Balancing The Scales: Harnessing Remote Work to Achieve Work-Life Balance Amid the Pandemic

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Abstract

Purpose: The Covid-19 pandemic brought about a major change in the way people live. This encompasses both job and domestic dynamics. This study aims to investigate the direct influence of remote work on employees' work-life balance, as well as the indirect influence of personality traits (namely extraversion and neuroticism) during the pandemic. **Design/methodology/approach:** 500 questionnaires were distributed among personnel at various higher education institutions situated in Rawalpindi, Islamabad, and Wah Cantt to collect the data. The data underwent statistical analysis utilizing the Structural Equation Modeling technique and the Smart PLS software tool. **Findings:** The results revealed a significant correlation between employees' work-life balance and their capacity to telecommute. The personality traits of extraversion and neuroticism have a notable indirect impact on the correlation between working from home and achieving work-life balance. The results indicated that implementing a work-from-home policy can assist employees in attaining an improved work-life balance, particularly when the management tailors job assignments to align with their individual personality attributes. **Originality/value:** The study also offers a roadmap for future researchers to improve the proposed framework by investigating several contextual and procedural deficiencies.

Keywords: *Work-from-home (WFH), Work-life-balance (WLB), Personality Trait Extraversion (PTE), Personality Trait Neuroticism (PTN), COVID-19.*

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 epidemic has essentially redesigned traditional work settings, captivating an immediate and extensive implementation of work-from-home (WFH) measures. This sudden changeover has distorted the borders between professional and personal domains, escalating challenges associated with work-life balance. Modern studies have emphasized that WFH during the pandemic has steered to increased work-family conflict and employee burnout, mediated by weakened work-life balance (Khalid et al., 2023).

Personality characters, predominantly extraversion and neuroticism, play a crucial part in how people traverse through the intricacies of remote work. Extraverted employees, who thrive on social collaborations, have testified a reduced productivity and work satisfaction over time in WFH arrangements (Evans et al., 2021).

Conversely, persons with high levels of neuroticism may practice greater stress and anxiety, possibly intensifying work-life disparity and burnout. Michinov et al., 2022). While WFH proposed flexible arrangements, it also posed substantial challenges to sustaining a vigorous work-life balance. However the mediating effects of extraversion and neuroticism as personality traits in underlined context remain underexplored. Comprehending how these traits effect the association between WFH and work-life balance is vital for devising custom-made strategies to boost employee's well-being and performance (Hussain K., 2024).

The field of education and the practice of teaching have also experienced setbacks. While some employees viewed it as a burden, others found the work-from-home technique to be a boon for achieving a harmonious work-life balance. The variation in personnel is attributed to their distinct personality features.

In the absence of taking into account the personality qualities of employees during a pandemic, businesses would lack a comprehensive understanding of how to effectively implement work-from-home rules. This can lead to uninformed strategies and ultimately contribute to industrial disasters. Furthermore, a recent study (Salma Sultana et al., 2021) suggests conducting a more in-depth inquiry into the impact of extraversion and neuroticism on distant employment. According to the study, some people with certain personality types may enjoy working from home, while others may not.

During the pandemic, Lo et al. (2022) found that both neuroticism and extraversion are important predictors of mental health. To improve work-life balance, organizations are increasingly analyzing their employees' personality attributes and assigning duties accordingly. This method produces more successful tactics and judgments. McCarthy et al. (2010) Thus, the purpose of this research study is to address difficulties that arise from unique research shortages in Pakistan's higher education institutions.

Research Questions

1) How the transitioning to WFH during the pandemic impacted employees' work-life balance?

2) How does extraversion as personality trait influence the relationship between WFH and work-life balance?

3) How does neuroticism mediate the relationship between WFH and work-life balance?

Answering these questions will present a meaningful understandings of the effects carried by personality traits on work-life balance in WFH settings, apprising managerial policies and employee support programs.

Research Objectives

1) Examine the impact of WFH on Work-Life Balance: Investigate how WFH settings amid pandemic have influenced employees' ability to balance work and personal engagements.

2) Examine the mediating effect of Extraversion: Establish how extraversion impacts the association between WFH and work-life balance, keeping in view the factors like social exchange requirements and job satisfaction.

3) Examine the mediating role of Neuroticism: Assess how neuroticism influences the interaction between WFH and work-life balance, considering stress levels, anxiety, and emotional stability.

In conclusion, the study sheds light on the difficulty of adjusting to a changing environment during a pandemic and emphasizes the importance of personality traits in achieving a better work-life balance. Understanding these qualities allows businesses to develop effective remote work policies that improve employee satisfaction, retention, and productivity. (Arrwin et al., 2021; Irawanto et al., 2021).

Lockdown measures had varying effects on different industries, resulting in closures for some and shifts to remote labour for others. Academic institutions were among those affected, with closures hurting millions of students (Pellerone, 2021).

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This study looks at the association between remote work, work-life balance, and certain personality traits such as extraversion and neuroticism. Personality trait theory is utilized to support the proposed links. The hypothesis posits that an individual's personality traits have a significant impact on their behavior, reactions, and interactions with others in the job. Furthermore, knowing personality dynamics is crucial in evaluating work fit and how people behave, respond, and interact with one another (Leka & De Alwis, 2016).

The study's premise proposes a beneficial link between working from home and work-life balance. Employees with extraversion characteristics may find it easier to make meaningful contributions while working from home due to their high energy levels (Wayne et al., 2004). Meanwhile, people with neuroticism traits may benefit from the freedom that working from home provides in order to achieve a better work-life balance and minimize stress.

Overall, the study highlights the need of considering personality traits when examining how remote working affects work-life balance and employee outcomes. (Dissertations and Kirwan, 2012; Perera, 2021).

Work-life-balance

Work-life balance refers to the ability to successfully balance personal and professional responsibilities (Greenhaus et al., 2003). It includes having enough time for family, maintaining excellent connections with coworkers, access to quality daycare, and being content with your task (Karakas et.2004). As stated by Kinman & Jones, (2008) poor work-life balance can cause job dissatisfaction, psychological suffering, and problems sleeping as a result of work-related stress. Work-life balance (WLB) is important for both individuals and organizations (Arif et al., 2020; Shahzadi et al., 2021).

According to research, applying WLB practices can increase organizational performance, employee productivity, and individual outcomes such as less stress, better physical and mental health, and higher job satisfaction. Implementing WLB techniques can help firms recruit and retain highly trained individuals while gaining a competitive advantage (Clark, 2000).

Work-from-home

This study examines working from home, which is defined as physical separation from the office. Researchers discovered both good and negative outcomes, including enhanced work-life balance and productivity problems. Companies and employees opt for remote work for a variety of reasons, including cost savings and increased motivation. (Moscoso Nilsson, 2021) (Ford and Butts et al, 2021). However, challenges include distractions, professional advancement obstacles, and difficulties in monitoring performance (Greer & Payne, 2014).

Personality Traits (Extraversion & Neuroticism)

Personality psychologists study human nature, using trait taxonomy to understand recurring patterns of feelings, ideas, and behaviors Costa & McCrae, (1997). Traits can be visible, cognitive, or emotional, but having a set of characteristics doesn't guarantee consistent behavior (Johnson, 1997).

Traits are dimensions of individual differences and inclinations, not absolute determinants of behavior (Moreno-Camacho et al., 2019). Extraversion, according to (Gottman et al., 1998), defines who we are and how we behave in situations when we must interact with others and collaborate as a group.

Neuroticism, according to (BARRICK & MOUNT, 1991) anxiety, anger, humiliation, despair, worry, and insecurity are prominent features within the factor of neuroticism. Emotional stability or Neuroticism is linked with low stress tolerances, getting upset easily and often a pessimistic approach to work.

Research Framework and Hypotheses Development

Working from home can have both positive and negative effects on an employee's work-life balance. Working from home and work-life balance are associated in research in both positive and negative ways (Nizath & Karunaratne, 2020) (Dockery & Bawa, 2014) (Uddin, 2021).

Employers must focus on providing the necessary conditions to increase productivity during work-from-home times in order to improve employees' quality of life. Distributive justice is also used to forecast employee work-life balance in telecommuting (Rathnaweera & Jayathilaka, 2021).

H1. Work-from-home has a significant impact on the WLB of academic employees in Pakistan

Extraversion has been found to be a predictor of teamwork, managerial roles, job satisfaction, and training proficiency (Salgado, 1997; Wille et al., 2013). Contrary to expectations, low extraversion traits are more likely to prefer work-from-home policies(Watson & Clark, 1997). Extraverts have greater energy and may view situations as less stressful, leading to better mood and more productivity. Extraversion is related to greater facilitation between roles but not related to conflict (Wauthia et al., 2019) (Wayne et al., 2004).

H2. Work-from-home has a significant impact on the personality trait extraversion of academic employees in Pakistan.

Neuroticism has inconsistent results as a predictor of job performance, unlike conscientiousness (Salgado, 1997). It can lead to negative behaviors and difficulties coping with stress. Emotional stability is the opposite of neuroticism and is indicative of adaptability and resilience, (McCrae & Costa, 2016) (Wang & Dong, 2018). Low neuroticism is associated with a willingness to try new things and can explain opposition to work-from-home policies. Gender does not significantly impact remote work preferences (Malouff et al., 2011).

H3. Work-from-home has a significant impact on the personality trait neuroticism of academic employees in Pakistan.

Extraversion is associated with outgoingness, energy, and talkativeness (Soni & Bakhru, 2019). Research shows that it has a positive relationship with work-life balance and life

satisfaction. It facilitates communication with others and enriches personal and job lives. Positive energy and friendly behavior towards others promote good physical and mental health (Wille et al., 2013) (Perera, 2021) (Kundnani & Mehta, 2014). Recent studies have suggested that extraversion can positively influence work-life balance in various organizational settings, including higher education institutions in Pakistan.

H4. Personality trait extraversion has a significant impact on the work-life balance of academic employees in Pakistan.

Neuroticism, a personality trait linked with negative emotions, is negatively related to work-life balance (WLB) (Soni & Bakhru, 2019). High neuroticism leads to frustration and stress, resulting in a lack of balance between work and life roles. It also negatively affects mental and physical health. (Hayes & Joseph, 2003) and (Ozer & Benet-Martínez, 2006) Emotional Stability (Neuroticism) was also found to be consistently linked with life satisfaction.

In particular (McCrae & Costa, 1982) It is worth noting that lesser Neuroticism is related with higher happiness and, as a result, higher Life satisfaction. Emotional stability, on the other hand, is linked with higher life satisfaction and better WLB. While previous studies have explored the relationship, more research is needed in higher education institutions in Pakistan to better understand the role of neuroticism in achieving WLB.

H5. Personality trait neuroticism has a significant impact on the work-life balance of academic employees in Pakistan.

Previous studies have found that work-from-home policy had a significant effect on the personality traits (Salgado, 1997)(Witt et al., 2002) and personality traits also had a significant effect on the work-life balance according to the certain traits they possess in their behavior over the time (Finch, Sue; Thomason, Neil; Cumming, 2015).

During the Covid pandemic, a research study conducted by (Lo et al., 2022) establishes that both neuroticism and extraversion serve as major predictors of mental health. Moreover, a recent study by Sultana et al, (2021) suggested to further examine extraversion and neuroticism as personality types in relation to remote employment as these personality types may be pleased with Work from Home setting while others may not.

Therefore, this research study has focused on alleviating the problems posed by certain research gaps in the higher education institutions of Pakistan, by providing specifics and insight into the personality traits extraversion and neuroticism of employees relating to achieving a better work-life balance when working from home during pandemic.

Thus, this study underlined the role of personality trait extraversion and neuroticism as a mediating factor between the relationship of work-from-home and work-life-balance among employees from Higher education institutions of Pakistan. Thus, the present study hypothesized that:

H6. There is a mediating effect of Personality trait extraversion in the relationship between work-from-home and work-life balance of academic employees in Pakistan.

H7. There is a mediating effect of Personality trait neuroticism in the relationship between work-from-home and work-life balance of academic employees in Pakistan.

The proposed research framework model of this study is given below:
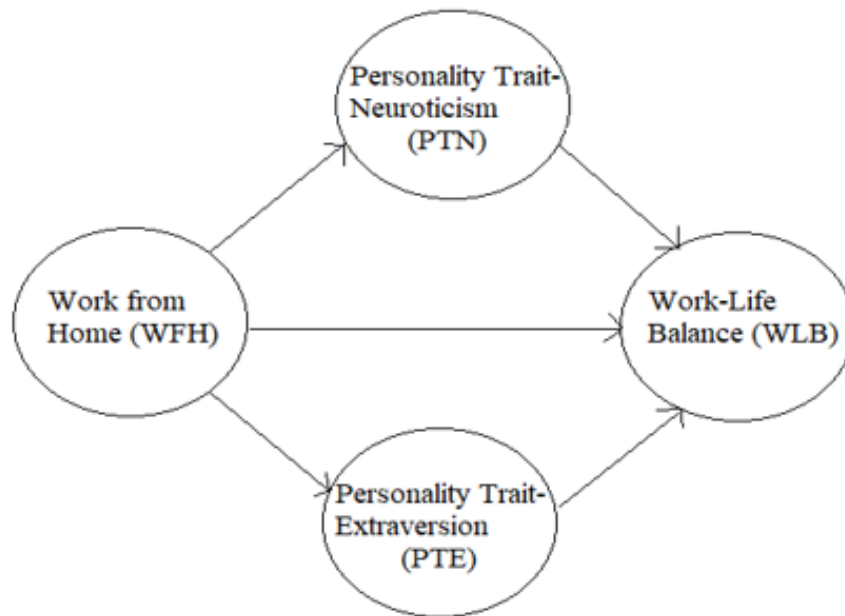
Figure 2.1: Research Framework

DATA AND METHODS

Sample and data collection

To test our hypotheses, we performed a questionnaire survey. The study used statistical tools such as Smart-PLS to examine empirical data acquired from faculty members at Pakistani higher education institutions.

The study investigates the reliability and validity of structural models, using extraversion and neuroticism as parallel mediators of the relationship between work-from-home and work-life balance. A huge number of questionnaires were issued, resulting in a 70% response rate. The final data were not subjected to normality testing since Smart-PLS does not require normally distributed data.

Table 1: Respondents Background

Demographics		Qty.	Valid%
Gender	Female	148	34.9
	Male	276	65.1
Age	20-30	164	38.7
	21-30	1	0.2
	31-40	194	45.8
	41-50	53	12.5
	>50	12	2.8
	Bachelors	18	4.2
Education	Doctorate	170	40.1
	Masters	236	55.7
	0-5 years	259	61.1
	6-10 years	46	10.8
	11-15 years	75	17.7
Experience	Above 15 years	44	10.4

Measures

The survey used a self-administered questionnaire in English because the respondents were well-educated, and English is a working language in Pakistan. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: demographics and individual data. Respondents provided input using a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire included variables related to work-from-home, work-life balance, personality traits (Extraversion and Neuroticism). The scales used to measure work-from-home, work-life-balance and personality traits extraversion and neuroticism are shown in the Table 2. The items used to measure work-from-home, work-life-balance, personality traits extraversion and neuroticism were adopted from Murray, 2020, Brough et al., 2014, Rigotti et al., 2008 (Table 3). The items were scored using a Likert response scale, in which "1″ means "strongly disagree" and "5″ means "strongly agree."

Table 2: Research Instruments

S. No	Variables	Items	Sources
1.	Work-from-home	10	Murray, 2020
2.	Work-life Balance	4	Brough et al., 2014
3.	Extraversion & Neuroticism	10	Murray et al., 2020

RESULTS

Structural equation modeling (SEM) technique was for statistical assessments of measurement and structural models. Both the literature on information systems and behavioral science has begun to acknowledge the usage of SEM more and more (Chin, 1998). Benefits of SEM include explicit measurement error modeling, direct and indirect estimations of correlations between constructs, and measures of global model fit. SmartPLS has been used for hypotheses testing as well as the projected model paths. SmartPLS was used to carry out all SEM statistical processes. The two parts of the data analysis comprised a measurement analysis and a structural model analysis.

Measurement model evaluation

The relationships between latent variables (the constructs being measured) and the observed variables (manifest variables, or indicators), are explained through measurement model estimations. The evaluation of the measurement model (given below in Table 3 & 4) comprise of confirmatory factor analysis (outer loadings), reliability (Cronbach's alpha), and validity (AVE) measures using SmartPLS. Bollen (1989) recommended that throughout the measurement model testing, emphasis be paid to factor loadings, and the squared multiple correlations between items and constructs.

Table 3: Indicator Outer Loadings

Items	PTE	PTN	WFH	WLB
PTE_1	0.87			
PTE_2	0.83			
PTE_3	0.88			
PTE_4	0.85			
PTE_5	0.86			
PTN_1		0.82		
PTN_2		0.88		
PTN_3		0.85		

PTN_4		0.88	
PTN_5		0.912	
WFH_1			0.90	
WFH_10			0.86	
WFH_2			0.82	
WFH_3			0.78	
WFH_4			0.74	
WFH_5			0.83	
WFH_6			0.76	
WFH_7			0.77	
WFH_8			0.80	
WFH_9			0.77	
WLB_1				0.92
WLB_2				0.88
WLB_3				0.88
WLB_4				0.82

Note: WFH= work-From Home, WLB= Work-Life Balance, PTN= Personality Trait Neuroticism, PTE= Personality Trait Extraversion.

In addition to the high loading for all items, as shown in Table 3, the examination of the squared multiple correlations (SMC) revealed that the most items satisfied the recommended threshold of 0.40 (Taylor & Todd, 1995). For each multi-item variables, internal consistency between items were measured through Cronbach's alpha coefficients satisfying the suggested limit of 0.70 for scale robustness, the results given in Table 4 attest to the instrument's strong internal consistency (Nunnally & Berstein, 1994). The range of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.770 to 0.884. To assess the measurement model's internal consistency, the composite reliability was calculated. The resulting coefficients, which ranged from 0.801 to 0.891 for each of the examined variables, are reported in Table 4. Additionally, every construct demonstrated composite dependability that was higher than the threshold of 0.60 recommended for all variables proving a higher level of internal dependability. The AVE value illustrates the construct's variance caused by a single component. The AVE values for all the components in this research ranged from 0.578 to 0.681 (see Table 4), exceeding the cutoff point of 0.5 proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Overall, the constructs' average variance revealed adequate reliability and validity. We were able to proceed with an estimation of the structural model as a result of the findings on internal consistency and validity.

Table 4: Construct Reliability Results

Variables	AVE	α	CR
PTE	*0.632*	*0.854*	*0.855*
PTN	*0.627*	*0.851*	*0.853*
WFH	*0.500*	*0.889*	*0.891*
WLB	*0.651*	*0.820*	*0.828*

Discriminant validity

To discriminate between notions that are different from one another, discriminant validity is utilized. The construct's discriminant validity can be measured using the approach proposed

by (Urbach et al., 2010) which is Cross-Loading. To evaluate the constructs in this study's discriminant validity, the cross loading approach was used.

SmartPLS software develops algorithms by measuring discriminant validity, which is the cross-loading whose results are obtained after using the algorithm function in Smart PLS software. For this study loadings value is located between indicators and constructs as indicated in Table 5, and measurement items value is loaded greater for its related construct when compared to other constructs. The values in each block are higher in respect to each construct than the values in the adjacent rows and columns of other constructs, separating each latent variable from others. This resulted in the finding that the loading measure fulfilled the measurement model's criteria for discriminant validity.

Table 5: Cross Loadings

Items	PTE	PTN	WFH	WLB
PTE_1	0.876	0.788	0.788	0.787
PTE_2	0.831	0.728	0.731	0.772
PTE_3	0.880	0.785	0.776	0.795
PTE_4	0.850	0.74	0.744	0.756
PTE_5	0.864	0.76	0.757	0.776
PTN_1	0.697	0.825	0.719	0.701
PTN_2	0.814	0.885	0.807	0.817
PTN_3	0.745	0.859	0.765	0.752
PTN_4	0.794	0.888	0.801	0.794
PTN_5	0.81	0.912	0.813	0.844
WFH_1	0.826	0.853	0.903	0.839
WFH_10	0.833	0.828	0.861	0.857
WFH_2	0.689	0.719	0.821	0.739
WFH_3	0.69	0.707	0.784	0.691
WFH_4	0.643	0.631	0.747	0.633
WFH_5	0.718	0.735	0.83	0.715
WFH_6	0.667	0.666	0.761	0.685
WFH_7	0.673	0.654	0.778	0.671
WFH_8	0.702	0.713	0.803	0.724
WFH_9	0.654	0.679	0.777	0.67
WLB_1	0.851	0.864	0.838	0.928
WLB_2	0.828	0.784	0.8	0.881
WLB_3	0.815	0.789	0.797	0.888
WLB_4	0.686	0.718	0.735	0.829

The current work summarizes validity and reliability and further assumes and evaluates them using a structural model. Measurement model and its validity in the current study are among the measurements and tests used to manage and examine data confirmation.

Structural Model Estimation

Multicollinearity

When there is a significant connection between two or more independent variables, a problem known as multicollinearity arises. The variance of inflation factors (VIF) values were analyzed to check for any potential multicollinearity among the variables in the investigation.

According to (J. F. Hair et al., 2014), Variables that are typically subject to the allowed limit in VIF values (=0.20 or/and =>5) are checked for collinearity using VIF values. The VIF values obtained for this study are listed below.

Table 6: VIF Values

Variables	PTE	PTN	WFH	WLB
PTE				3.736
PTN				4.636
WFH	1	1		4.685
WLB				

Because all of the VIF values for the independent variables utilised in this analysis fall within the range, it is reasonable to infer that no multicollinearity concerns were discovered among the variables in this study (0.20 - 5.00).

Structural model analyzes and illustrates the relationships between constructs in a proposed (Byrne, 1998). Table 5 provides the indices for evaluating the structural model's fitness. The variables and their interactions were examined simultaneously for analysis. The values of R-Square and F-Square values as shown below in Table 7 determined the fitness of model.

Table 7: Model Fit

Variables	R^2	F^2	WLB
PTE	0.77	0.204	Strong/ Moderate Effect
PTN	0.79	0.099	Strong/ Weak Effect
WFH	0.87	0.131	Strong/Weak Effect

The hypothesis was tested using p values and t values as given in Table 8, t-value of 2.44 established the significance of this relationship. Similarly, the p-value of "0.042" was significant and below the cutoff of "0.05." (Hair et al., 2006,).

The statistical results provided sufficient empirical support for the acceptance of all hypothesis acceptance and demonstrated that the proposed direct relationships between variables are significant. This significance is justified as the p-values are less than the threshold value of 0.05 and t-values are also higher than the important value of "1.96". As a result, there is sufficient empirical evidence to support the current study's conclusions.

Table 8: Hypothesis Testing

Path	Path Coefficient	t	p
PTE -> WLB (H1)	0.379	8.28	0.00
PTN -> WLB (H2)	0.278	5.43	0.00
WFH -> PTE (H3)	0.882	68.87	0.00
WFH -> PTN (H4)	0.894	73.75	0.00
WFH -> WLB (h5)	0.316	5.35	0.00

Mediating effect (WFH>PTE>WLB)

The partial mediation role of Extraversion was tested in a mediation analysis between WFH and WLB. As shown in Table 4.8, the output findings reveal a direct effect when bootstrapping approaches are used in PLS-SE.
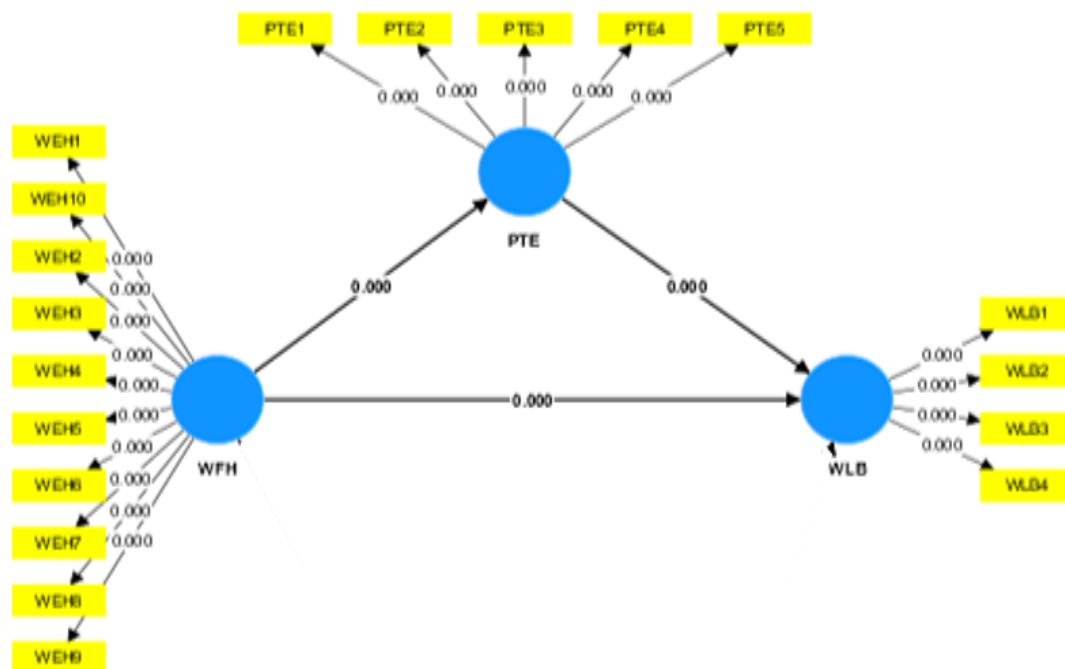
Table 9 shows that the indirect relationship of WFH>PTE>WLB produces significant findings. Because the indirect effect of WFH on WLB has been found to be positive with significant t and p values, hypothesis H6 was accepted.

H6: Extraversion mediates the relationship between work-from home and work-life balance.

Table 9: Direct and Indirect Paths (WFH>PTE>WLB)

Path	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics	P Values
WFH -> PTE -> WLB (H6)	0.334	8.01	0

78

Figure 1: Path Coefficeints (WFH>PTE>WLB)

Mediating effect (WFH>PTN>WLB)

The partial mediation role of Neuroticism was tested in a mediation analysis between WFH and WLB. As shown in Table 8, the output findings reveal a direct effect when bootstrapping approaches are used in PLS-SE. Table 8 shows that the indirect relationship of WFH>PTN>WLB produces significant findings. Because the indirect effect of WFH on WLB has been found to be positive with significant t and p values, hypothesis H6 was accepted.

H7: Personality Trait Neuroticism mediates the relationship between work-from home and work-life balance.

Table 10: Direct and Indirect Paths (WFH>PTN>WLB)

Path	Original sample (O)	T Statistics	P Values
WFH -> PTN -> WLB (H7)	0.248	5.48	0
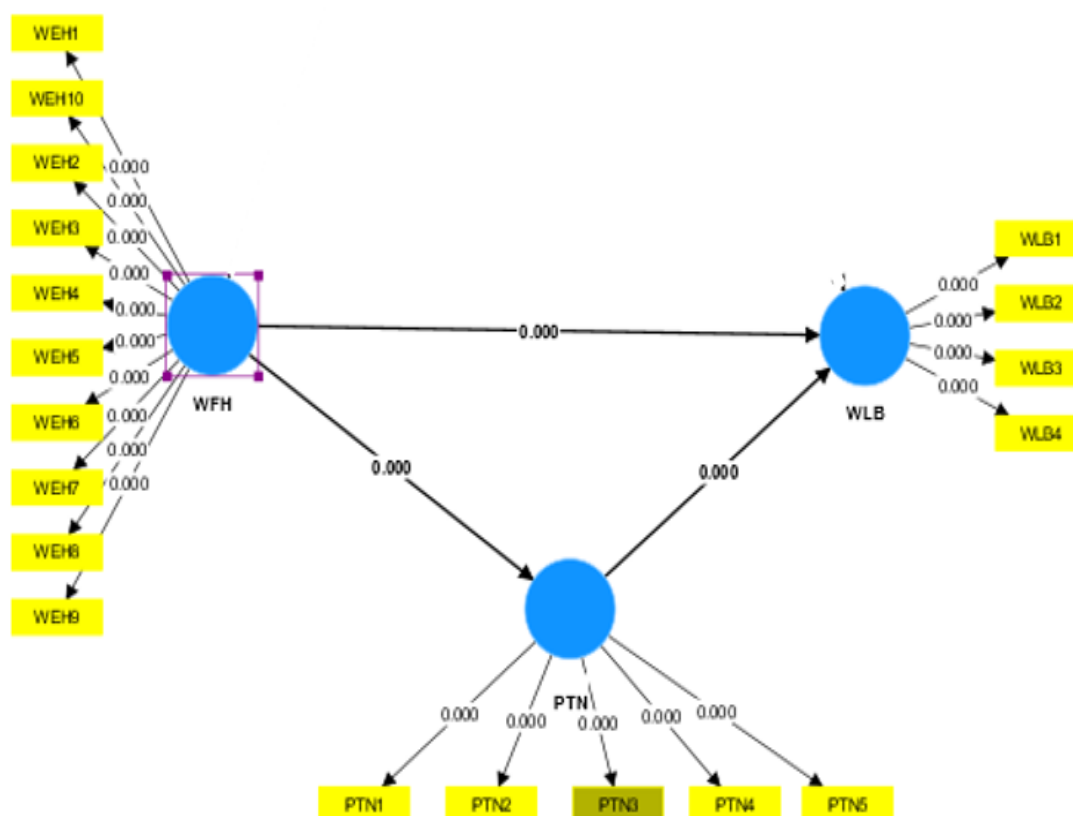
Figure 2: Path Coefficeints (WFH>PTN>WLB)

DISCUSSION

The proposed model for this study hypothesized the correlation between remote work and the preservation of work-life equilibrium. The present study aimed to examine the unique effects of personality traits, specifically extraversion and neuroticism, as mediators. The study was designed to specifically aim at the WLB of academic employees.

According to *H1*, WFH influences academic staff members' WLB in Pakistan. This claim is supported by an extensive body of current research that demonstrates the advantages and disadvantages of remote work arrangements for employees' quality of life (see e.g., AbuJarour et al., 2021; Palumbo et al., 2021; Subramaniam et al., 2020).

During the COVID-19, organizations and employees had to quickly adapt to the shift to remote work, which presented plenty of opportunities and obstacles. Although WFH provides flexibility and independence, it can also make it more difficult to distinguish between work and personal life, which could result in stress and make it more difficult to achieve WLB (Moore, 2006).

With the right resources and assistance, though, such efficient communication tools and unambiguous expectations, WFH can improve workers' scheduling autonomy and boost WLB.

H2 investigated the effect of WFH on academic staff members' extraverted personality traits. Extraversion, which is exemplified by gregariousness and vigor, can affect people's inclinations toward working remotely (see e.g., Looman, 2023; Willerslev, 2022). In contrast to popular belief, people with low extraversion qualities may actually prefer work-from-home arrangements since they provide them with more independence and less social stimulation (Michinov et al., 2022).

Extraverts, on the other hand, might flourish in remote work settings, using their vigor and people skills to sustain relationships and cooperation electronically. Knowing how extraversion and WFH interact can help develop tactics that maximize worker happiness and productivity in remote environments.

H3 investigated the correlation between the remote work habits of academic staff members and the personality trait of neuroticism. Individuals who exhibit neurotic tendencies, which are marked by emotional instability and elevated stress levels, may have varying perspectives on remote employment. (Bohan, 2022). Neuroticism at high levels can intensify feelings of anxiety and loneliness in remote work settings, which may have a detrimental effect on work-life balance. (Moscoso Nilsson, 2021). On the other hand, individuals who possess low neuroticism traits may find it easier to adjust to remote work. They may experience less emotional distress and show more resilience in handling their work and personal obligations. To enhance workers' productivity and well-being, it is crucial to understand how neuroticism affects their experiences while working from home. This understanding will help in developing interventions and support systems.

H4 suggests that extraversion is a personality trait that has a significant impact on the work-life balance of academic personnel in Pakistan. It's really helpful for people to be outgoing and sociable because it helps them find a good balance between their personal and professional lives. As a natural tendency, some people who are more outgoing tend to intentionally seek out social connections and outside stimulation. As Thanh Thao et al. (2024) claimed that, generally, people can be much happier, if they get better at things at their workplace as well as personal relationships. Moreover, individuals who possess better social skills and have exceptional interpersonal abilities, may perceive the difficulties associated with remote work. They hold the capability to foster strong relationships with their peers and achieve a harmonious balance between work and personal life.

H5 examined the impact of neuroticism on WLB of academic employees. Individuals who are sensitive to tension and are emotionally volatile may discover it challenging to balance their professional and personal lives (Bocheliuk et al., 2020). Researchers discovered that people who are neurotic in nature, are more prone to worry excessively, have repetitive cognitive processes, and also struggle to deal with anxieties at work. (Weigelt et al., 2019).

Individuals having such symptoms may encounter challenges in finding peace and joy during their leisure time at home. Neuroticism has the potential to increase instability in both personal and professional lives. The organizational solution and support system is of utmost importance in this context. By implementing these strategies, organizations can mitigate the adverse effects of anxiety and improve our mental health.

H6 proposes that the personality feature Extraversion influences how WFH affects WLB among academic staff members in Pakistan. Being extraverted can help people deal with the

obstacles and uncertainty of remote employment. Striving for a healthy work-life balance can impact their attitudes and behaviors (Flood, 2022). Extraverts may find it easier to divide their personal and professional lives when working from home because they are more socially inclined and adaptive to new situations. Remote work situations can affect people's overall pleasure and well-being.

H7 proposed that Among Pakistani academic professionals, the personality trait of neuroticism had an impact on the relationship between WFH and WLB. Certain personality traits that are linked to emotional volatility and vulnerability to stress can affect the emotional well-being and stress levels of individuals in remote work settings.

Working from home can be more challenging for people who are more neurotic, as it can make them feel more anxious and uneasy. It can be challenging for people to find a balance and feel content in both their personal and professional lives (Sharma & Subramanyam, 2020). It's important to recognize how neuroticism can affect us, especially when it comes to remote work. This understanding helps us realize the importance of taking specific actions to reduce stress and improve our mental well-being in these settings.

Theoretical implications

The current study makes a theoretical contribution to the extant body of literature about remote work and the work-life balance of employees, along with the examination of self-efficacy and personality characteristics. The current study centered on the examination of an employee's work-life balance and the factors that influence it, including the practice of remote work amidst a pandemic.

Moreover, a study was conducted to examine the mediating role of employees' personality qualities, specifically extraversion and neuroticism, in the relationship between remote work and the maintenance of a harmonious work-life equilibrium. The management literature places significant importance on these links or interactions, and previous studies have been utilised to shape the theoretical and practical basis of the current study.

Contemporary research has broadened and enhanced the theoretical framework employed to empirically examine the mediating influence of employee personality traits, specifically extraversion and neuroticism, on the association between remote work and work-life balance. Our study provides theoretical support for the considerable and robust contribution of these two mediators in promoting a more favorable work-life balance.

Furthermore, to strengthen the theoretical foundation or foundation for establishing connections between the anticipated variables, the present study also examined or validated the positive impact of personality traits extraversion and neuroticism on these associations.

The significance of personality trait extraversion and neuroticism as mediating variables is supported by the personality trait hypothesis, which posits that individuals with these traits are more likely to have a better work-life balance.

Hence, the incorporation of the mediating variables of extraversion and neuroticism as personality traits has shown noteworthy enhancements in the present study. Furthermore, this study provided future researchers with an opportunity to investigate and distribute knowledge on other personality traits throughout a wide range of business sectors and unique circumstances.

Practical Implications

According to this study, employees who perceive their job as well-suited to their abilities and personality exhibit higher levels of engagement, productivity, and are more inclined to remain employed by the organization. Conversely, employees who have a lack of belonging or a lack of purpose in their work are less motivated and frequently depart within a year.

The aforementioned situation holds practical ramifications for both companies and employees, as the retention of highly skilled individuals can prove challenging in the absence of recognition or opportunities for growth. Organizations might endeavor to establish a conducive atmosphere whereby all individuals are empowered and capable of making their utmost contributions by facilitating staff feedback on their performance, promoting from within, and offering workplace flexibility (Palumbo, 2020).

Prior to accepting a job offer, employees should adopt a proactive stance by conducting research on their employer to ensure its compatibility with their needs and preferences (Mulyani et al., 2020). Furthermore, this research study presents empirical findings that support the notion that remote work has the potential to enhance the work-life equilibrium of individuals who often exhibit high levels of performance or self-assurance.

It is important to carefully consider the advantages in relation to potential drawbacks, such as the potential decrease in social interactions with colleagues and limited prospects for professional growth within the company. When making decisions about the implementation of a remote working policy, it is advisable for employers to take into account the findings presented by Rudnicka et al. (2020).

Initially, it is imperative for management to recognize the significance of work-life balance within the organizational framework. When making decisions and implementing initiatives, it is crucial for them to prioritize the work-life balance of employees. In order to achieve success, the management should ascertain the correlation between personality traits and the equilibrium between work and personal life.

Given this comprehension, it is imperative to adopt tactics aimed at enhancing the productivity and efficacy of employees by fostering a harmonious equilibrium between their professional and personal lives. Assigning job duties based on individuals' personality types is crucial. Otherwise, individuals may encounter the adverse consequences of work-life imbalance. Various tactics can be employed by organizations to enhance the work-life balance of their workers. One significant method that might be mentioned is the facilitation of flexible time.

This will enable employees to achieve a harmonious equilibrium between their professional and personal life. Currently, the majority of employees really appreciate this resource, as it effectively alleviates employee stress and consequently decreases both absenteeism and turnover. The ultimate outcome will be enhanced performance, enabling management to successfully accomplish the organization's goals and objectives.

It is imperative for management to allocate job roles in a manner that aligns with individuals' personality types. If management were to allocate a work role with significant importance, encompassing a multitude of key tasks and responsibilities, to an employee lacking a strong personality, it is likely that performance would be negatively impacted. Hence, it is imperative for management to ascertain the personality type and degree of their employees

prior to allocating job roles. If a company is able to do this, it will result in a staff that maintains a harmonious equilibrium between work and family life.

Telecommuting can greatly enhance work-life balance amidst the pandemic. For instance, by working remotely, you can circumvent the need to interact with individuals and the potential diseases they may be harboring. This might greatly enhance your work-life balance among the pandemic.

The ability to work remotely, either to minimize daily encounters or to coexist with others in close proximity under more regulated circumstances, confers a distinct benefit for individuals who prioritize their well-being and productivity. According to Suryani et al. (2021), (De Tiroina & Sulaiman, 2021). Consequently, these individuals may encounter reduced levels of interruption in their overall lives as a consequence of engaging in remote employment. In contrast, individuals with limited autonomy over their schedule or personal life may perceive remote work as disruptive and challenging to endure (Ghislieri et al., 2022).

Limitations and future research

The current research possesses several constraints that necessitate attention in subsequent scholarly inquiries. To enhance the comprehensiveness of the study and validate the results, it is recommended to employ a bigger sample size. Furthermore, the results may differ in different geographical areas and countries where universities and educational institutions are present. Furthermore, this study utilized self-reported replies, and it is recommended that future studies explore alternative methodologies.

Furthermore, the study solely focused on two personality qualities from the Big 5, thereby necessitating further research to investigate additional traits. Furthermore, the study utilized a cross-sectional approach, and conducting longitudinal research could enhance the applicability of the findings. Furthermore, it is recommended that future research investigates the moderating influence of additional personality qualities on the correlation between remote work and the equilibrium between work and personal life. In conclusion, it is recommended that future study incorporates perspectives from many service providers, business sectors, and industries.

The study aimed to enhance employee productivity and equilibrium between work and personal life in Education service institutions in Pakistan through the implementation of remote work arrangements. Factors to take into account encompass the expenses and advantages of remote work, furnishing essential resources, and executing a proficient Work-Life Balance initiative.

Later research may direct their attention towards examining the mediating impacts of personality traits, including Conscientiousness, openness, and conformity. Longitudinal study offers a more comprehensive viewpoint and assists in tackling concerns, such as alterations in management strategies and policies.

Suggestions for fostering work-life balance throughout the pandemic encompass maintaining consistent communication with friends and family, allocating dedicated periods for leisure, refraining from excessive work, including regular breaks, and requesting assistance from colleagues or supervisors. In the end, individuals should heed their own preferences and make appropriate adaptations.

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