

# THE IMPACT OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE ON MENTAL WELL-BEING OF REMOTE WORKING GENERATION Y ACADEMICIANS DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN TURKEY

## TÜRKİYE'DE COVID-19 PANDEMİSİ NEDENİYLE UZAKTAN ÇALIŞAN Y KUŞAĞI AKADEMİSYENLERİN MENTAL İYİ OLUŞ HALİNİN İŞ-YAŞAM DENGESİNE ETKİSİ

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### Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has profoundly affected labor markets and working styles. Within the scope of the precautions taken to ensure social isolation worldwide, remote working, one of the flexible working practices, has started to be used compulsorily in many sectors. With the transition to distance education in higher education, academicians have started to work remotely. Due to all these developments, the work and family life of the employees came together, and this situation brought many questions about work-life balance and mental well-being. The main objective of the paper is to determine the impact of remote working on mental well-being of generation Y academicians, due to the Covid-19 pandemic in Turkey. In this context, surveys were applied to 397 generation Y academicians working at public and private universities, and the relations were analyzed with the SPSS program. Based on the results, we confirmed the hypothesis that the work-life balance of the generation Y academicians who started working remotely due to the Covid-19 outbreak had a statistically significant positive effect on mental well-being. On the

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other hand, it was observed that the demographic characteristics and academic titles of the participants did not make a significant difference on work-life balance and mental well-being.

**Keywords:** Covid-19 Pandemic, Generation Y, Mental Well-being, Remote Working, Work-Life Balance

**JEL Classification:** D20, D23

## Öz

Covid-19 pandemisi, işgücü piyasalarını ve çalışma tarzlarını derinden etkilemiştir. Dünya genelinde sosyal izolasyonu sağlamak için alınan önlemler kapsamında esnek çalışma uygulamalarından biri olan uzaktan çalışma birçok sektörde zorunlu olarak kullanılmaya başlanmıştır. Yükseköğretimde uzaktan eğitime geçişle birlikte akademisyenler uzaktan çalışmaya başlamışlardır. Tüm bu gelişmeler nedeniyle çalışanların iş ve aile yaşamı bir araya gelmiş ve bu durum iş-yaşam dengesi ve mental iyi oluş ile ilgili pek çok soruyu beraberinde getirmiştir. Makalenin temel amacı, Türkiye’de Covid-19 salgını nedeniyle uzaktan çalışmanın Y kuşak akademisyenlerin mental iyi oluşları üzerindeki etkisini belirlemektir. Bu kapsamda kamu ve özel üniversitelerde görev yapan 397 Y kuşağı akademisyene anket uygulanmış ve ilişkiler SPSS programı ile analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlardan yola çıkarak, Covid-19 salgını nedeniyle uzaktan çalışmaya başlayan Y kuşağı akademisyenlerin iş-yaşam dengesinin ruh sağlığı üzerinde istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir olumlu etkisi olduğu hipotezi doğrulanmıştır. Öte yandan, katılımcıların demografik özelliklerinin ve akademik unvanlarının iş-yaşam dengesi ve ruh sağlığı üzerinde anlamlı bir fark yaratmadığı görülmüştür.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Covid-19 Pandemisi, Y Kuşağı, Mental İyi Oluş, Uzaktan Çalışma, İş-Yaşam Dengesi  
**JEL Sınıflandırması:** D20, D23

## 1. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has directly affected both the private and business life of many people around the world. It also caused a fairly high level of stress among all university staff, including students (Sahu, 2020). In this context, it is thought that the positive and negative reflections of remote work on work-life balance and mental well-being will have different results in the Covid-19 process. In this study, it is aimed to investigate the work-life balance and mental well-being of the generation Y academicians who have switched to the remote working education system due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Inability to go to workplaces along with curfews, age restrictions, entry and exit bans imposed by countries, travel restrictions during the pandemic process led to the transition to a remote working system. Especially with the Covid-19 pandemic, flexible working styles, remote working, etc., developments reveal the issue of work-life balance. Universities have an extremely flexible workplace. Academicians have the freedom to decide where, how and when they will work, and self-control mechanisms are more effective in controlling the work. They have flexible working hours (being at congresses on weekends, working nights/weekends for thesis writing or academic research and spaces, unlike the 9-5 working hours. Technological developments also make it possible for academics to work for non-business roles. Especially during the pandemic period, the workload of academics increased and they started to work from home, including online lessons. This situation caused the blurred work-life balance to become more blurred. From this point of view, the sample of the research consists of academicians who are working remotely.

As a result of research, many studies have been conducted on work-life balance and human psychology relationship. However, when the studies in the literature on mental well-being are examined, it is seen

that the studies mainly cover the fields of health and psychology (Tennant et al., 2007). While the studies on mental well-being in the field of management and organization are relatively few, it is seen that there are many studies on psychological well-being and subjective well-being. In this context, it is thought that the study to be conducted on the concept of mental well-being, which includes psychological and subjective well-being concepts, will contribute to the management literature. In addition, it is anticipated that the suggestions made to improve the process for businesses that have made a mandatory transition to the remote working system will also benefit the applications of the enterprises.

The main objective of this research is to examine the effect of work-life balance on mental well-being of generation Y academicians who switched to remote work due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Within the scope of the study, Y generation academicians born between 1980-2000 were selected as a sample. According to the researches, 35%-40% of Turkey's population consists of Y generation employees (IENSTITU, 2020). It is seen that the Y generation employees have been in business life for more than 10 years and some of them are now in managerial positions. Managing the skills of Generation Y, who have started to move into leadership positions, and maintaining talent are among the most important agenda items in the business world (Bloomberg, 2018). According to Deloitte's Y-Generation research conducted in 2020, although Y-Generation puts salary and financial benefits number one when evaluating different job opportunities, it was seen that "work-life balance" and "leadership opportunities" rank first and respectively when this factor is excluded. According to the evaluations, "the work they do makes sense" for Generation Y in Turkey, and "flexible working opportunities" take the third place in the world. Again, according to the same research, 75% of the working Generation Y prefer to work from home or from different places where they can be more productive (Deloitte, 2020). It is seen that the Y generation is joining the workforce more and more in universities. Considering that academics play an important role in the development of future generations, it is thought that the study will make a contribution to the field. Within this context this article first provides a literature review about work-life balance, mental well-being and remote working and then gives information about research methodology. Finally, based on the research findings, discussion, conclusion, and suggestions for future studies were discussed.

## **2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development**

### **2.1. Work-Life Balance**

In the literature, work-life balance refers to the stabilization of both work and non-work activities (Brough et al., 2014). According to this concept, people are expected to exhibit different and predictable behaviors depending on their social identity and location (Biddle, 1986). If the balance between roles cannot be established or conflicts occur, negative psychological reflections occur in the individual. In this context, failure to establish a work-life balance causes stress and tension in employees (Frone, 2003).

Work-life balance can be used in the literature instead of concepts such as work-life conflict, work-family enrichment; but the concepts in question have different meanings. Work-family conflict is a form of conflict between roles. It is expressed as incompatible with each other in some aspects of role demands arising from work and family areas. Work-family enrichment is related to the extent to which experiences about a role improve the quality of performance in another role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Studies show that there is both a positive and negative relationship between remote work and work-life balance. Solis (2017) argues that remote work provides autonomy and flexibility to the employee. Employees can spend time for themselves and fulfill their family membership responsibilities with the remote work application (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). If individuals have more family responsibilities, their place and time flexibility by working remotely affects the work-life balance positively. On the other hand, it is suggested that working remotely allows spending more time with the family which will be beneficial for children and make family and private life more harmonious and satisfying (Sullivan & Lewis, 2006). The remote working system provides convenience for organizing family and personal responsibilities (Noonan et al., 2007).

The fact that employees experience less stress related to remote work, they can save time on their way to their offices, and they can allocate more time to themselves, have a positive effect on work-life balance (Noonan et al., 2007). While they find the opportunity to work in line with their goals, they can easily fulfill other roles they have. Depending on the practice of remote work, the employee sees time as an important resource for their own goals and thinks that they have enough time due to the balance of work and life, which affects psychological well-being (Gropel & Kuhl, 2008).

Studies have also shown the negative consequences of working remotely. Neglect of the work-related performance together with the employee spending more time on the family can disrupt the work-life balance (Lautsch et al., 2009). On the other hand, the size of the house which an employee lives in, the negative attitude of family members towards working remotely, and the threats perceived by the employee regarding career expectancy can negatively affect the work-life balance (Sullivan, 2012). As a result of the searches, if the working hours are excessive, the employee will not be able to spare enough time in his private life. He/she will sleep less or spend less time with friends, compromising his personal needs. This situation will negatively affect psychological well-being (Yang et al., 2018).

## **2.2. Mental Well-Being**

Interest in positive psychology is increasing day by day in the world. Seligman and Csikszentmihaly (2000) defined the main purpose of positive psychology as “translating the focus of psychology not only to eliminate negativities, but also to structuring positive qualities”. In this context, positive psychology is examined at three levels. At the subjective level, it is about valuable subjective experiences: well-being, satisfaction, and satisfaction from the past; hope and optimism about the future, harmony and happiness for now. At the individual level, it relates to positive personal traits: the ability to love, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensitivity, perseverance, forgiveness, originality,

foresight, spirituality, talents, and wisdom. At the group level, there are civic skills and traits that lead a person to be a better citizen: responsibility, compassion, helpfulness, courtesy, temperance, tolerance and work ethic (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The definition and characteristics of the psychologically healthy individual within the subject of positive psychology are examined by many researchers. In this context, this study focuses on the concept of mental well-being. As a result of the studies conducted, it is seen that mental well-being is a concept that includes psychological well-being and subjective well-being (Maheswaran et al., 2012). Psychological well-being is a concept beyond happiness and pleasure, and it refers to revealing the positive potential that people have. Subjective well-being is associated with happiness and pleasure and is a hedonism-based<sup>1</sup> concept (Ryan & Deci, 2001). The first definition of mental well-being, including both psychological and subjective well-being, was made by the World Health Organization. According to this definition, mental well-being is expressed as “being aware of abilities, overcoming the stress that occurs in his life, being productive and beneficial in his work life, and contributing to the society in line with his abilities” (World Health Organisation, 2004).

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the mandatory transition of many sectors to remote work has brought many questions about the work-life balance and mental well-being of employees by bringing work and family life together (Board of Innovation, 2020). When studies involving remote working and psychological well-being were examined, it was seen that the psychological effect of remote working had different results compared to office-based work. Studies have demonstrated that remote working has both positive and negative effects. Mann and Holdsworth (2003), claimed that remote working has a negative emotional effect especially in terms of feelings such as loneliness, irritability, anxiety and guilt. They stated that remote workers showed more stress symptoms than office workers and had more physical health problems. A study conducted in the education sector showed that the remote working system had a negative effect on subjective well-being and that working remotely was associated with burnout syndrome (Barros, 2017). Traditional work systems allow employees to establish social relationships with each other. In this context, one of the shortcomings of remote working systems is related to social relations. The social relationships that employees establish with each other can be an important resource for their prosperity, mental well-being and positively affect their work performance. It is seen that working remotely creates a feeling of lack of social support outside of work and in the work context (Hager, 2018). Lewis and Cooper (1995) evaluated the mental effects of working remotely both positively and negatively in their study. They argued that working remotely may be more interesting in today’s working environment, as employees are given more responsibility for self-motivation and self-management than traditional working methods. However, higher performance and accountability expectations increase job pressure and the likelihood that this pressure will affect family life.

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1 “Hedonistic view can be described as follows: The individual evaluates his life according to his own values and standards by evaluating the concept of well-being subjectively. In this context, he explains the concept of well-being with happiness and life satisfaction. Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci, “On Happiness and Human Potentials: A Review of Research on Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-Being”, *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52 (1), 2001, p.143. 108 Keldal, p. 104.

Studies on work-life balance and mental well-being, which are another variable of the study, show that there is a positive relationship between these two concepts ( Dawson et al., 2017; Rahim etc., 2019; Tuwei etc., 2015). According to the study conducted by Lunau, in 27 European countries, it was concluded that if employees had poor work-life balance they had more health problems and their mental well-being levels were low (Lunau et al., 2014). The research on academicians in Turkey, showed the results that while remote working provides flexible working opportunities, it also makes work-life balance uncertain (Uysal & Yılmaz, 2020). In a study conducted on Australian academicians, it was concluded that academicians who cannot establish a work-life balance will have less mental energy to balance their personal and work responsibilities and conflict in work and personal life in the long run (Bell et al., 2012). A study on academicians in England shows that the perceived conflict between work and other non-work areas is the main determinant of tension, psychological distress and job dissatisfaction (Kinman & Jones, 2008).

### **2.3. Remote Working**

Developments in information and communication technologies, increase competition in the domestic and foreign markets. It has increased the use of flexible working applications and has made remote working, which is one of the flexible working applications in many areas, a necessity. Flexible working is an application that includes control over when or where employees work. More specifically, flexibility involves regulation and modification of workers' working hours (Chung & Horst, 2017). Remote working, which is one of the flexible working applications, has been chosen as the application subject to this research because it has become a necessity in many sectors due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

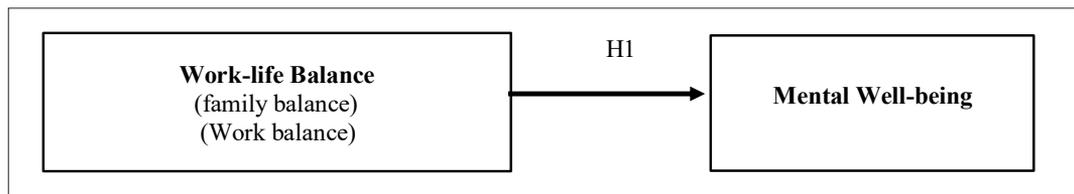
Remote working has been described as a revolution in the interrelation between work and people's personal life, providing a new, location-independent and technology-efficient way of working (Messenger & Gschwind, 2016). Remote working, also known as teleworking or telecommuting, is defined as a flexible working arrangement. This system provides employees ability to perform periodic, regular or private work from a location other than their workplace, equipped with appropriate computer-based technology (Caillier, 2012).

The benefits of remote working can also be evaluated in an individual, organizational and social contexts. In terms of organizational benefits, remote working has been expressed as an arrangement that can increase the performance of the employees and the profitability of the organization. Martinez et al. (2007) investigated 156 Spanish firms and concluded that remote working had a positive effect on financial performance and strategic flexibility. It creates numerical and functional flexibility for organizations. While numerical flexibility increases an organization's ability to make workforce adjustments (number of workers) in its outputs, functional flexibility increases the organization's capacity to distribute employees across different roles to adapt to changing workloads, production systems or technologies (Dissanayake, 2017). The individual benefits of remote working have been the subject of many studies. In a study of 863 remote workers in the federal government, Major et al. (2008) stated that the dependents of remote workers benefit from this way of working. According

to Major et al. (2008), performance of remote workers increased, because they were more motivated and less concerned about the care of their dependents. Nicholas and Adèle (2010), listed benefits of working remotely as not going to the office during rush hours and spending less time in traffic, flexibility, increased morale and job satisfaction, and increased work-life balance. Boell et al. (2013), determined the advantages and disadvantages of working remotely at both institutional and individual levels in his study and identified five main advantages for the individuals such as financial benefits, spatial mobility, job autonomy and satisfaction. The Global Dialogue Forum, by the International Labour Organization, discussed policies and practices that can maximize the benefits of remote working (ILO, 2016). According to the results obtained, benefits of remote working for employees are as follows: a better work-life balance, less commuting, less work-related personal expenses and the ability to balance care responsibilities, and more job opportunities.

Based on the literature review we formulated a research model that is shown in Figure 1. We followed the research process described by Kumar (2005).

**Figure 1:** Research Model



Based on the literature review we formulated a hypothesis below.

**H1:** *The work-life balance of generation Y academicians who switched to remote work due to the Covid-19 pandemic has a statistically significant positive impact on mental well-being.*

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1. Data and Sample

The sample of this study is generation Y remote working academics, who are working in public and private universities in the province of Istanbul. Based on the fact that generation Y is the common name given to those born between 1980 and 2000, it is planned that the participants to be included in the study were born between the aforementioned years, and those who did not meet this criterion were not included in the study (Broadbridge et al., 2007). According to the up-to-date statistics obtained through the Higher Education Information Management System (YOK Statistic Reports, 2020) a total of 36896 academicians works throughout Istanbul. 7370 professors, 3968 associate professors, 9680 Assistant Professors, 7212 lecturers and 8666 research assistants are academicians who work actively in public and private universities within the borders of Istanbul.

The simple random sampling method was used. In this way all Y generation academicians in the research universe have an equal chance to be selected until the necessary sample size is reached. In the selection of samples, the academicians' title differences will not be taken into account, only the lower and upper age limit will set as the criterion for inclusion in the generation Y. According to the acceptable minimum sample size for different populations at %95 confidence level for quantitative oriented social science research, the number of samples that are enough to represent the universe is 381 (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2014). A total of 440 academicians have returned to the surveys. According to the age limitation, 397 questionnaires were included in the study.

Academicians working in the medical faculty were not included in this study. The reason for this is that academicians working in the medical faculty during the Covid-19 process also work in hospitals. It was thought that there might be a difference in mental well-being of these academicians because of the direct exposure to the Covid-19 in the hospitals. That is why medical faculty academicians are excluded from the study.

### **3.2. Research Method**

The study was planned to be a descriptive observational study in which data were collected through a questionnaire. Since it cannot be done face to face due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was carried out online via email. The prepared questionnaire consists of three parts. The first part includes descriptive questions containing demographic data to obtain detailed information about the participants and to complete the requested data. It is aimed to reach information such as age, gender, academic title, type of university in this way. In the second part, the work-life balance scale developed by Netemeyer et al. (1996) and adapted to the Turkish scale by Korkmaz and Erdoğan (2014) was used to measure the work-life balance of the participants. Work life balance scale consists of two parts -work life and family life- and a total of 36 questions. Korkmaz and Erdoğan discussed this scale in two dimensions as work balance and family balance in their study. The scale revision with 6 questions for family balance and 5 questions for work balance was included in the study. In the third part, the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMIOÖ) developed by Tennant et al. (2007) and adapted to the Turkish scale by Keldal (2015) was used to measure the mental well-being of the participants. The scale consists of 14 questions and a single factor. It deals with individuals' positive mental health by including psychological well-being and subjective well-being. The responses for the scales in the second and third sections were prepared as 5-Likert Type in the range of "I totally disagree" and "I strongly agree".

A pilot study was conducted with 55 people as a methodical measure to prevent the bias of the results obtained from the research with statistical methods. With the pilot study, pioneering data were collected, the validity and reliability of the planned study were examined, and the arrangements planned to develop the research design were tested. It is observed that the number of people to be piloted depends on the purpose and sensitivity of the researcher and is generally between 5-10 and 50-100 (Reynolds et al., 1993). The reliability of the pilot measure was measured by the Cronbach

alpha coefficient as in the measurement of the research results, and the result was found at 0,882 for work-life balance and at 0,859 for mental well-being.

### 3.3. Results

Research data were analyzed using the SPSS 22.0 program. First, the descriptive demographic characteristics of the sample participating in the study were examined and shown in Table 1. After this, the means of the sample's answers to the expressions were examined and shown in Table 2 and Table 3. The linguistic equivalence of both scales was provided by the translation retranslation method in the original studies before. Confirmatory factor analysis was applied to the scales by finding the Cronbach Alpha coefficient to determine the reliability and validity of the scales. It is stated that the reliability of the measurement is very good for  $0.70 \leq \alpha < 0.80$ , is moderate for  $0.60 \leq \alpha < 0.70$ , and is barely acceptable if  $\alpha$  is smaller than 0.60 (Cronbach, 1951). The suitability of the data for factor analysis was examined using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) coefficient and Bartlett's test of sphericity. Whether work-life balance and mental well-being differ according to the demographic characteristics, type of institution and titles participants' work for is also included in the study and independent samples were examined with the t test and ANOVA. Finally, regression analysis was conducted to verify the hypothesis. The structure of academicians that participated in the survey are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Profile of Survey Participants

Features	Distribution of Responses
Age	20-25: 5.8 %; 26-30: 23.4%; 31-35: 28.7%; 36-40: 42.1%
Gender	Male: 35.8%; Female: 64.2%
Marital Status	Single: 49.6%; Married: 50.4%
Academic Title	Research Assistant: 38.3%; Lecturer: 22.7%; Assistant Professor: 26.7%; Associate Professor: 12.3%
University	Public: 54.2%; Private: 45.8%
Faculty of	Administrative, Economics & Political Sciences: 13.6%; Health Sciences: 2.8% Education: 3.5%; Engineering: 17.1%; Pharmacy: 1.3%; Architecture: 7.1%; Art and Design: 1.3%; Communication: 2.3%; Law: 7.8%; Fine Arts: 4.8%; Science and Letters: 12.3%; Dentistry: 0.8%; School of Foreign Languages: 6.5%; Naval Architecture and Marine Sciences / Maritime: 2.5%; Theology: 0.5%; Health Sciences and Services Vocational School: 8.6%; Vocational School: 7.3%

When Table 1 is examined, the sample consists of mostly women, single, aged 36-40, working as research assistants and working at the public university.

The results of descriptive statistics for answers about the work-life balance of the academicians who switched to the remote work system due to the pandemic are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Descriptive Statistics for Answers About the Work-Life Balance

Questions	Obs	Median	Mean	Std. Dev.	Factor Loadings (Family Balance)	Factor Loadings (Work Balance)
Q1	397	3,000	2,864	1,4058	,786	-
Q2	397	2,000	2,567	1,2608	,763	-
Q3	397	2,000	2,516	1,3192	,858	-
Q4	397	2,000	2,499	1,2863	,819	-
Q5	397	3,000	2,836	1,3673	,851	-
Q6	397	2,000	2,524	1,2842	,853	-
Q7	397	3,000	3,091	1,4167	-	,700
Q8	397	2,000	2,783	1,3975	-	,812
Q9	397	2,000	2,187	1,1563	-	,798
Q10.	397	2,000	2,563	1,2049	-	,696
Q11	397	2,000	2,907	1,3627	-	,777
<b>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure: 0.914</b>						
<b>Approx. Chi-Square: 3044,641, df: 55, p &lt; 0,000</b>						
<b>Cumulative percentage of explained variance: 70,682 %</b>						
<b>The value of Cronbach's alpha: 0,922</b>						

According to Table 2, considering the averages of the responses of the participants to the work-life balance scale, it is revealed that they do not reflect the problems in their family life to their work, but it is seen that they have the idea that it affects their balance in work life. It was also observed that the condition of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) is 0.914 and the calculated chi-square value of Barlett's Test was met to be statistically significant. The reliability of the scale was measured by the Cronbach alpha coefficient and the result was found at 0,922. The scale was parallel to Korkmaz and Erdogan's (2014) study and gave results with two factors: family balance and work balance. Descriptive statistics for answers about the work-life balance in Table 2 shows that the highest average agreement is achieved by the statements "Since I started working remotely due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the increasing demands in my job have turned me into a stressful person in my personal life." (mean 2,907) and "I believe that long working hours, compulsory overtime and job changes have disrupted my work life balance." (mean 3,091). This situation shows that stress increases in individuals who experience work-life conflict due to time as a result of the increase in responsibilities and work demands in home life during the pandemic process.

Table 3 presents the results of descriptive statistics for answers about the mental well-being of the academicians who switched to remote work system due to the pandemic.

**Table 3:** Descriptive Statistics for Answers About the Mental Well-Being

Questions	Obs	Median	Mean	Std. Dev.	Factor Loadings
Q1	397	3,000	3,196	1,0621	,867
Q2	397	4,000	3,748	,9934	,733
Q3	397	3,000	2,678	1,1750	,723

Q4	397	4,000	3,589	,9536	,676
Q5	397	3,000	3,068	1,1968	,665
Q6	397	4,000	3,602	,8720	,655
Q7	397	4,000	3,579	,9545	,622
Q8	397	4,000	3,398	1,0720	,562
Q9	397	3,000	3,229	1,0152	,798
Q10	397	4,000	3,894	,8639	,681
Q11	397	4,000	3,924	,8758	,638
Q12	397	4,000	3,788	,9564	,579
Q13	397	4,000	3,738	,9702	,572
Q14	397	3,000	3,118	1,0911	,524
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure: 0.935					
Approx. Chi-Square: 3064,731, df: 91, p < 0,000					
Cumulative percentage of explained variance: 58,550 %					
The value of Cronbach's alpha: 0,922					

According to Table 3, considering the averages of the responses of the participants to the mental well-being scale, it is revealed that their mental well-being is not directly exposed to a negative effect. It was also observed that the condition of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) is 0.935 and the calculated chi-square value of Barlett's Test was met to be statistically significant. The reliability of the scale was measured by the Cronbach alpha coefficient and the result was found at 0,922. Descriptive statistics for answers about mental well-being in Table 3 shows that the highest average agreement is achieved by the statements "I can make my own decisions." (mean 3,924) and "I am confident." (mean 3,894). This situation shows that participants express themselves positively despite the pandemic process and changes in working life.

The t-test was applied to examine whether there are significant differences in terms of demographic factors for work-life balance and mental being, and it is shown in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Independent Sample T Test Results

Features		Obs	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t value	Sig (2-tailed)	
Work-Life Balance	Gender	Male	142	2,70	,9250	317	,528	,598
		Female	255	2,64	1,022			
	Marital Status	Single	197	2,66	,9772	394	-,106	,916
		Married	200	2,67	1,001			
	University	Public	215	2,69	1,024	392	,507	,613
Private		182	2,64	,9454				

Mental Well-being	Gender	Male	142	3,43	,7220	286	-,755	,451
		Female	255	3,48	,7051			
	Marital Status	Single	197	3,45	,7293	393	-,450	,653
		Married	200	3,48	,6936			
	University	Public	215	3,38	,7343	392	-2,542	,011
Private		182	3,56	,6711				

Table 4 shows that the changes based on gender, marital status, and the type of university the participants work in did not make a significant difference on both work-life adaptation and mental well-being.

The One-Way Anova was applied to examine whether there are significant differences in terms of academicians' title differences for work-life balance and mental being, and it is shown in Table 5.

**Table 5: One-Way ANOVA Results**

Features		Number	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig (2-tailed)
Work-Life Balance	RA	152	2,55	,9888	3,393	1,486	,218
	Lecturer	90	2,76	1,020			
	Asst. Prof.	106	2,77	,9730			
	Assoc. Prof.	49	2,60	,9376			
Mental Well-being	RA	152	3,43	,7801	3,393	,473	,701
	Lecturer	90	3,44	,6927			
	Asst. Prof.	106	3,53	,6517			
	Assoc. Prof.	49	3,47	,6300			

Table 5 shows that the academicians' title differences do not cause a significant difference on work-life adaptation and mental well-being. After descriptive statistics, factor analysis, t tests and ANOVA it is performed a regression analysis to verify the following hypothesis:

**H1:** *The work-life balance of generation Y academicians who switched to remote work due to the Covid-19 pandemic has a statistically significant positive impact on mental well-being.*

**Table 6: Regression Analysis for Variables**

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
The work-life balance of generation Y academicians	The mental well-being	0,336	,032	,467	47,916	,000

The value of correlation coefficient between the dependent variable and independent variable for H1 is  $r = 0,467$ , which indicates that there is a connection between the variables. The adjusted R-Squared

value of the analysis results is 0,216. According to this value, it is seen that 21% variance in mental well-being depends on work-life adaptation.

#### **4. Discussion**

During the pandemic, businesses that have switched to flexible working practices have recently realized that their work can be performed outside of traditional office areas and started to use technology more comfortably. Rate of remote working in the pre-pandemic period was 21 percent, and this rate was situated quite low compared to other OECD countries. However, according to the “Turkey Business Life and Work Areas in the New Era” report, it was found 70 percent with new legal regulations (Sputnik Türkiye, 2020). In this report, it was also seen that education, scientific activities, finance or communication and information activities are the sectors most suitable for working from home (OECD, 2020), According to the study of Dingel and Neiman, occupations that require only a laptop and internet connection will be considered as jobs with high potential to work remotely (Dingel & Neiman, 2020). Generally, such occupations require a high level of education. Differences in the potential to work remotely between regions and countries reflect the educational differences of the workforce. This leads to an increase in jobs that enable remote work. Many countries around the world have decided to suspend face-to-face education and close schools at all levels in order to limit the spread of the virus in the pandemic period. In all of Europe (except Sweden and Iceland), schools at all levels have been closed within a week from March 16 (Workplaceinside, 2020). Higher education institutions are also closed on the same date, Turkey has been adopted in the subsequent process of distance education and academics began teaching with distance learning. Employees in higher education institutions can be considered among the professions that are highly suitable for home-based professions due to their high education levels. Because working from home is so important, in order for institutions and organizations to continue to work effectively and productively during the pandemic. How mental well-being of employees is affected in this process is also important. Based on this aim, this study was carried out to determine the extent to which the work-life adaptation processes and mental well-being were affected during the pandemic process of the academicians who switched to the remote working system. When similar studies about academic staff of the higher education sector in the literature are examined, it is seen that family type, gender differences and marital status making differences primarily creates differences in task management and efficient use of time (Currie & Eveline, 2011). These differences also affect job performance, job satisfaction (Arvola & Kristjuhan, 2015) and well-being indirectly. Increasing job demands and extended working hours can cause an increase in stress (Tremblay et al., 2006). On the other hand, remote worker academicians can feel more productive and more satisfied with their work (Tustin, 2014). In line with all these results, it is possible to examine the relationship between work-life adaptation and mental well-being (Allen & Finkelstein, 2014). In our study, it was observed that the mental well-being of the people was generally at a high level and did not have a high-impact relationship with work-life adaptation, which was negatively affected by the transition from home to work.

Based on the results, we confirmed the hypothesis that the work-life balance of generation Y academicians who switched to remote work due to the Covid-19 pandemic has a statistically significant positive impact on mental well-being. Table 2 shows that the remote working system application of the participants due to the pandemic causes them to experience some negative effects about work-life balance. It was observed that the levels of stress increased and work life balance was negatively affected. The results obtained are similar to the current literature.

While remote working certainly has advantages and is quickly being adopted widely, fighting loneliness was one of the biggest challenges (Workplaceinside, 2020). They spare more time for responsibilities at home and feel tired of working after fulfilling those responsibilities. Therefore, they experience work life conflicts due to the overlap of work and home responsibilities. Long meetings that exceed working hours, uncertain working hours, compulsory overtime, and increasing demands on their work disrupt their work-life balance and turn them into a stressful person in their personal lives (Heiden et al., 2020).

Table 3 shows that academicians express themselves positively despite the pandemic process and changes in working life. They emphasized that their decision-making processes are not negatively affected, that they can cope with problems confidently, they are interested in new things, their communication with other people and their interest in them are not impaired, and they feel useful. This may lend support to previous findings that academicians adapt more easily to work from home due to their service provision and competencies, and their mental well-being is slightly affected by this situation and shows a positive course. Considering the situation in academia, especially in terms of work-life balance among employees, flexible work arrangements have been proposed as a means of reducing stress (Mudrak et al., 2018). According to Göktepe (2020), it was determined that the perception of the participants regarding role conflict in the home-working model was generally positive, and 60% of the participants in the study stated that working from home contributed positively to their family roles. As a result of the research, it is seen that working from home is generally perceived positively by the academicians participating in the research. It can be said that the nature of the work done is convenient to work remotely (from home) and remote (home) working is in the nature of being an academician, independent of space and time.

Whether work-life balance and mental well-being differ according to the demographic characteristics and academic title (Table 4 and 5) of the participants is also included in the study. It is seen that these variables did not make a significant difference on both work-life adaptation and mental well-being. Our result does not support previous findings of similar studies in this respect.

In addition to all these, as people learn new ways to work remotely and businesses reorganize, the pandemic-driven changes may portend more lasting effects on the organization of work. We will continue to track changes to the nature of remote work, learning how pandemic-induced changes transform workplaces in the short and long-term (Brynjolfsson et al., 2020). As long as the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic continue, flexible working applications such as remote work will continue to be used intensively in the upcoming period (Bartik et al., 2020).

## 5. Conclusion

The Covid-19 epidemic spreaded all over the world and negatively affected many industries. In order to limit the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, schools and universities have closed in most countries. Therefore, like many sectors, academicians started working remotely. According to the new educational system, this study examined the impact of remote working on the mental well-being of generation Y academicians in Turkey. Generation Y academicians constitute the sample of the study. The reason for focusing only on generation Y academicians is that, the number of generation Y academicians in the academy is high according to the data of the Council of Higher Education. In addition, the generation Y academicians will be in the academy in the upcoming years, so the study can be examined in a long-term way. The study can be examined again when the pandemic will decrease and comparisons can be done with our study. Academicians in medical faculty were not included in the study. It has been observed that the academicians working in the medical faculty not only work remotely but also work in the hospital. The results showed significant association between work-life balance of generation Y academicians who work remotely and mental well being. Unlike other studies, no significant difference was found between gender and mental well-being. For future studies, first of all, academicians working in the medical faculty, which is excluded from the sample, can be examined separately. Comparison can be made with the results obtained. It is thought that there will be differences in mental well-being of this academic group, which is in direct contact with the disease in the Covid-19 process. In this context, examining the results with qualitative research methods is important in terms of deepening the subject. It is also recommended to make comparisons on the basis of intergenerational separation, which is one of the limitations of the study. In particular, taking the opinions of generation Z academician candidates, who will be new to academia in the coming years, will contribute to the shaping of the future education system. This study focuses only on academics, studies to be conducted in different sectors are likely to have different results. In this context, the study can be applied to different sectors. This study only contains Turkey. It is thought that studies to be carried out in other countries will yield different results due to cultural differences. In this respect, the comparison with different countries and Turkey can reveal meaningful results. Since there is not much work on the concept of mental well-being, it can be handled with different variables. With the pandemic, work-life balance gains importance. For this reason, it is recommended to make arrangements with the remote working system, to create a supportive work culture, to raise awareness of individuals and organizations about work-life balance, and to make arrangements to achieve better work-life balance in remote working models. However, due to the pandemic, organizations can implement new business and human resources strategies within the scope of organizational change. In this model, the concepts of remote work, work-life balance and mental well-being are discussed. However, researchers can add the concepts of burnout, motivation, career satisfaction performance, organizational support and resilience to this model. This study is a cross sectional study. Research results can be compared with longitudinal studies with the same variables in different time periods. Finally, this study was carried out with the Y generation. In other studies, generation X and Z can be included in the sample and intergenerational differences can be discussed.

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