors associated with work-life balance and productivity before and during work-from home"	318 employees from various sectors and industries (38.36% Male and 61.64% Female)	• Well-being • Stress • Social Support • Productivity • Job Autonomy	Working from home has worsened employee sleep quality and has exacerbated tension. Employees were observed to have lowered productivity and an imbalance between work life and home life. As compared to before the pandemic, productivity and work-life balance was seen to worsen as a result of working from home.
Babu (2021)	"Pandemic and work-life balance An exploration on how employees of Big4 accounting firms manage their work lives during COVID 19"	100 (41% Male and 59% Female) with the main age group being between 20 – 25 years (75% Single and 25% Married)	• Well-being • Stress • Flexible working hours • Work Satisfaction • Family and Peer Support • Work Experience	The factors affecting employee work-life balance while working from home during COVID-19 include extended working times such as long shifts and working during weekends. Gender was significantly linked to feelings of stress and work experience was positively linked to employee satisfaction
Tusl et al. (2021)	"The impact of the COVID 19 crisis on work and private life, mental well-being and self-rated health in German and Swiss employees"	2118 (55% Male and 45% Female) from Germany (77%) and Switzerland (23%). 28% lived alone and 72& lived with others.	• Well-being • Age • Living Situation	Some employees felt that their work-life balance had worsened while other felt that it had improved due to factors such as a change in employment contract and changes in personal time. Individuals who lived alone during the pandemic reported a higher decrease in work-life balance

Bukowska et al. (2022)	"The Workplace and Work-life Balance During COVID-19"	120 (29% Male and 71% Female) with the majority have over 10 years' experience with their current employer and working in an organisation with over 250 employees	• Flexible working hours	The COVID-19 pandemic made it more difficult for employees working from home to achieve a healthy work-life balance. Many of the respondent indicated that the flexibility of working hours aided in them achieving a work-life balance. Over 40% of individuals did not use added measure to help improve their work-life balance
Srimulyani and Hermanto (2022)	"Work life balance before and during work from home in a COVID-19 pandemic situation"	108 (52 university lecturers and 56 school teachers).	• Working hours • Depression	The results presented that there was an increase in the work-life balance of the teachers and lecturers when they began working from home compared to before the pandemic but the difference was noted not to be significant
Hjalmsdottir and Bjarnaddottir (2020)	"I have turned into a foreman here at home Families and work life balance I have turned into a foreman here at home Families and work life balance"	47 (7 Males and 40 Females)	• Well-being • Stress	The women in the study mention struggling to juggle their roles in terms of work and home life especially childcare. There was guilt felt by women for having trouble splitting their time and trying to achieve a healthy work-life balance. The study suggests that household labour during the pandemic was unevenly distributed
Naz et al. (2021)	"Managing the porous boundaries Impact of working from home on work life balance of university teachers during COVID 19"	128 (31.3% Male and 68.8% Female) with the majority above the age of 35	• Well-being • Life Satisfaction • Challenges faced by employees while working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic	The work-life balance of female teacher was seen to decline during COVID-19 as more work-home conflict arose. The findings suggest that males were more comfortable with the shift to remote work than females and males found it easier to maintain a healthy work-life balance
Uddin (2021)	"Addressing work-life balance challenges of working-women	22 employed women aged between 27 and 52. The majority had more than 10	• Challenges faced by employees while working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic	During the pandemic, the perpetuation of gender roles and stereotypes heaving impacted the women's work-life

	during COVID-19 in Bangladesh”	year of working experience and 86% had dependents		balance. Spousal and organisational support were identified to be aspects that positively contributed to work-life balance which in turn led to better well-being and quality of life

Most of the studies that were included in this review used correlation which does not evaluate causality. Directionality and causality were not always explicitly stated but this review attempted to identify whether work-life balance was treated as an input or an output variable and deduce causality and directionality where possible. This was based on how the variables were positioned in the introduction, literature review, findings and discussion sections of the included studies. Well-being and stress were found to be the variables that were most examined with particular interest with their relation to the work-life balance of employees working from home during the pandemic appearing in seven and six articles respectively. Satisfaction and time on the other hand were found in slightly less articles, appearing four times each. The less commonly studied variables included support, challenges, age, depression, trust, happiness, work experience, non- work activities, children, income, organisation size, leadership, resources, living situation, fatigue and job autonomy. Very few of the articles investigated variables acting as moderators and mediators in the relationship between remote work and work-life balance with four articles investigating moderators and three articles investigating mediators. The most common variable used as a control variable was gender although age and children in the household were also included in one study in addition to gender.

Well-being was found to be one of the most commonly studied variables in relation to work-life balance appearing in seven out of the seventeen articles included in this review. Hjalmsdottir and Bjarnadottir (2020) found that women in Iceland were burdened with added mental work while working from home during the pandemic such as acting as the sole caregivers for their families which in turn negatively affected their well-being. Well-being in this study referred mainly to emotional labour and mental work and did not specifically refer to anything physical (Hjalmsdottir & Bjarnadottir, 2020). In addition to lowered well-being, the participants in the study also struggled to maintain a healthy work-life balance and felt guilt in having to rotate between their many roles which lead them to spread themselves thinly in their day to day lives. A similar finding was made by Bhumika (2020) where women in India were seen to suffer from more emotional exhaustion than men but surprisingly, there were no significant gendered differences found between emotional exhaustion and work-life balance. In this study, gender played the role of aa moderator in the relationship between emotional exhaustion and the interference of private life with work. (Bhumika, 2020). Emotional exhaustion was also observed to be linked to increases in demands and conflict which was examined by Naz et al. (2021) and the results yielded that for women in particular, working from home during the pandemic brought more work-home demands and work-life conflicts which in turn negatively impacted their work-life balance. Contrastingly, Tusl et al. (2021)

found that in Germany, mental well-being was observed to improve with the move to remote work which in turn led to a healthy work-life balance. This study however focused on both female and male participants and highlighted that there were different perceptions of work-life balance as some employees reported improvements while others felt that they were experiencing deteriorations in work-life balance since working from home (Tusl et al., 2021).

In a quantitative study comparable to the one done by Tusl et al. (2021), Chu et al. (2022) discovered that during the pandemic in Hong Kong, positive psychological well-being stemmed from having an adequate equilibrium between one's work domain and personal domain and that work-life balance was particularly negatively affected by high stress levels. The variables studied alongside to stress in this study were mainly focused on organisational variables such as company support, supervisor support and productivity that the employees experienced while working at home during the pandemic but company support and supervisor support as well as work-life balance were also studied as stress relievers (Chu et al. 2022). The results suggested that it was only work-life balance as a stress reliver out of the four total variables that had impacted psychological well-being in a positive manner as it contributed to employee happiness. The effect of company support and supervisor support was not expanded upon to a great extent. Also somewhat in relation to psychological well-being, Tejero et al. (2021) had a focus on psychological detachment which they found to increase for individuals working from home in the Philippines during the pandemic which in turn affected their ability to maintain a work-life balance. Psychological detachment in this study involved the employees' ability to mentally separate themselves from their work as it was found that worries from work negatively affected their personal life and disrupted the boundary between work and home (Tejero et al., 2021).

Another aspect that relates to well-being is mental workplace tension which was examined by Babu (2021) and the findings suggested that workplace stress was found to trigger many health issues such as emotional instability and palpitations and was also seen to contribute to job insecurity which in turn lowered employees work-life balance. Workplace tension in this article was specifically anchored to concepts such as workplace stress and the work atmosphere that mentally affected an employees which then affected their work-life balance. These findings were similar to those found by Tejero et al. (2021) in relation to psychological detachment causing sleep disruptions. Babu (2021) specified that the stress felt by employees that brought about the decreased well-being was specifically linked to the shift from working in office to working at home. Gigauri (2020) had a different perspective at examining well-being than the other prior mentioned authors as the main focus was on the efforts of human resource managers

in maintaining employee well-being. The findings suggested that initiatives taken by human resource managers made a positive difference in supporting employee well-being (Gigauri, 2020).

Stress was a variable that was studied in six of the articles. The results relating to stress may be similar to those of well-being spoken about previously as stress and well-being are negatively related according to Zarbova and Karabeliova (2018). In a study that was centres on remotely working from home during the pandemic in Hong Kong, Chu et al. (2022) found a that the relationship between stress levels and an employees work-life balance was negative. Sandoval-Reyes et al. (2021) made similar findings where it was suggested that employees working from home in Latin America experienced increased work stress in addition to an imbalance between their work and home lives. Work stress was found to be a mediator in the relationships between remote working demands and work-life balance, work productivity, work satisfaction and job engagement (Sandoval-Reyes et al., 2021). While Singh et al. (2022) were able to show that within their sample group in India, working from home increased employee stress levels, they were unable to reflect to an accurate degree the relationship between stress and work-life balance and how they influence each other. This differs from the prior mentioned studies by Sandoval-Reyes et al. (2021) and Chu et al. (2022) which both came to the conclusion that increased stress negatively affects an employee's ability to establish a balance between their work and home lives.

On the other hand, Tejero et al. (2021) was able to deduce that employees in the Philippines experienced a low work-life balance when they worked from home during the pandemic and also experienced increased stress which they found to be exacerbated when employees were unable to psychologically detach themselves from their work. In a more gender specific study, Hjalmsdottir and Bjarnadottir (2020) uncovered that women in Iceland felt increased influxes of stress as they worked remotely during the pandemic while still having to maintain their home responsibilities including tending to their husbands and children. The study also highlighted how the women in the study attempted to keep their high stress levels a secret from their families by not confiding in anyone in order to maintain calmness in the household which in turn caused more emotional exhaustion and anxiety. Babu (2021) also found that there was a significant relationship between stress and gender and that increased stress led to increases in sleep disturbances, emotional instability and tiredness which in turn contributed to a work-life imbalance. In the study, women were found to experience higher stress levels than men. These findings are very similar to the findings on gender inequalities highlighted by Hjalmsdottir and Bjarnadottir (2020).

There were four studies that fell in line with the inclusion criteria stipulated in this review that investigated time as a variable in relation to work-life balance. Srimulyani and Hermanto (2022) was able to deduce that there was significant improvement in the work life balance of educators with one of the contributors being more flexible work time although there was an increase in the number of hours spent working as compared to pre-pandemic times. A contrasting finding was made by Bukowska et al. (2022) that suggested that although employees had a more flexible work schedule as well as working time that was task based, there was an immense struggle to maintain a balance between their work life and personal life. Babu (2021) found a few variables in relation to time that were seen to influence employee work life balance during remote work such as mandatory overtime, long working hours as well as working during weekends and holidays. All of the prior mentioned time variables of flexible work time and scheduling in the studies by Srimulyani and Hermanto (2022), Bukowska et al. (2022) and Babu (2021) were observed to have a negative effect on work-life balance. In another study, Takami (2021) found that during the remote working period induced by COVID-19, working hours decreased, housework/childcare hours increased and leisure hours were seen to fluctuate from person to person. In the study, changes in working hours was the only variable that was found to be significantly related back to work-life balance and it was deduced that increases in working hours and overtime contributed to a degradation in an employee's ability to establish a work-life balance but the relationship with other variables was unclear. Though it was not made explicitly evident, the study suggests that the experiences of long working hours between males and females were different was made which suggests that gender could have been utilized as a control variable or a mediator in the study but this is uncertain as no definitive conclusion was made (Takami, 2021).

Four included articles were observed to have a focus on satisfaction. Though there was no direct and explicit exploration of the relationship between work-life balance and satisfaction in the study by Sandoval-Reyes et al. (2021), both variables were found to be negatively affected by working remotely. The lowered levels of satisfaction and work-life balance due to remote work was seen to be mediated by stress. Job satisfaction in addition to work engagement were also investigated by Sandoval-Reyes et al. (2021) which were was found to increase when the pandemic emerged and employees began working remotely although no direct links were made between work engagement and work life balance. Babu (2021) also found that remote work lowered employee satisfaction with the difference in the study compared to the one by Sandoval-Reyes at al. (2021) being that it was work experience and daily working hours that were found to be causes. This lowered satisfaction contributed to a work-life imbalance of the

sample group in the study. Additionally, daily working hours was also found to be a variable that affected life satisfaction of employees working from home during the pandemic in a study conducted by Takami (2021) where increases in working hours were found to lower life satisfaction. However, in general, this study suggested that the participants overall experienced higher life satisfaction while working from home which then led to improvements in their work-life balance which contrasts from the results in the prior mentioned studies. Naz et al. (2021) studied female participants in particular and found that working from home brought about less satisfaction due to increased home demands and it was highlighted that work-life balance has a positive relationship with satisfaction.

The variable of support appeared in three out of the seventeen studies included in this review. The support types that were identified in the examined studies included supervisor support, family and peer support, social support as well as organisational/company support. Of the participants in the study by Babu (2021), family and peer support were only seen to be a determining factor of work-life balance by 5% of the participants which leads to the assumption that there is no significant relationship between peer and family support and work-life balance or between support and work-life balance. Somewhat similarly, Chu et al. (2022) hypothesized that employee happiness would increase with increased company support, but employee stress would increase with increased company support. Unfortunately, the study did not yield results that substantiated these hypotheses and work-life balance was not linked to support. Company support in the context within this article referred to employees having interpersonal communication and interaction with colleagues as well as having access to technical support for a smooth transition to working from home during the pandemic. In relation to this, Tejero et al. (2021) found that working from home during the pandemic brought about lessened social support which in turn increased employee stress levels and caused imbalances between work and home life.

Much like support, productivity was also found to be a variable of interest in three of the articles conducted during the pandemic that studied employees working from home and their establishment of a work-life balance. In Tejero et al.'s (2021) study, it was found that there were instances of decreased productivity experienced by employees working from home as compared to before the pandemic but this finding was not linked to work-life balance. In contrast, Sandoval-Reyes et al. (2021) found that working from home led to increased employee productivity but in turn lowered work-life balance. Still in relation to productivity, Tejero et al. (2021) found that sleep quality can be classified as a mediator in the relationship between psychological detachment and productivity though as mentioned before, the link to

work-life balance is unclear although work-life balance was seen to be negatively affected by stress which was exacerbated by psychological detachment. An interesting finding made by Sandoval-Reyes et al. (2021) when gender was used as a control variable was that woman's productivity is negatively affected by stress to a greater extent than men and this was the only difference in terms of gender. Chu et al (2022) were able to find that a healthy work-life balance positively contributed to an employees work productivity but no causal nature was deduced.

There were three articles that examined the challenges faced by employees as they worked from their homes during the pandemic. According to Uddin (2021), some of the challenges that negatively impacted the work-life balance of females in particular included increases in work pressures, gender stereotypes, spousal non-compliance and family traditions. Another study that highlighted the main challenges during the pandemic that were faced by employees working remotely was that of Al-Habaibeh et al. (2021) that spoke of reduced face to face communication, redundancy and additional workloads as being the most detrimental for employees. Unlike Uddin (2021), these challenges outline by Al-Habaibeh et al. (2021) were not directly examined in relation to work-life balance of the employees. Naz et al. (2021), in contrast, suggested that work-life balance had a negative relationship with increased challenges brought about by remote work during the pandemic and it was highlighted in the study that female participants experienced more challenges than male participants. Manzoor and Hamid (2021) examined the challenges faced by academicians and had a solely female sample group. This study was focused on work related, family related and personal related issues that were faced by academicians that taught their classes from their homes during the pandemic (Mazoor & Hamid 2021). The challenges faced were found to negatively impact the employees ability to establish a work-life balance.

Age was another variable that appeared in three included articles. Al-Habaibeh et al. (2021) outlined findings in their study that suggest that older individuals were able to more easily adapt to remote work during the pandemic which in turn made it easy to balance their work and home lives. The results of the study by Tusl et al. (2021) are contrasting in that they report that older employees were found to have lower odds of being able to balance their work lives and their personal lives due to the perceived lack of adaptability to the drastic changes of working from home that COVID-19 brought about. A study by Lonska et al. (2021) revealed that of their sample group, younger individuals were reported to experience more of a work-life imbalance than older individuals due to their personal life interfering with their job responsibilities.

A few of the less common variables that appeared in one article each include depression, trust, happiness, work experience, and non- work activities. In regard to depression, Srimulyani and Hermanto (2022) found that though the participants had the personal perception that they had more of a balance between their work and home domains, increased working demands brought about more pressure and depression. Babu (2021) found that work experience was a significant indicator for employee satisfaction while working from home during the pandemic which contributed to a low work-life balance. It was unable to be revealed whether more or less work experience contributed to increased satisfaction. Chu et al. (2021) revealed that individuals partook in more non-work activities during the times that they should have been working the more stressed they felt but this in turn surprisingly did not affect their productivity. Although stress was negatively linked to work-life balance in this study, no direct relationship or linkage between work-life balance and non-work activities was made. Happiness was also examined by Chu et al. (2021) where it was discovered that the relationship between employee happiness and work-life balance was found to be positive. Chu et al. (2021) in addition, attempted to investigate supervisor trust in relation to stress levels and in turn work-home balance but the results did not support the hypothesis that there is a relationship between supervisor trust, employee stress levels and employee happiness.

Other less common variables included children, income, organisation size, leadership, resources, living situation, fatigue, job autonomy and organisational leadership that only appeared in one article each. In regard to living situations of employees, Tusl et al. (2021) found that a decreased work life balance was associated mostly with individuals who lived alone during the time they worked remotely compared to those who lived with others such as family or their partner. Also in relation to employees living situation, Lonska et al. (2021) found that individuals who resided with individuals who were below 18 years of age during the time of the study felt less able to successfully balance their work and home lives. Imbalances between the two domains of home and work was also experienced by individuals who experienced changes in income, be it an increase or decrease, as compared to before the pandemic as observed by Takami (2021) as a direct result of lower life satisfaction that was associated with their change in income. In relation to resources, Al-Habaibeh et al. (2021) found that internet connection, software features and device capabilities such as ability to use the required applications did not significantly predict remote working adaptability. No relationship between resources and work-life balance was investigated. Tejero et al. (2021) found that job autonomy had no significant difference for employees before and after their experiences of working remotely during the pandemic but it was found that job autonomy was

positively related to productivity. However, no linkage to work-life balance was made to job autonomy or productivity as mentioned previously. Bhumika (2021), took organisational leadership into consideration when looking at the work-life balance of employees and the study produced the result that there was a negative relationship between work interference with personal life and participative leadership and that increasing participative leadership can help in reducing employee emotional exhaustion.

The key trends to note for the studies that investigated remote work and work life balance during the pandemic that were included in this review are that there was more or less an equal split in terms of studies that took place in the global north and the global south. All of the studies investigated what they aimed to with some articles having a focus mainly on work-life balance and others including additional variables which in one way or another related back to work-life. The variables in the articles investigated in this review had an interesting division where countries in the global north focused more-so on variables that were more individualistic and countries in the global south had more of a focus on variables relating to organisational constructs such as productivity. The majority of the articles concluded that overall, work-life balance had diminished to an extent for employees working from home during the pandemic with only a few factors such as flexible working hours and more time spent with family being observed to have been positive impacts. There was a tendency of some studies not to include theories and theoretical frameworks to substantiate their findings and for some variables to be more of interest than others which left some gaps in the information gathered about what factors had an influence on the ability of employees to create boundaries, switch between their roles and create an equilibrium between their work and their home lives.

4.2 Summary of the results

Overall, all of the articles included in this review had a focus on investigating whether or not employees were able to maintain a balance between their work and home lives as they worked from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. Though the main focus of the studies in this review was on work-life balance, the additional variables studied may have differed slightly with some articles looking at factors such as working hours and flexible working time in relation to work-life balance and others considering the impact of well-being and mental health on the balance between work and personal life. The trend regarding the kinds of variables included in the studies were that developing countries mainly considered organisational variables such as productivity and job satisfaction and the developed countries focused more on well-being and related individual variables. There were a number of studies that had similar aims but included slightly different variables which allowed for different perspectives to be

gained. Similarly, studies in the same geographical area mainly had similar sample groups or similar aims such as educators and female participants being popular sample group in developing countries.

Regarding the research design, the quantitative design seemed to be the design of choice in many of the studies with just over 76% of the studies in this review adopting it. The sample groups in the quantitative studies and the mixed method study were diverse in that some had a mixture of both male and female participants and others focused solely on female participants. Contrastingly, 67% of the qualitative studies solely focused on female participants with 100% focus on educators. There was an array of sampling techniques used including snowball sampling, purposive sampling and convenience sampling. There seemed to be minimal link between research design and sampling technique as all of the qualitative studies used different methods of sampling. However, 64% of the quantitative studies utilised convenience sampling likely due to the large sample sizes as compared to the qualitative studies. Though the use of a theoretical approach/framework is beneficial in research, just over 47% of the seventeen articles included in this study did not make use of one. Some of the articles included commonly known theories such as Boundary Theory and Work-Family border theory while others made use of less commonly used theories such as the self-determination theory and the Theory of Gendered Aspects of Emotional Labour. Most of the studies incorporated the theories in relevant manners while a few of the studies made mention of the theories but made no explicit linkages between the theories and the results of the study.

In addition to work-life balance, around twenty to twenty-five variables were studied across the seventeen articles included in this review. The studies that focused on well-being and stress in relation to work-life balance all yielded similar results in their conclusion that work-life balance was negatively affected by stress and lowered wellbeing brought on by the requirement to work remotely from home during the pandemic. The studies that investigated the effects of increased working hours on work-life balance had contrasting findings with some studies concluding an improved work-life balance and one or two finding a degraded work-life balance. The studies that found an improved work-life balance included other variables such as flexible working hours. Regarding both life satisfaction and job satisfaction, working from home was overall seen to negatively affect the balance that employees were able to maintain between work and home life.

The consensus from the articles in this review that investigated support was that while working from home, both the social support and company support minimised which then negatively affected other variables such as well-being which in turn lowered work-life balance.

Productivity on the other hand was seen to vary with some studies reporting that it increased due to having extra time work and flexible working hours and others reporting decreased productivity due to individuals' having conflicting roles and responsibilities. Working from home during the pandemic was seen to increase depression for employees which lowered work-life balance. Other variables that were reported to have negatively affected work-life balance foe employees working remotely during COVID-19 were age and living situation where older individuals and individuals living at alone were unsuccessful in balancing their work and home lives. There were other variables that were less commonly studied in relation to work-life balance such as autonomy which positively affected work life balance as well as others such as organisation size and work experience which yielded inconclusive results in relation to work-life balance.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Discussion

The aim of this scoping review was to further unpack the extent to which employees working remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic had the ability and support to establish a work life balance. The results in the review aided in understanding what kind of studies were conducted on work life balance and remote work during the pandemic, what the aims of the studies were as well as what variables were studied. This topic in particular was important to further examine since the concept of working from home was not common but had become popular due to the emergence of COVID-19 and the mandatory stay-at home orders that were enforced as a result (Bick et al., 2020). It was estimated by the International Labour Organization (2020) that before the pandemic, 7.9% of employees were exposed to working from home and during the pandemic this number rose to an average of 96%. The fact that remote work has been a relatively new concept that quickly became popular in the last two years due to the pandemics brings light to the fact that there is more research required to fully understand it especially since hybrid working situations are likely to become normalised (Sokolic, 2022).

5.1.1 Research Question 1:

The first research question posed in this scoping review focused on what research was conducted in relation to the aims of the studies that were done on remote work and work-life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic. This question focused not only on the main aims but also the geographical areas of the studies as well as what kind of sample groups were investigated. Of all the included articles in the study, all of them had a focus on work-life balance with a few specifically studying work life balance in relation to remote work (Uddin, 2021; Manzoor and Hamid, 2021) and others including variables in addition to work life balance. This is a trend that can also be observed in studies that were conducted pre-pandemic with authors such as Crosbie and Moore (2004) and Maruyama et al. (2009) focusing on examining how individuals are able balance their work and home lives while working from home.

As mentioned, other authors incorporated other variables into their studies on remote work and work-life balance with some of them being moderators, mediators, control variables, antecedents of work-life balance and others being correlates and contextual variables (Field, 2018; Ruan, 2020; Dizaho & Othman, 2015). Authors such as Bhumika (2021) had the aim of investigating employee psychological well-being and others such as Tejero et al. (2021) and

Lonska et al. (2021) investigated organisational variables in regard to factors that affect an employees work-life balance while working from home in regard to concepts such as productivity and working hours. Interestingly enough, the identified literature that was compiled before the emergence of COVID-19 had a large aim of investigating mainly organisational variables such as working hours and how this affected employee work-life balance (Felstead & Helsenke, 2017; Grant et al., 2013). Though there are a few articles within the ones included in this review that pay attention to organisational variables, there is more of a spread of other variables such as well-being, stress, satisfaction, gender, etc., as compared to pre-pandemic studies.

In elaborating more on the diversity of the literature, there are also some trends in regard to the geographical locations of studies that have been conducted on the topic of establishing a work-life balance while working from home. Most of the pre pandemic literature on the topic that was found was conducted in countries in the global north with the United Kingdom being a large area of interest (Felstead & Helsenke, 2017; Maruyama et al., 2009). Contrastingly, studies that were conducted during the pandemic had a wider range of geographical areas such as Srimulyani and Hemanto (2021) who conducted their study in Indonesia and many other authors who conducted their research in areas in the global South such as Asia (Uddin, 2021; Naz et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2021). It is likely that this is because many developing countries situated in the global south did not have the technological advancements to enable employees to work from home unlike more developed countries and hence there may have been no reason to conduct a study in those regions (Gottlieb et al., 2021). The pandemic brought about stay at home orders and if organisations did not accommodate their employees technologically, business would have halted and not only the organisation but the economy of that country would have slowly collapsed. This then opened a research gap whereby researchers were eager to understand how employees from countries where such a topic was not highly covered managed to create a work-life balance while working from home possibly for the first time and possibly with unfamiliar technology during a global crisis (Gottlieb et al., 2021).

5.1.2 Research Question 2:

The second research question was centred around theoretical approaches and research designs within studies that were done on remote work and work-life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic. The incorporation of a relevant theoretical framework is important for authors to develop their own arguments within their findings using pre-existing theories that act as a foundation (Kivunja, 2018). A theoretical framework serves the important role of judging

findings against a pre-existing body of well-grounded theory and mitigating the risk of not using or misusing a theoretical framework which can greatly affect the meaning, rationale and quality of a study (Nhan, 2020).

Of the seventeen articles that were included in this review, only nine (47%) utilised theories to contribute to their articles. The other eight articles mentioned theories including boundary theory, role theory and work-family border theory while the less common theories were self-determination theory, disaster management framework, Roger's innovation diffusion theory, stress mindset theory and theories of gendered aspects of emotional labour (Bhumika, 2020; Gigauri, 2020; Naz et al., 2021; Uddin, 2021; Bukowska et al., 2021; Srimulyani and Hermanto, 2022; Takami, 2021; Hjalmsdottir and Bjarnaddottir, 2020; Al-Habaibeh et al., 2021). In examining some pre-pandemic literature on the topic of remote work and work-life balance, a similar pattern can be observed where some studies incorporate theories while others do not. Felstead and Helsenke (2017) incorporated the social exchange theory and Border theory into their work. Crosbie and Moore (2007) referenced an article about the work/family border theory but the theory was not explicitly mentioned anywhere in the study itself which can also be seen in the work by Grant et al. (2013) where the boundary theory is mentioned but not applied to the study. Hill et al. (1998) and Maruyama et al. (2009) were pre-pandemic articles that did not make use of any theoretical framework. Something interesting to note was that studies conducted during the pandemic had a larger variety of theories that were not present in pre-pandemic literature while the pre-pandemic literature only had one or two theories that the studies conducted during the pandemic did not utilise.

Some authors who studied the ability of employees to develop and sustain a work-life balance while working remotely from home during the pandemic used the theories and theoretical frameworks to substantiate their findings. Such authors include Bhumika (2020) who used the boundary theory to further signify how remote work blurs the boundary between work and home and Uddin (2021) who used the Role Theory to speak about the role overlaps that employees working from home felt during the pandemic. Certain pre-pandemic studies also used theories to strengthen their findings such as the work of Felstead and Helsenke (2017) who incorporated the social exchange theory to substantiate the proposed explanations of how employees having the comfort of working from home will have to make some sacrifices such as putting in more effort in their work domain. They also made use of the border theory to further examine the heightened spill-over that happens between work and personal life when individuals work remotely from their homes (Felstead & Helsenke, 2017).

Other authors who conducted studies before the pandemic and mentioned articles without explicitly applying them include Crosbie and Moore (2009) who referenced an article about the work/family border theory but did not incorporate the theory. This also be observed in a study conducted during the pandemic by Bukowska et al. (2021) with the same theory. Additionally, Grant et al. (2013) mentioned and explained the boundary management theory in the literature review of their study on remote work and work-life balance conducted before COVID-19 but did not include the theory in any other part of the writing to add value to the results or discussion. The lack of comprehensive inclusion of the theories and theoretical frameworks possibly affects the quality and impact of the information and results that these studies present since they have not been presented against well-grounded theory (Nhan, 2020).

The second part of research question 2 involved the investigation of the different research designs used in studies about the work-life balance of employees working remotely from home during the pandemic. As mentioned in the results section, just over 76% of studies conducted during the pandemic on this topic utilised a quantitative design (i.e., Bhumika, 2020; Gigauri, 2020; Takami, 2021; Lonska et al., 2021; Bukowska et al., 2022; Srimulyani and Hermanto, 2022; Chu et al., 2022; Tusl et al., 2021; Sandoval-Reyes et al., 2021; Tejero et al., 2021; Singh, 2021; Naz et al., 2021; Babu, 2021) while 17% made use of a qualitative approach (i.e., Hjalmsdottir and Bjarnadottir, 2020; Uddin, 2021; Manzoor & Hamid, 2021) and only 7% used a mixed method research design (Al-Habaibeh et al., 2021). In comparison, the studies conducted pre-pandemic seemed to have a more equal distribution of studies utilising qualitative design and quantitative designs while only one pre-pandemic study was found to use a mixed method design much like the one mixed method study conducted during the pandemic (Felstead and Helsenke, 2017; Grant et al., 2013; Crosbie & Moore, 2004; Maruyama et al., 2009; Vernon, 2005; Hill et al., 1998).

The information presented above may indicate the need for literature that is conducted post-pandemic to be more diverse in the research designs used seeing that studies done during the pandemic favoured a quantitative research design which indicates a gap that needs to be closed. Some reasons why authors may prefer quantitative research designs according to Eyisi (2016), is that the statistical analysis of data saves time and quantitative methods are able to investigate larger sample groups and are able to provide more generalisability than qualitative and mixed method studies. These reasons are all relevant within the COVID-19 context due to the fact that investigating larger sample groups meant obtaining more data to answer burning questions surrounding COVID-19 and working from home as it was a circumstance never experienced before. In addition to conducting research fast and efficiently, quantitative studies were more

easily adapted during the pandemic so that their data collection processes could happen in a no contact manner such as using quick response (QR) codes to give participants access to questionnaires seeing as COVID-19 was so infectious (Torrentira, 2020).

In regard to the sampling techniques that the researchers used to obtained the sample groups used in the studies, just over 60% of the studies conducted on remote work and work life balance during the pandemic used convenience sampling with some employing the sample technique virtually through the use of emails and social media (i.e., Bhumika, 2020; Sandoval-Reyes et al., 2021; Takami, 2021; Singh et al, 2022; Tejero et al., 2021; Babu, 2021; Tusl et al., 2021; Bukowska et al., 2022; Hjalmsdottir & Bjarnaddottir, 2020; Naz et al., 2021). Apart from convenience sampling, 29% of studies in this review used snowball sampling (i.e., Chu et al., 2022; Al-habaibeh et al., 2021; Lonska et al., 2021; Srimulyani & Hermanto, 2022; Uddin, 2021) while the types of sampling techniques used to a lesser extent in the articles in this review include purposive sampling and random sampling (Manzoor & Hamid, 2021; Srimulyani & Hermanto, 2022; Gigauri, 2020). When considering the sampling techniques used in pre-pandemic literature on remote work and work life balance during COVID-19, there seems to be a lot of use of convenience sampling much like the research that was conducted during the pandemic (Maruyama et al., 2009; Grant et al., 2013; Hill et al., 1998). Another trend that was revealed between the pandemic versus pre-pandemic literature what that in a lot of cases, the sampling technique was not always explicitly stated and so it had to be assumed based on other information such as the target and sample population. Crosbie and Moore (2004) likely used a purposive sampling technique while it was mentioned that Felstead and Helsenke (2017) used random sampling. These two sampling techniques were also found to be uncommon in research done during the pandemic on remote work and work-life balance as mentioned above.

As well as having a prevalence of quantitative research designs, studies conducted during the pandemic mainly used a cross-sectional design whereby the data used for analysis in the studies was collected at one point in time as opposed to a longitudinal design where data is collected over a longer period of time from the same participants. 94% of the studies used a cross-sectional design (Bhumika, 2020; Gigauri, 2020; Takami, 2021; Lonska et al., 2021; Bukowska et al., 2022; Srimulyani & Hermanto, 2022; Chu et al., 2022; Tusl et al., 2021; Sandoval-Reyes et al., 2021; Tejero et al., 2021; Singh, 2021; Naz et al., 2021; Babu, 2021, Uddin, 2021; Manzoor & Hamid, 2021; Al-Habaibeh et al., 2021) while 6% used a longitudinal design (Hjalmsdottir and Bjarnadottir, 2020). Many authors prefer to utilise cross-sectional design as the data collection is easier due to being done during one period as well as the fact that the data

is faster to collect and the study can be started as soon as possible whereas with longitudinal studies more time is needed for the data to be collected (Wang & Cheng, 2020). The emergence of COVID-19 was observed to put haste on research being conducted seeing as it was a new virus that was extremely infectious and individuals were eager for more information (Pepper & Burton, 2020). This is likely why cross-sectional studies were mainly used by researchers due to their timely nature especially regarding the topic of working remotely which had harsh effects on individuals, organisations and the economy (Bertoni et al., 2021).

5.1.3 Research Question 3:

The third and final research question had a focus on the variables and findings in studies that were conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic about employees who worked remotely and their ability to establish a work-life balance. In the seventeen articles included in this study, the four most commonly studied variables included well-being, stress, life and job satisfaction and time in regard to flexible and long working hours (Hjalmsdottir & Bjarnadottir, 2020; Bhumika, 2020; Naz et al., 2021; Tusl et al**.,** 2021; Chu et al., 2022; Tejero et al. 2021; Babu, 2021; Gigauri, 2020; Sandoval-Reyes et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2022; Srimulyani & Hermanto, 2022; Takami, 2021). These four variables were also seen to be present in pre pandemic literature (Felstead and Helsenke, 2017; Grant et al., 2013; Crosbie & Moore, 2004; Maruyama et al., 2009; Vernon, 2005; Hill et al., 1998).

A few of the studies suggested that there was a positive impact on and improvement of well-being for individuals during COVID-19 who worked from home but the more prevalent trend was that well-being was lowered due to reasons such as heightened workloads and increased commitments that were brought on from having to work from home due to the pandemic which in turn lowered employees work-life balance (Hjalmsdottir & Bjarnadottir, 2020; Bhumika, 2020; Naz et al., 2021). Similarly, studies conducted pre-pandemic, before 2020, such as those by Felstead and Helsenke (2017) and Crosbie and Moore (2004) found that working out of the office lowered employee's ability to build a work-life balance as it required a robust well-being which employees found difficult to establish.

In investigating satisfaction, pre-pandemic studies found heightened life and work satisfaction linked with working remotely which improved employees work-life balance (Felstead & Helsenke, 2017; PWC, 2016). These findings contrasted heavily with those of studies done during the pandemic that found that both life and job satisfaction declined with the sudden and forceful jump to working from home (Sandoval-Reyes et al., 2021; Takami, 2021; Naz et al., 2021). These contrasting findings could be related to the fact that the individuals who worked

from home before the pandemic likely did so willingly whereas the shift to remote work during the pandemic was involuntary and brough with it many negative feelings and connotations which then led to higher dissatisfaction.

A small number of studies done during the pandemic investigated the effect of time in regard to flexible working hours on work-life balance. Such studies include one by Bukowska et al. (2022) where the results suggested that with the privilege of flexible working hours, employee's found their work-life balance worsening while they worked from home during the pandemic as well as another study by Srimulyani and Hermanto (2022) who found the opposite, that flexible working hours improved employee work-life balance. The pre-pandemic study conducted by Crosbie and Moore (2004) found the same positive sentiment as Srimulyani and Hermanto (2022) in that those employees revealed that the flexible working hours that working from home brought meant that there was more time to be involved in their households which improved their work-life balance. Contrastingly, Hochschild (1997) which was also a pre-pandemic study, revealed that the flexible working hours that are awarded by remote work lead to procrastination in regard to home responsibilities and foster a routine of working longer than usual which in turn lowered work-life balance. This reveals that both positive and negative sentiment around flexible working hours and long working hours exists for employees working from home both before and during the pandemic.

Stress was identified to be an antecedent of work-life balance and was observed to act as a moderator between work-life balance and other variables such as gender and age (Ruan, 2020). The investigation of the possibility of stress stemming from working remotely and its effect on work-life balance was less commonly studied in pre-pandemic literature however, Gottlieb et al. (2018) linked stress from remote work to role conflict. As previously mentioned, Role Theory was a theoretical framework that was utilised in both studies conducted before and during COVID-19. On the other hand, the investigation of stress was more common in studies conducted during the pandemic and it was found in all of the included articles in this review that employees working from home experienced heightened stress which in turn led made it more difficult to establish a balance between work and home (Chu et al., 2022; Sandoval-Reyes et al., 2021; Singh et al. (2022; Tejero et al., 2021; Hjalmsdottir & Bjarnadottir, 2020; Babu, 2021). The exact reasons for the increases in employee stress were not mentioned and it was simply coined down to working from home being the cause. The conservation of resources theory would have been a strong theoretical framework to use to unpack the stress felt by employees although it was not utilised by any other articles, neither those conducted pre-pandemic nor during the pandemic (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). It can be assumed that

pre-pandemic remote working employees likely had fewer stressor seeing as they weren't faced with a pandemic and the stressors and challenges that came with it. The conservation of resources theory explains that the more stressful the environment, the fewer the psychological resources an individual has which in turn depletes their work-life balance (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012).

Productivity was identified to be an organisational outcome of work-life balance with studies such as one by Fapohunda (2014) suggesting that employees have increased productivity when they are able to establish a work-life balance. The effect of productivity was investigated in studies conducted during the pandemic including those caried out by Tejero et al. (2021), Sandoval-Reyes et al. (2021) and Chu et al (2022). All three studies were able to come to a consensus that work-life balance had a positive influence on work productivity for individuals working from home (Tejero et at., 2021; Sandoval-Reyes et al., 2021; Chu et al., 2022) and this corroborated with pre-pandemic literature that found that working from home improved productivity (PWC, 2016). In contrast to the studies done during the pandemic, the article by PWC (2016) did not explicitly mention the relationship between work-life balance and productivity though it was implied that work-life balance improved as employees exhibited increased happiness.

This review found that work-life balance was a highly gendered construct with many of the studies that were aimed towards gender discovering that women were more impacted by having to work home from during the pandemic and had difficulty in finding a balance between work and home (Hjalmsdottir & Bjarnadottir, 2020; Bhumika, 2020; Naz et al., 2021). This finding was mainly evident in developing countries as opposed to developed countries in the global north. The gendered findings within this review were substantiated by previous studies such as one conducted by Fapohunda (2014) that suggested that because women were mostly the home makers and traditionally had additional household responsibilities, their work-life balance suffered more than men's. These findings fall in line with stereotypical societal gender norms where women take care of the household and the children while men work to provide for their families and that is considered enough. The difference in these gender roles in today's more modern society is that many women have occupations that they are dedicated to as much as men (Eagly et al., 2020). Due to this, it is likely that women feeling more burnt out and had greater difficulty that men in establishing a work-life balance during the pandemic while working from home was because they were expected to care for the household while also having to fulfil their work responsibilities (Fisher & Ryan, 2021). How the roles that individuals and different genders had to play impacted their experiences during COVID-19 that

ultimately influenced their work-life balance can be unpacked with the use of the role theory. Biddle (1986) proposed that roles need to have space between them so that they do not overlap because the blurring and overlapping of roles leads to role conflict. Authors such as Suhaimi et al. (2017) have found that role conflict has a significant negative effect of work life balance which may help explain and substantiate some of the findings discussed above.

There were many variables included in studies on the topic that were conducted during the pandemic that were either not investigated at all or investigated in passing in pre-pandemic literature. These variables include support, age, depression, trust, happiness, work experience, non- work activities, children, income, organisation size, leadership, resources, living situation, fatigue, job autonomy and organisational leadership (Tusl et al., 2021; Lonska et al., 2021; Takami, 2021; Habaibeh et al., 2021; Tejero et al. 2021; Bhumika, 2021; Srimulyani & Hermanto, 2022; Babu, 2021; Chu et al., 2021). It should be noted that all of these variables were less commonly present in literature between the years 2020 and 2022 where the pandemic was still very rampant.

Chapter 6: Implications, Gaps and Limitations

6.1 Practical Implications

Several practical implications have been identified in the research done on work-life balance of employees working from home during the pandemic. Suggestions of increased individual technological adaptation and programmes for disaster management were made in order to provide organisations and their employees with a better foundation to more adequately manage abrupt changes in work situations (Al-Habaibeh et al., 2021). Having mechanisms in place will likely make it easier for employees to adjust and not feel so displaced in their lives as this was one of the suggested reasons that led to lowered work-life balance. A number of studies were able to suggest policies, both individual, organisational and governmental that have the potential to influence employee work-life balance in a positive manner and improve its feasibility as well as improve employee well-being (Sandoval-Reyes et al., 2021; Gigauri, 2021; Singh et al., 2022; Tejero et al., 2021; Tusl et al., 2021). The factors and challenges affecting work-life balance were expanded on in this review which add more depth to existing studies and this review has also brought to light the highly gendered nature of work-life balance which can then act as a starting point for other gendered studies in the study area (Tejero et al., 2021; Hjalmsdottir & Bjarnadottir., 2020). Another important practical implication that this research has brought about is highlighting the measures and resources that need to be taken by both organisations and employees to make remote work more successful so that employees are better able to maintain a work life balance while working from home (Sing et al., 2022; babu, 2021).

6.2 Theoretical Implications

In addition to practical implications, this review was able to highlight some theoretical implications that were rooted in some of the articles included in this review because an average of only 50% of the studies utilised specific theoretical frameworks. These theoretical implications are very similar to the findings for research question 2 outlined above. Boundary theory was mentioned to be especially relevant when speaking of work-life balance during the pandemic since individual roles between work and home had become blurred during the pandemic due to personal life and professional life meshing into one environment (Bhumika., 2021; Gigauri, 2020). The results from utilising the boundary theory fell in line with those of role theory as it helped establish that when looking at working from home, especially during a crisis, individuals' roles will likely affect each other in one way or another which then threatens to bring about conflict (Uddin, 2021; Naz et al., 2021; Bhumika, 2021). One of the studies in

this review made use of the family border theory to determine that establishing boundaries between the two domains during the pandemic was possible while another two studies brought to light that managing stress is important in upkeeping a healthy work life balance (Takami, 2021; Hjalmsdottir & Bjarnadottir., 2020). The last theoretical implication identified in this study was that motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, are important for the successful adjustment of employees to working from home suddenly during the pandemic through the use of the self-determination theory (Al-Habaibeh et al. 2021). Besides the Boundary Theory, none of the more common theories associated with work-life balance such as the conservation of resources theory and the work-home resource model were used in any of the studies included in this review.

6.3 Gaps and Limitations

This review was not without its limitations. The search for studies to include in the review were inconsistent as the results did not always yield studies that fell in line with the keywords searched. The studies included in this review were of a both qualitative and quantitative nature although the main design utilised was quantitative which highlights the gap of a lack of rich context that qualitative studies have the potential to provide. Also in relation to the kinds of studies conducted, as previously mentioned, 94% of the included articles used a cross-sectional design which may have been the most convenient to use during the pandemic but also has limitations attached to it. One important limitation outlined by Taris, Kessler and Kelloway (2021) suggests that cross-sectional studies make it difficult to deduce causality which was one of the observations made about the studies that were conducted during the pandemic. Additionally, since the data in cross-sectional studies is collected only at one point in time, the results compiled in this from the studies were unable to investigate work-life balance and remote work in a broad and long-term time frame which is a limitation in that the pandemic brought about many rapid changes and individuals experiences and sentiments may have changed which the cross-sectional design would have not been able to capture or account for (Taris, Kessler & Kelloway, 2021). This then brings for the need for more longitudinal studies to explore work-life balance and remote work during the pandemic in a more dynamic manner.

There were also some limitations identified in regard to the sample sizes and sampling techniques used in the seventeen articles included in this study. In regard to the sampling techniques, while convenience sampling has its advantages such as being deemed as the easiest to employ to obtain participants, cost effective and time efficient, it also has its limitations which can affect the outcomes of the research (Taherdoost, 2016). Convenience sampling makes the selection of candidates prone to selection bias which is when the sample group

selected is not an accurate representation of the overall target population (Taherdoost, 2016). This raises some concerns for the internal validity of the results found in the studies included in this review since more than half of them used convenience (Tripepi et al., 2010). 29% of studies done during the pandemic were found to use a snowball sampling technique. The limitation of this technique falls similarly in line with that of convenience sampling with the possible occurrence of selection bias as well as hesitation and scepticism on the part of the respondent due to the very nature of the sampling technique which can very negatively influence the results obtained (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). While not affecting as large of a number of studies as was mentioned for convenience sampling, snowball sampling also brings about challenges of internal validity of the results for almost 30% of the studies that were investigated in this review. The types of sampling techniques used to a lesser extent in the articles in this review include random sampling and purposive sampling (Manzoor & Hamid, 2021; Srimulyani & Hermanto, 2022; Gigauri, 2020). The limitations of random sampling techniques that possibly have an effect on the articles used in this review include lower precision in regard to the sample collected as the search is not as directed as purposive sampling for example (Atheros, 2016). There also is never full assurance with random sampling techniques that the sample will be representative of the target group although chances are higher than with convenience or snowball to name a few (Atheros, 2016).

When taking into consideration the samples and sample sizes used in this review, seventeen included articles, some limitations are present. According to Fox et al. (2007), the sample size of a study depends largely on the target population and whether or not the data obtained from a sample will be representative of that target population. Out of the three qualitative studies, two seemed to have a sample size within an appropriate range for the type of research design (i.e., Manzoor & Hamid, 2021; Uddin, 2021) while the last study had a sample size that is deemed as relatively large (Hjalmsdottir & Bjarnaddottir, 2020). Hagaman and Wutich (2017) were able to justify that up to 20 interviews are sufficient to collect rich data and therefore the sample size of 47 used by Hjalmsdottir and Bjarnaddottir (2020) is deemed as large. A negative impact that comes with having a larger sample size in qualitative research is that meaning can be lost when the data undergoes analysis which then affects the quality of the results (Rahman, 2016). Large sample sizes also perpetuate type two errors which is when a finding is accepted as being significant when it in fact should have been deemed as insignificant or not true and this error can greatly affect the accuracy of the results that them provides limitations for the review as a whole (Oribhabor & Anyanwu, 2019).

While one out of three of the qualitative studies was found to have a sample size that was larger than usually accepted, some of the quantitative studies (i.e., Bhumika, 2020; Gigauri 2020; Singh et al., 2022; Babu, 2021; Bukowska et al., 2022; Srimulyani & Hermanto, 2022; Naz et al., 2021) seemed to have relatively small sample sizes in relation to the populations they were representing. Smaller sample sizes in research have observed to have a negative impact on how generalisable the sample groups results are to the wider population which then raises concerns about the reliability of the data and how much it can be trusted and deemed as true (Rahman, 2016). In addition, relatively small sample sizes may lead to accurate findings being deemed as not true or not significant which is classified as a type one error and will negatively impact the reliability and validity of the findings (Oribhabor & Anyanwu, 2019).

Another factor that would likely impact the generalisability of the results in the articles included in this review on remote work and work-life balance during the pandemic is the fact that in some cases, the sample group was not split evenly in regard to gender (Naz et al., 2021; Hjalmsdottir & Bjarnaddottir, 2020; Bukowska et al., 2022; Tejero et al., 2021; Lonska et al., 2021). This limitation was particularly important seeing as some studies included gender comparisons on work-life balance which may have been inaccurate due to there either being more males or more females included in the study. Much like the sample sizes spoken about above, this unequal demographic distribution is likely to limit the generalisability of the studies because if a study comprises of mainly male participants, those findings are not directly representative of the female participants of the female target population as a whole for example.

In terms of geographical area, the studies in this review were more or less split evenly between the global north and the global south. Though this was positive, it should be noted that the main continents of focus were Europe and Asia and there was no representation from other continents which then not only brings forth a gap in the research but also impacts the generalisability of the results of the included articles. An interesting finding of this review was that studies in the global north were steered towards individual factors like well-being while the ones in the global south were generally focused on organisational factors such as productivity. This brings forth another research gap in that there is the absence of research on certain variables related to work life balance in specific contexts and environments which may impact generalisability and validity of the results obtained.

Another gap that has been identified in the research conducted during the pandemic on remote work and work life balance is that more research needs to be conducted utilizing different theoretical approaches with more common and widely known work-life balance theories. This gap has been brought forth due to the fact that there are many theories of work-life balance that

were not included in the studies in this review but were included in pre-pandemic literature for example, as well as some studies not utilising a theoretical framework at all. Much like the need for a larger focus and expansion of theoretical frameworks, a substantial limitation is that certain variables that were identified to be substantial contributors to work-life balance were either very briefly studied or not investigated at all in both pre-pandemic studies and studies conducted during the pandemic. These studies include challenges depression, trust, happiness, work experience, non-work activities, children, income, organisation size, leadership, resources, living situation, fatigue and job autonomy and more research needs to be done in these areas in order to close the gap and study the variables relating to work-life balance more holistically.

Overall, there is still room for more research to be done on remote work and work-life balance during the pandemic especially with the prospects of businesses adopting a more hybrid approach to integrate remote work and in-office work together. Though this review was able to further highlight factors affecting work-life balance for individuals working at home during the pandemic and bring forth a foundation for policy development on the grounds of the included studies, the gaps require further addressing in order to provide for more generalisable results thar are both more internally and externally reliable and valid. Despite the identified limitations, this review was able to provide expansion of previous literature and root it in the context of the challenges that presented themselves during the COVID-19 pandemic. Further research would benefit from providing more tangible evidence on less commonly studied factors of work-life balance such as organisation size, living situation, leadership, etc as well as provide a focus on post-pandemic organisational situation.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic introduced shockwaves around the world when it brough forth mandatory stay at home orders which gave individuals no choice but to work from home. Many employees suffered from increased stress and lowered well-being from the pressures and uncertainty that COVID-19 brought as well decreases in productivity and performance which were seen to stem from many circumstances including feelings of isolation and role conflict. On the other hand, some employees experienced more positive implications from being forced to stay at home during the pandemic which shows how unique and contextual each individuals experiences are.

From the information that this review was able to gather, it can be highlighted that the aims of the review such as providing more attention to the positive outcomes on work-life balance that working from home during the pandemic brought about such as increased leisure and family time and increased job and life satisfaction in some cases were adequately addressed. In addition, this review was able to provide insight about how people countries in different geographical areas with different economic statuses experienced the pandemic. This aim was especially important to address as it has continuously been highlighted how certain countries were more equipped for remote work than other due to having unequal levels of technological advancement. Insight was also provided in how individuals working in different industries experience remote work during the pandemic which adds another much-needed lens to the topic.

This scoping review was not only able to look at the aims of studies on work-life balance during the pandemic but also what kind of research designs, variables and theoretical frameworks were used which in turn aided in the suggestion of further study propositions and highlighted gaps that previous studies contained. On comparison, pre-pandemic literature was found not to differ too much from newer literature which makes it even more important that further studies taking into consideration the gaps and limitations be conducted. Overall, there is still more research required on the topic of remote work and work-life balance especially taking into consideration the hybrid workplace that is on the rise and how individuals will begin to navigate the journey back into more of a normal pre-pandemic work setting while still recovering from the aftermath of how the pandemic affected their work and home lives.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews Checklist

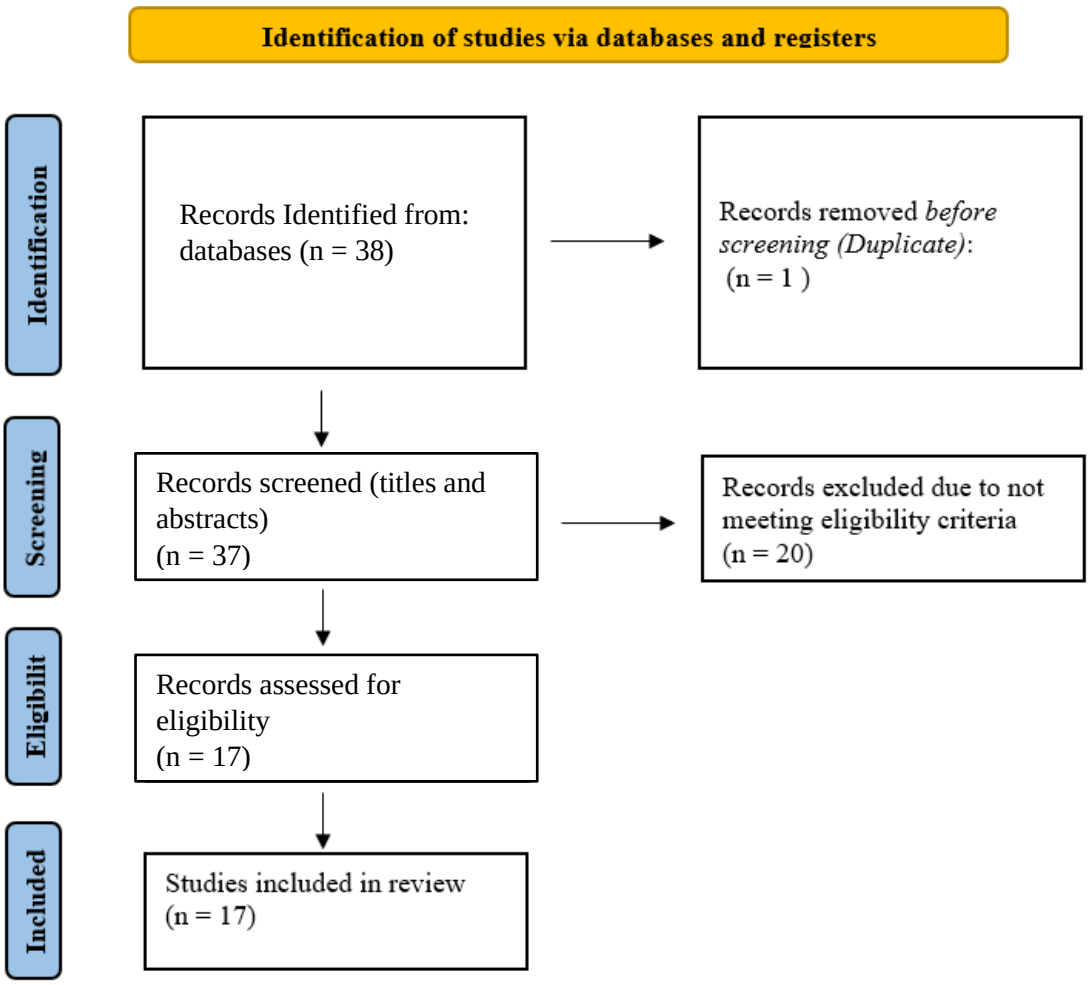
Section/topic	#	Checklist item	Reported on page #
TITLE			
Title	1	Identify the report as a systematic review, meta-analysis, or both.	Title Page
ABSTRACT			
Structured summary	2	Provide a structured summary including, as applicable: background; objectives; data sources; study eligibility criteria, participants, and interventions; study appraisal and synthesis methods; results; limitations; conclusions and implications of key findings; systematic review registration number.	Abstract Page
INTRODUCTION			
Rationale	3	Describe the rationale for the review in the context of what is already known.	1, 2
Objectives	4	Provide an explicit statement of questions being addressed with reference to participants, interventions, comparisons, outcomes, and study design (PICOS).	1, 2, 18
METHODS			
Protocol and registration	5	Indicate if a review protocol exists, if and where it can be accessed (e.g., Web address), and, if available, provide registration information including registration number.	19, 20, 21, 22
Eligibility criteria	6	Specify study characteristics (e.g., PICOS, length of follow-up) and report characteristics (e.g., years considered, language, publication status) used as criteria for eligibility, giving rationale.	21
Information sources	7	Describe all information sources (e.g., databases with dates of coverage, contact with study authors to identify additional studies) in the search and date last searched.	20
Search	8	Present full electronic search strategy for at least one database, including any limits used, such that it could be repeated.	20
Study selection	9	State the process for selecting studies (i.e., screening, eligibility, included in systematic review, and, if applicable, included in the meta-analysis).	23
Data collection process	10	Describe method of data extraction from reports (e.g., piloted forms, independently, in duplicate) and any processes for obtaining and confirming data from investigators.	21, 22
Data items	11	List and define all variables for which data were sought (e.g., PICOS, funding sources) and any assumptions and simplifications made.	N/A
Risk of bias in individual studies	12	Describe methods used for assessing risk of bias of individual studies (including specification of whether this was done at the study or outcome level), and how this information is to be used in any data synthesis.	19
Summary measures	13	State the principal summary measures (e.g., risk ratio, difference in means).	N/A
Synthesis of results	14	Describe the methods of handling data and combining results of studies, if done, including measures of consistency (e.g., I^2) for each meta-analysis.	24

Section/topic	#	Checklist item	Reported on page #
Risk of bias across studies	15	Specify any assessment of risk of bias that may affect the cumulative evidence (e.g., publication bias, selective reporting within studies).	N/A
Additional analyses	16	Describe methods of additional analyses (e.g., sensitivity or subgroup analyses, meta-regression), if done, indicating which were pre-specified.	N/A
RESULTS			
Study selection	17	Give numbers of studies screened, assessed for eligibility, and included in the review, with reasons for exclusions at each stage, ideally with a flow diagram.	23
Study characteristics	18	For each study, present characteristics for which data were extracted (e.g., study size, PICOS, follow-up period) and provide the citations.	24 -52
Risk of bias within studies	19	Present data on risk of bias of each study and, if available, any outcome level assessment (see item 12).	24
Results of individual studies	20	For all outcomes considered (benefits or harms), present, for each study: (a) simple summary data for each intervention group (b) effect estimates and confidence intervals, ideally with a forest plot.	24 - 52
Synthesis of results	21	Present results of each meta-analysis done, including confidence intervals and measures of consistency.	24 - 52
Risk of bias across studies	22	Present results of any assessment of risk of bias across studies (see Item 15).	N/A
Additional analysis	23	Give results of additional analyses, if done (e.g., sensitivity or subgroup analyses, meta-regression [see Item 16]).	N/A
DISCUSSION			
Summary of evidence	24	Summarize the main findings including the strength of evidence for each main outcome; consider their relevance to key groups (e.g., healthcare providers, users, and policy makers).	53 - 61
Limitations	25	Discuss limitations at study and outcome level (e.g., risk of bias), and at review-level (e.g., incomplete retrieval of identified research, reporting bias).	62 - 66
Conclusions	26	Provide a general interpretation of the results in the context of other evidence, and implications for future research.	67
FUNDING			
Funding	27	Describe sources of funding for the systematic review and other support (e.g., supply of data); role of funders for the systematic review.	N/A

From: (Moher et al., 2009)

Appendix B: Article Selection Flowchart

Figure 1



Appendix C: List of Excluded Articles

The following articles were excluded as they did not meet the inclusion criteria as defined in Table 1 in the Scoping Review

Excluded Articles		
Author	Year	Title
Yavuz Aksakal	2021	A Descriptive Study on Work-Life Balance of Turkish Employees in Various Sectors During Covid-19 Pandemic
Ilhan	2021	A Rapid Implementation of Remote Work as a Strategy in Response to COVID-19: An Examination in Terms of Work Life Balance
Donoso et al.	2021	Academic and family disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic: A reflexive from social work
Muralidhar et al.	2020	Association Among Remote Working Concerns and Challenges on Employee Work-Life Balance: An Empirical Study Using Multiple Regression Analysis with Reference to International Agricultural Research Institute, Hyderabad
Como et al.	2021	An Exploration of Work-Life Wellness and Remote Work During and Beyond COVID-19
Reimann et al.	2022	COVID-19 and Work-Family Conflicts in Germany: Risks and Changes Across Gender and Parenthood
Chung et al.	2020	Working From Home During The Covid-19 Lockdown: Changing Preferences and the future of work
Vigneshwaran et al.	2021	Influence of COVID-19 on Predictors of Work-Life Balance: A study
Shirmohammad et al.	2022	Remote work and work-life balance: lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic and suggestions from HRD practitioners
Andrade & Lousa	2021	Telework and Work-Family Conflict during COVID-19 Lockdown in Portugal: The Influence of Job-Related Factors
Scholtz	2021	The Balancing Act: A qualitative study on remote work and childcare during COVID-19 Lockdown in South Africa
Roslee et al.	2021	The Impact of Employees' Work Life Balance Reviewed From Work From Home During Covid-19 Pandemic

Vyas & Butakhieo	2020	The Impact of working from home during COVID-19 on work and life domains: An exploratory study on Hong Kong
Bulinska-Stangrecka et al.	2021	Work-Life Balance during COVID-19 Pandemic and Remote Work: A Systematic Literature review
Krisjane et al.	2020	Work-Life Balance during The Covid-19 Outbreak: The Case Of Lativa
Anderson & Kelliher	2020	Enforced Remote Working and the Work-Life Interface during Lockdown
Sooriyaarachchi	2020	A Study on the Work-Life Balance Of Employees Working from Home during Covid-19 Lockdown Period
Hadapad & Battur	2020	A Study On Work-Life Balance Of Informations Technology Employees Working From Home During Covid 19
Okuyan & Begen	2020	Working from home during the COVI 19 Pandemic, its Effects on Health, and Recommendations
Zhang et al.	2021	Exploring Public Sentiment on Enforces Remote Work During COVID-19