



BSc in Psychology
Department of Psychology

The Effect of Having the Option to Work
Remotely on Job Satisfaction and Work-
Family Conflict

June, 2023

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Foreword

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the BSc Psychology degree, Reykjavik University, this thesis is presented in the style of an article for submission to a peer-reviewed journal.

Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic led to more organizations offering remote work. This study examines the effect of having the option to work remotely on job satisfaction and work-family conflict (WFC). WFC is when employees have a hard time balancing work and family responsibilities, both when work interferes with family (WIF), and family interferes with work (FIW). A questionnaire measured the job satisfaction, WFC and availability of remote work of participants (N = 102). Findings indicate that the age of the youngest child and gender can affect WFC. Having the option to work remotely is a better predictor of higher job satisfaction ($t(100) = 3.31, p = .001$) and lower WFC ($t(100) = 3.31, p = .001$) than whether or not the option is used. Those with the option to work remotely had higher job satisfaction and lower WFC than those without the option. Men reported higher WFC than women. Participants who did not have children showed the lowest mean WFC, followed by participants with the youngest over 16. This study provides new evidence on the effect of having the option to work remotely in Iceland. Further research is needed due to the increase of employees having the option to work remotely.

Keywords: Remote work, Job satisfaction, Work-family conflict, Work interfering with family, family interfering with work

Útdráttur

Covid-19 faraldurinn leiddi til þess að fleiri fyrirtæki bjóða upp á fjarvinnu. Þessi rannsókn kannar áhrif þess að hafa möguleika á fjarvinnu, á starfsánægju og togstreitu á milli vinnu og fjölskyldu (TVF). TVF kemur upp þegar starfsfólk á erfitt með að ná jafnvægi á milli ábyrgðar í vinnu og fjölskyldulífinu, bæði þegar vinnan truflar fjölskyldulíf og öfugt. Spurningalisti mældi starfsánægju, TVF og möguleika á fjarvinnu hjá þátttakendum (N = 102). Niðurstöður leiddu í ljós að aldur yngsta barns og kyn starfsmanns hafði áhrif á TVF. Það að hafa möguleika á fjarvinnu hefur betra forspárgildi fyrir hærri starfsánægju ($t(100) = 3.31, p = .001$) og minni TVF ($t(100) = 3.31, p = .001$) en það hvort þau nýti möguleikann. Þeir sem höfðu möguleika á fjarvinnu höfðu meiri starfsánægju og minni TVF en þeir sem höfðu ekki möguleika á fjarvinnu. Karlar upplifðu meiri TVF en konur. Þátttakendur sem áttu ekki börn greindu frá minnstu TVF og þar á eftir komu þátttakendur sem áttu börn 16 ára eða eldri. Þessi rannsókn leiðir í ljós nýjar niðurstöður á áhrifum fjarvinnu möguleika á starfsánægju og TVF. Þörf er á frekari rannsóknum vegna fjölgunar starfsfólks sem hefur möguleika á fjarvinnu.

Lykilorð: Fjarvinna, Starfsánægja, Togstreitu á milli vinnu og fjölskyldu, Vinna truflar fjölskyldulíf, Fjölskyldulíf truflar vinnu

The Effect of Having the Option to Work Remotely on Job Satisfaction and Work-Family Conflict

The COVID-19 pandemic led to a massive experiment on remote work by forcing employees to work remotely (Barrero et al., 2021). The experience obtained by working remotely during the pandemic has permanently affected how companies organize their workforce (Bamieh & Ziegler, 2022). Remote work is a form of flexible work arrangement (Kaduk et al., 2019) where employees perform their duties outside the office, most frequently from home (Kaduk et al., 2019). Flexible work arrangements allow employees to choose where, when, and how much they work (Shagvaliyeva & Yazdanifard, 2014). With added flexibility in the workplace, employees find it easier to balance work and family life (Shagvaliyeva & Yazdanifard, 2014), resulting in employees finding work-life balance and experiencing increased life satisfaction (Shagvaliyeva & Yazdanifard, 2014).

Remote work

Barrero et al. (2021) found that 20% of workdays were worked remotely post-pandemic compared to 5% pre-pandemic (Barrero et al., 2021). Many consider hybrid work a win-win situation, as it allows employees to split their work week up and work remotely for a set amount of days and on-site for the remaining days (Adekoya et al., 2022). Adekoya et al. (2022) found that 65% of participants preferred hybrid work compared to 35% that preferred full-time remote work. Barrero et al. (2021) did a study with 30,000 participants in the USA. Participants were asked how many days they would like to work remotely after the pandemic. Of those who had the option to work remotely, 80% would choose to work remotely at least one day of the week. Those who wanted to work remotely all five days a week were 30%, and those who wanted to split the work week and work both remotely and in the workplace were roughly 46% of those who had the option to work remotely. Only 22% of those who had the option to work remotely would choose to work remotely rarely or never (Barrero et

al., 2021). These results imply that many workplaces will offer two to three days a week where employees can work remotely in combination with on-site work (Barrero et al., 2021).

Work-family conflict

Many find it hard to handle the overlapping between life and work with remote work. Unclear boundaries between the two could result in increased work-family conflicts (WFC) (Palumbo, 2020). Employees' work-family balance is considered stable when they can fulfil the many responsibilities at work and in the family (Dhingra & Dhingra, 2021). WFC are bidirectional, with work interfering with family (WIF) and family interfering with work (FIW) (Grandey et al., 2011; Allen et al., 2015). WIF occurs when people sacrifice family time to attend to work obligations, and FIW occurs when people put off finishing work tasks to tend to family obligations (Xu et al., 2022).

Studies have shown that gender (Grandey et al., 2011; Ammons & Markham, 2010) and family stage (Allen & Finkelstein, 2014), such as the age of the employee's youngest child (Byron, 2005), influence WFC. Research has found that men are more likely than women to experience WIF, and women are more likely than men to experience FIW (Kulik et al., 2016; Ammons & Markham, 2010; Wang et al., 2020). This could be explained by the gender role theory (Grandey et al., 2011). The gender role theory implies that men are more likely to prioritize work over family (Beauregard & Henry, 2009) and that women are more likely to prioritize family over work (Grandey et al., 2011).

A study by Allen and Finkelstein (2014) found that parents experienced the least WFC when their children had left home. Another study by Bennett et al. (2017) found similar results. Those without children experienced the least FIW, followed by couples with the youngest over 18 (Bennett et al., 2017). This is explained by parents with children over 18 having the same responsibilities as other couples but without children (Bennett et al., 2017). They found that parents with the youngest child under six years old experienced the most FIW, followed by youngest child 6-12 years old, followed by youngest child 13-18 years old,

followed by the youngest child over 18 years old, followed by couples without children (Bennett et al., 2017). WIF showed different results, with the most conflict in parents with the youngest child 13-18 years old, then younger than six years old, 6-13 years old, followed by couples without children, followed by parents with the youngest child over 18 years old (Bennett et al., 2017).

The effect of having the option to work remotely on job satisfaction and WFC

Flexible work arrangements are a form of supportive workplace culture where mutual respect and trust between employee and employer are present (Hill et al., 2008). Employees' perceived autonomy increases by implementing flexible work arrangements in the workplace (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Beigi et al., 2018). Perceived autonomy is when employees consider themselves in charge of deciding when, where and how they use flexible work arrangements (Allen et al., 2013). Studies have shown that perceived autonomy is a mediator between remote work and job satisfaction among employees (Gözükara & Çolakoğlu, 2016; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). In other words, by implementing the option to work remotely, employees perceived autonomy increases, which can increase employee job satisfaction (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007).

Allen et al. (2013) emphasized the importance of differentiating between having the option to work remotely and remote work use. Some studies examine remote work use, and others examine remote work availability (Allen et al., 2013). While all those who work remotely have the option to work remotely, it is crucial to understand that not all employees who have the option to work remotely use the option (Allen et al., 2013). Studies have shown that employees presented with the option of flexible work arrangements can experience increased job satisfaction (Grover & Crooker, 1995; De Menezes & Kelliher, 2011; Scandura & Lankau, 1998; Allen, 2001) and less WFC (Beauregard & Henry, 2009) even though they do not use the option (Grover & Crooker, 1995; De Menezes & Kelliher, 2011; Scandura & Lankau, 1998; Allen, 2001; Beauregard & Henry, 2009). Batt and Valcour (2003) assumed

that the reason for flexible work options having a good impact on employees was that by implementing flexible work, employees experienced that the organization had concern for them (Batt & Valcour, 2003)

Allen et al., 2013 proposed that it was not remote work itself was not the key to decreased WFC. What mattered more was that employees felt they had control over how they used flexible work arrangements (Allen et al., 2013; Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Scandura and Lankau (1998) found that 60% of employees that had the option to work remotely used the option. Some employees want to work entirely from the office and enjoy more traditional work patterns (Allen et al., 2013); thus, they must be given a choice (Allen et al., 2013). Involuntary remote work is when an employee is assigned to work remotely by the employer (Allen et al., 2013), removing the control from the employee (Allen et al., 2013). Seen as the perception of control connects flexible work arrangements to decreased WFC (Allen et al., 2013), it is clear that involuntary use of remote work does not have the same positive effect (Allen et al., 2013). To enhance the positive impact of having the option to work remotely, the employees must be in control (Allen et al., 2013) over choosing a flexible work arrangement themselves (Kaduk et al., 2019).

The current study

Studies pre-pandemic and during the pandemic are inconsistent with studies done on remote work post-pandemic (Xu et al., 2022). The permanent effects on the workforce caused by the pandemic (Arntz et al., 2020; Bamieh & Ziegler, 2022) calls for new research on remote work. Further evidence is especially needed in Iceland due to the lack of studies that examine remote work in Iceland. This study aims to examine the effect of whether employees have the option to work remotely on job satisfaction and WFC. The current study hypothesizes that (1) employees with the option to work remotely show higher job satisfaction and lower WFC than employees not presented with the option, (2) having the option to work remotely is a better predictor of higher job satisfaction and lower WFC than

whether the option is used, (3) employees that do not have children report the lowest WFC, and employees with the youngest child younger than six years old will report the highest WFC, and (4) women report higher levels of FIW than men, and men report higher levels of WIF than women.

Method

Participants

Participants were 18 years old or older employees from seven companies in Iceland where the number of employees was over 100 and remote work was thought to be a possibility. Participants were gathered through a convenience sample (N=102). Participation in the study was optional, with no prices. The demographics of participants are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Gender, age, and age of the participant's youngest child

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender		
Men	30	29.4%
Women	72	70.6%
Age		
25-34 years old	19	18.6%
35-44 years old	32	31.4%
45-54 years old	34	33.3%
55-64 years old	14	13.7%
65 years old or older	3	2.9%
Age of youngest child		
No children	10	9.8%
5 years old or younger	24	23.5%
6-10 years old	18	17.6%
11-15 years old	22	21.6%
16 years old or older	28	27.5%

Measures

The data was gathered with a self-completion online questionnaire operated through QuestionPro. The questionnaire consisted of eight items measuring the option to work remotely and demographics, a 36-item list that measured job satisfaction, and a 10-item list that measured WFC. The two lists used had not been standardized or translated into Icelandic. To ensure an accurate translation of the lists, the researcher had four individuals that did not participate in the study translate each list separately. The researcher compared all translations and chose the most accurate translation of each item for the lists.

Remote work

The researcher designed four items that measured the option to work remotely, remote work use, days desired to work remotely, and days used to work remotely (see Appendix). The option to work remotely was measured on a nominal scale "*Does your workplace offer remote work options?*" (1 = yes, 2 = no, 3 = *I don't know*, 4 = *does not apply to my job*). For this study, participants that answered that they did not know and that remote work did not apply to their job did not complete the rest of the questionnaire and were not included in the research. Remote work desired for those that had the option to work remotely and for those that did not were measured on an ordinal scale "*How many days of the workweek do you want to work remotely?*" (1 = none, 2 = 1 day, 3 = 2 days, 4 = 3 days, 5 = 4 days, 6 = 5 days). Use of the option to work remotely when offered was measured on a nominal scale "*Do you use remote work options?*" (1 = yes, 2 = no, 3 = *my workplace does not offer remote work options*). Only those who answered yes and no were included to ensure that participants who did not have the option to work remotely were excluded from the data analysis. The use of the option to work remotely solely for the participants that had the option was measured on an ordinal scale "*How many days of the workweek do you work remotely?*" (1 = 1 day, 2 = 2 days, 3 = 3 days, 4 = 4 days, 5 = 5 days, 6 = *I choose to work only from the workplace*, 7 = *my workplace does not offer remote work options*). To exclude those that did not have the

option to work remotely, participants that answered that their workplace did not offer the option to work remotely were excluded from the analysis.

Demographics

The researcher designed four items to measure gender, age, marital status, and the age of the participants' youngest child (see Appendix). Gender was measured on a nominal scale (1 = *male*, 2 = *female*, 3 = *other*), age was measured on an ordinal scale (1 = *24 years old or younger*, 2 = *25-34 years old*, 3 = *35-44 years old*, 4 = *45-54 years old*, 6 = *55-64 years old*, 7 = *65 years old or older*), marital status was measured on a nominal scale (1 = *single*, 2 = *in a relationship*, 3 = *married*, 4 = *divorced*, 5 = *other*), and age of participants youngest child was measured on an ordinal scale (1 = *I do not have children*, 2 = *5 years old or younger*, 3 = *6-10 years old*, 4 = *11-15 years old*, 5 = *16 years old or older*).

Job satisfaction

The Job satisfaction survey (Spector, 1985) was used to measure job satisfaction (see Appendix). The list was developed in 1985, but it is still widely utilized in research due to its validity, reliability, and stability of results through the years (Yanchovska, 2022). The scale has nine job satisfaction factors, including, for example, pay, promotion, and coworkers (Yanchovska, 2022). For this study, only total job satisfaction was used. The questionnaire consists of 36 questions on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = *disagree very much* to 6 = *agree very much*). The job satisfaction score can range from 36 to 216, where higher scores display more satisfaction. Examples of question items in the scale are "*I enjoy my coworkers*", "*I have too much paperwork*", and "*I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do*". Items were both negatively and positively worded. Nineteen negative worded items were reversed before calculating the total job satisfaction score. In this study, Cronbach's alpha was .89 for the scale.

Work-family conflict

The Work and family conflict scale (WAFCS) (Haslam et al., 2014) was used to measure WFC (see Appendix). WAFCS has been proven to be a reliable scale to measure WFC as well as to measure work interfering with family (WIF) and family interfering with work (FIW) (Haslam et al., 2014). The scale has two factors, WIF and FIW. The first five questions measure WIF, and the last five measure FIW (Haslam et al., 2014). All ten questions added up make the WFC score (Haslam et al., 2014). The scale consists of 10 questions on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *very strongly disagree* to 7 = *very strongly agree*). The scores of WIF and FIW can range from 7 to 35, and the scores of WFC can range from 7 to 70. Higher scores display more conflict. An example of question items is "*My work prevents me spending sufficient quality time with my family*" and "*My family has a negative impact on my day to day work duties*". In this study, Cronbach's alpha for the WAFCS was .92. The two factors were also tested, and Cronbach's alpha was .91 for WIF and .87 for FIW.

Procedure

The online questionnaire used for this study was designed with QuestionPro. An email explaining the aim of the research was sent to human resource managers of larger companies in Iceland, where remote work was likely to be an option. Those who accepted to participate in the research got a link to the questionnaire sent via email along with a brief introduction to the research. The HR managers then forwarded the email to their employees. At the start of the survey, the aim of the study was explained, and participants were informed that their informed consent was given by accepting to answer the questionnaire. Participants were assured that their answers would be kept anonymous and that they could quit at any time.

Research design and data analysis

The research design of the current study was quantitative. The study's independent variable was the option to work remotely, and the dependent variables were job satisfaction and WFC. The data was managed, processed, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for

the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were run for the option to work remotely, remote work use, job satisfaction, WFC, WIF and FIW. A Cronbach's alpha reliability test was conducted to test the reliability and internal consistency of the two scales used in this study. Independent sample T-tests were conducted to examine the effect of having the option to work remotely and remote work use on job satisfaction and WFC. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to compare mean scores of WFC, WIF and FIW concerning the age of the participants' youngest child. Post hoc tests were conducted to examine further the mean differences of WFC, WIF and FIW scores by the age of the participants' youngest child. An independent sample T-test was conducted to compare mean WFC, WIF and WIF scores between men and women.

Results

Table 2 displays frequencies for background questions about remote work. A majority of participants in the sample had the option to work remotely (85.3%). Of those with the option to work remotely, 78.2% used the option, and 21.8% did not. When asked how many days participants would want to work remotely per week, the most common answer was one day (38.2%), and the least desired number of days spent working remotely was five. Of those that had the option to work remotely, it was most common that they worked remotely one day of the workweek (39.5%) and least common that they worked four days remotely (1.2%).

Table 2

Background questions regarding remote work

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Workplace offers remote work (<i>N</i> = 102)		
Yes	87	85.3%
No	15	14.7%
Days desired for remote work (<i>N</i> = 102)		
None	18	17.6%
1 day	39	38.2%
2 days	29	28.4%

3 days	12	11.8%
4 days	4	3.9%
5 days	0	0.0%
Do you work remotely when offered ($N = 87$)		
Yes	68	78.2%
No	19	21.8%
Days used for remote work when offered ($N = 87$)		
None	25	29.1%
1 day	34	39.5%
2 days	20	23.3%
3 days	3	3.5%
4 days	1	1.2%
5 days	3	3.5%

Table 3 displays the descriptive statistics for WIF, FIW, WFC, and job satisfaction. Participants' WFC scores ranged from 10 to 57, with a mean WFC score of participants was 24.16. Participants had a higher mean WIF score ($M = 14.93$) than the mean FIW score ($M = 9.24$). Scores for job satisfaction ranged from 95 to 216, with a mean score of 150.04.

Table 3

Descriptive statistics for WIF, FIW, WFC and Job satisfaction

	<i>N</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
WIF	102	5	32	14.92	7.17
FIW	102	5	28	9.24	5.22
WFC	102	10	57	24.16	10.52
Job Satisfaction	102	95	216	150.04	21.66

Independent sample T-tests were run to test the first hypothesis. Table 4 presents mean job satisfaction scores and mean WFC scores for participants that had the option to work remotely, participants that did not have the option to work remotely, participants that had the option to work remotely and used the option, and participants that had the option to work remotely and did not use the option.

Table 4*Mean scores of Job satisfaction and WFC*

	<i>Job satisfaction</i>			<i>WFC</i>		
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Remote work an option	87	152.9	20.2	87	23.0	9.7
Remote work not an option	15	133.7	20.2	15	30.9	12.7
Remote work optional and used	68	153.5	20.9	68	22.8	10.0
Remote work an option and not used	19	150.7	18.0	19	23.7	8.9

The first hypothesis in this study states that employees with the option to work remotely show higher job satisfaction and lower WFC than employees not presented with the option. To test the first part of the hypothesis, an independent sample T-test was conducted to compare mean differences in job satisfaction scores of participants that had the option to work remotely and those who did not. The mean difference in job satisfaction was significant between the two groups ($t(100) = 3.31, p = .001$). The mean job satisfaction scores for those with the option ($M = 152.9$) were significantly higher than those without the option to work remotely ($M = 133.7$). An independent sample T-test was conducted to test the second part of the hypothesis. The results revealed that the mean difference in WFC scores was significant between those with the option to work remotely and those without the option ($t(100) = -2.79, p = .006$). WFC measured higher for those without the option to work remotely ($M = 30.9$) than for those with the option ($M = 23.0$).

The second hypothesis states that having the option to work remotely is a better predictor of higher job satisfaction and lower WFC than whether the option is used. To test this hypothesis, two independent sample T-tests were conducted. The first independent sample T-test was conducted to compare mean differences in job satisfaction scores of participants that had the option to work remotely and used the option and those that had the option to work remotely and did not use the option. The mean difference in job satisfaction

was insignificant between those that chose to work remotely and those who did not when given the option ($t(85) = .526, p = .600$). The second independent sample T-test was conducted to compare mean differences in WFC scores of participants that had the option to work remotely and used the option and those that had the option to work remotely and did not use the option. The test revealed an insignificant difference in mean WFC scores between those that chose to work remotely and those who did not when given the option ($t(85) = -.378, p = .706$).

The third hypothesis stated that employees that do not have children report the lowest WFC, and employees with the youngest child younger than six years old report the highest WFC. Table 5 presents the mean WIF, FIW and WFC scores by the age of the participants' youngest child.

Table 5

Mean scores of WIF, FIW and WIF by the age of the youngest child

	<i>WIF</i>			<i>FIW</i>			<i>WFC</i>		
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
I do not have children	10	10.6	4.6	10	7.5	4.8	10	18.1	8.6
5 years old or younger	24	15.1	7.0	24	11.5	6.2	24	26.6	12.5
6-10 years old	18	16.5	7.3	18	10.9	6.4	18	27.4	10.2
11-15 years old	22	17.4	6.7	22	9.5	4.7	22	26.9	9.6
16 years old or older	28	13.4	7.7	28	6.7	2.1	28	20.0	8.4
Total	102	14.9	7.2	102	9.2	5.2	102	24.2	10.5

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to test the third hypothesis and compare mean WIF, FIW and WFC scores by the age of the participants' youngest child. The results revealed a significant difference in WFC scores by the age of the youngest child of participants ($F(4, 97) = 3.28, p = .014$). The mean scores presented in Table 5 show that those

who did not have children experienced the least WFC ($M = 18.1$), and those with the youngest child of age 16 or more had the second least WFC ($M = 20.0$). The mean differences were minimal for participants with the youngest child of 5 years old or younger ($M = 26.6$), 6-10 years old ($M = 27.4$), and 11-15 years old ($M = 26.9$). The one-way ANOVA revealed a close to significant difference in WIF scores by the age of the youngest child ($F(4, 97) = 2.20, p = .074$) and a significant difference in FIW scores by the age of the participants' youngest child ($F(4, 97) = 3.92, p = .005$). Participants with the youngest child of 16 years old or older had the lowest FIW score ($M = 6.7$). A post hoc test using Tukey's HSD revealed a significant difference only when comparing groups within FIW. A significant difference was between those that had the youngest child 16 years old or older ($M = 6.7, SD = 2.1$) and those that had the youngest child five years old or younger ($M = 11.5, SD = 6.2$) and between that had the youngest child 16 years old or older ($M = 6.7, SD = 2.1$) and those that had the youngest child of 6-10 years old ($M = 10.9, SD = 6.4$). A Bonferroni post hoc test further revealed a significant difference only when comparing FIW scores of those with the youngest child 16 years old or older and those with the youngest child five years old or younger.

The fourth hypothesis stated that women report higher levels of FIW than men, and men report higher levels of WIF than women. To test the fourth hypothesis, independent sample T-tests were conducted. Mean WFC, WIF, and FIW scores by gender are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Mean scores of FIW, WIF and WFC between genders

	<i>Men</i>			<i>Women</i>			<i>p-value</i>
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
WFC	30	27.0	11.3	72	23.0	10.0	.078
WIF	30	17.0	7.6	72	14.0	6.7	.054
FIW	30	10.0	5.3	72	8.9	5.2	.363

The first independent sample T-test examined the mean differences between genders between FIW, WIF and WFC. The test revealed that the mean difference in WFC scores was close to significant ($t(100) = 1.78, p = .078$) and that men had more WFC ($M = 27.0$) than women ($M = 23.0$). The second independent sample T-test revealed a marginally significant mean difference in WIF scores between genders ($t(100) = 1.95, p = .054$). The last independent sample T-test revealed a non-significant mean difference in FIW scores between genders ($t(100) = 0.91, p = .363$). Mean scores presented in Table 6 show that men reported higher mean FIW, WIF and WFC scores than women.

Discussions

The current study aimed to examine the effect of having the option to work remotely on job satisfaction and WFC. The first hypothesis states employees with the option to work remotely show higher job satisfaction and lower WFC than employees not presented with the option. The results show a significantly higher job satisfaction score and a significantly lower WFC score for those with the option to work remotely than those without the option. This is consistent with previous research that employees that have the option of flexible work arrangements can show increased job satisfaction and lower WFC regardless of whether the employee uses the option or not (Grover & Crooker, 1995; De Menezes & Kelliher, 2011; Scandura & Lankau, 1998; Allen, 2001; Beauregard & Henry, 2009). Having control over the use of flexible work arrangements is considered to be the reason remote work increases job satisfaction (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007) and decreases WFC (Allen et al., 2013; Thomas & Ganster., 1995). Allen et al. (2013) suggest that by having control over remote work use, employees can better arrange their time to fulfil family and work demands simultaneously and find a better balance between work and family (Allen et al., 2013). Participants of the current study who had the option to work remotely had control over whether they used the option, but those without the option to work remotely did not have that control. This

difference in control could explain the significant mean difference in job satisfaction between those with the option to work remotely and those without the option.

The second hypothesis states that having the option to work remotely is a better predictor of higher job satisfaction and lower WFC than whether the option is used. As mentioned above, there was a significant difference in both job satisfaction and WFC of the participants that were presented with the option to work remotely and those that were not. The difference in job satisfaction and WFC between participants that had the option to work remotely and used the option and participants that had the option to work remotely and did not use the option was insignificant. This is similar to Scandura and Lankau's (1998) results, which found no significant difference in job satisfaction for those who used flexible work arrangements and those who did not use them when offered (Scandura & Lankau, 1998). The results indicate that it is not whether employees use the option to work remotely but rather that they have the option that explains the effect remote work has on job satisfaction and WFC.

The current study hypothesized that employees that do not have children report the lowest WFC, and employees with the youngest child younger than six years old report the highest WFC. Results show partial support for the hypothesis. Those that did not have children reported the lowest mean WFC score, supporting the hypothesis. Not supporting the hypothesis, parents with the youngest child between 6 and 10 had the highest mean WFC score. A post hoc test revealed no significant difference between the two groups that could be explained by a few participants who reported having no children. These results are similar to previous research (Allen & Finkelstein, 2014; Bennett et al., 2017). Bennett et al. (2017) found that WIF is lowest for employees with the youngest child over 18 years old and highest for those with the youngest child 13-18 years old (Bennett et al., 2017). WIF in the current study measured lowest for those without children and highest for those with the youngest child aged 11-15 years old. Bennet et al. (2017) found that FIW is lowest for those without

children and highest for those with the youngest child under six years old (Bennett et al., 2017). The current study showed that FIW measured lowest for those with the youngest child aged 16 or older and highest for those with the youngest child aged six or younger. The results show a significant difference in WFC by the age of the participant's youngest child, indicating that the age of the employee's youngest child impacts how much WFC they experience.

The last hypothesis stated that women report higher levels of FIW than men, and men report higher levels of WIF than women. Previous research has shown that women report higher FIW than men, and men report higher WIF than women (Ammons & Markham, 2010). This could be explained by the gender role theory, which states that traditional gender roles indicate that men should spend more time at work than with their families and that women should do the opposite (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Grandey et al., 2011). Surprisingly, the results of the current study show that men reported higher WIF and FIW than women. Similarly, Parasuraman and Simmers (2001) found that men experienced more WFC than women and suggested that it might be because men experience more pressure from their work than women while wanting to spend more time with their families (Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001). The results of this study could, however, possibly be explained by men being a minority of participants.

This study has a few limitations. The majority of the sample had the option to work remotely, leaving few that did not have the option. Due to few participants reporting not having the option to work remotely, it is difficult to generalize the findings. The same was found for gender, where women were the majority of the sample, limiting the generalizability of the results. Allen et al. (2013) found a flaw in the literature on remote work is that some researchers do not differentiate between having the option to work remotely and remote work use, as well as distinguish between voluntary and involuntary remote work (Allen et al., 2013). A limitation of this study is that it was assumed that participants had control over

when or how much they could use the option to work remotely, not differentiating between voluntary and involuntary use. However, a strength of this study is that participants were asked both if remote work was an option and if they used the option, differentiating between the option to work remotely and remote work use. Another strength is that this study provides new evidence to the small field of studies of remote work in Iceland that have primarily been conducted through master's programs, not peer-reviewed journal articles.

Further research is needed on remote work in Iceland and elsewhere. Understanding remote work's effect on employees and organizations is vital, primarily due to its increase following the pandemic. This study provided evidence that having the option to work remotely and using the option can have a different effect on employees, which should be considered in future research. It would be interesting to measure employees perceived control in relation to the option to work remotely and whether remote work use is voluntary or involuntary. Further research on the option of remote work can give organizations a better understanding of its effect on employees and organizations.

This study provides new evidence for the field of remote work and the effect that having the option to work remotely can have on employees. The main findings show that having the option to work remotely is a better predictor of higher job satisfaction and lower WFC than whether or not the option is used. Employees with the option to work remotely showed significantly higher job satisfaction and lower WFC than those without the option. The age of the employees' youngest child and gender affects how much WFC they experience.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Býður vinnustaðurinn þinn upp á fjarvinnu hluta úr vinnuviku?

1. Já
2. Nei
3. Veit ekki
4. Á ekki við mína vinnu

Hversu marga daga vinnuvikunnar myndir þú vilja vinna heiman frá samanborið við á vinnustaðnum?

1. Enga daga
2. 1 dag
3. 2 daga
4. 3 daga
5. 4 daga
6. 5 daga

Nýtir þú þér fjarvinnu hluta úr vinnuviku?

1. Já
2. Nei
3. Vinnustaðurinn minn býður ekki upp á fjarvinnu

Hversu marga daga vinnuvikunnar vinnur þú heiman frá að jafnaði samanborið við á vinnustaðnum?

1. 1 dag
2. 2 daga
3. 3 daga
4. 4 daga
5. 5 daga
6. Ég vel að vinna alfarið frá vinnustaðnum
7. Vinnustaðurinn minn býður ekki upp á fjarvinnu

Hvert er kyn þitt?

1. Karl
2. Kona
3. Annað

Hver er aldur þinn?

1. 24 ára eða yngri
2. 25-34 ára
3. 35-44 ára
4. 45-54 ára
5. 55-64 ára
6. 65 ára eða eldri

Hver er hjúskaparstaða þín?

1. Einhleyp/ur/t
2. Í sambandi
3. Gift/ur

