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Remote Work's Impact on Well-being: Longitudinal Analysis and the Influence of Gender, Household Size, and Childcare

Abstract

Purpose

The aim of the study was to investigate the relationship between remote work and subjective well-being and the potential moderating role of gender, household size, and childcare.

Design/methodology/approach

The current research used data from the 2016 and 2020 editions of the Survey on Household Income and Wealth of the Bank of Italy. Italian workers were asked to report their subjective well-being and how many days per month they work remotely (at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic). Cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses were conducted on a sample of 1.103 and 184 participants, respectively.

Findings

After controlling for the effect of gender, age, education, and perceived economic condition, ordered probit models revealed that the relationship between remote work and subjective well-being was non-significant. Moreover, gender, household size, and childcare did not play a moderating role in the relationship between remote work and subjective well-being.

Originality

The potential positive effects of remote work on subjective well-being might be overestimated.

Practical implications

The findings of the current study suggest that an individualized approach is required to maximize the possible benefits of remote work.

Keywords: COVID-19, gender, parental status, remote working, working from home, subjective well-being

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on employment, work organization, working conditions, and employee experiences. One of the most reported organizational changes is the significant increase in remote work, which was not only recommended but in some cases mandatory (Tursunbayeva *et al.*, 2022). Here, remote work can be defined as those situations in which the work is fully or partly carried out in another location away other than the workplace (Spreitzer *et al.*, 2017). Remote work is a broad concept that includes telework or telecommuting (an American equivalent for teleworking) that involves the use of landline telephones or information and communications technology to communicate and carry out the work remotely (Spreitzer *et al.*, 2017, Wheatley, 2012, Sullivan, 2003).

A wide range of benefits has been attributed to remote work (e.g., Spreitzer *et al.*, 2017, Wheatley, 2012, Charalampous *et al.*, 2019, Allen *et al.*, 2015). Remote work has been associated with employees' perceptions of job quality (Kelliher and Anderson, 2008), organizational commitment (Golden, 2006) and job performance (Bloom *et al.*, 2015, Gajendran and Harrison, 2007) In their theoretical framework and meta-analysis of 46 studies, Gajendran and Harrison (2007) argued and provided evidence indicating beneficial effects of remote working on perceived autonomy, work-life balance, job satisfaction, performance, (lower) turnover intent, and (lower) role stress. It is interesting to note that, contrary to their expectations, a positive effect of remote work on the employee–supervisor relationship was found, while coworker relationship quality was not affected by remote work. Also, high-intensity remote work (more than 2.5 days a week) increased the positive relationship between remote work and good work-life balance and had a damaging effect on coworker relationship quality. In a subsequent meta-analytic study, it has been found a small but positive relationship between remote and secure retention, organizational commitment, productivity, and performance (Harker Martin and MacDonnell, 2012).

However, there are also some disadvantages or challenges related to remote work (e.g., Charalampous *et al.*, 2019). The most obvious disadvantage of remote work is the lack of interactions with coworkers and supervisors, which may result in social isolation and decreased potential for feelings of inclusion and work community/relationships. Using a quasi-experimental design, Morganson *et al.* (2010) found that main-office workers reported a greater sense of inclusion than remote workers, while the levels of work-life balance support and job satisfaction were similar across groups. In another study, it was found that face-to-face interaction is most important for workplace friendship initiation and maintenance; however, the importance of face-to-face interaction to workplace friendship is declining as the workplace becomes electronically connected (Sias *et al.*, 2012). In addition, remote workers may struggle to maintain a boundary between work and home life and experience increased work–family conflicts (Fonner and Stache, 2012, Adisa *et al.*, 2022, Ammons, 2013). Remote work has been found to lower work-to-family conflict at the expense of increased family-to-work conflict (Golden *et al.*, 2006). Finally, remote workers may cope with higher levels of household and family responsibility (Hammer *et al.*, 2005).

It seems clear that remote work can bring many benefits but also carries some disadvantages or challenges. Most of the existing studies (e.g., Charalampous *et al.*, 2019, Fonner and Roloff, 2010) focused on the relationship between remote work and well-being in the workplace context (domain-specific). According to their conceptual and theoretical overview of well-being at work, Taris and Schaufeli (2014) conceptualize two dimensions of well-being, namely whether they focus on a specific context (domain-specific) or whether they are context-free (or global) indicators of well-being. There are theory and evidence indicating that remote work could also affect context-free (or global) subjective well-being (e.g., Wang *et al.*, 2021, Pataki-Bittó and Kun, 2022, Knardahl and Christensen, 2022).

Research on the relationship between remote work and subjective well-being is relatively unexplored and findings are inconclusive. In one of the first studies that drew attention to the

relationship between remote work and subjective well-being, Hartman *et al.* (1992) argued that remote work would be positively associated with life satisfaction due to the flexibility and freedom to pursue family and other non-work activities as well as to the higher job satisfaction resulting from remote work. However, in a subsequent study, Virick *et al.* (2009) found that a curvilinear, inverted U-shaped relation exists between the extent of remote work and life satisfaction. More specifically, life satisfaction was highest at moderate levels of remote work. This suggests a potential tradeoff between advantages (e.g., flexibility and freedom) and disadvantages (e.g., lack of face-to-face interactions) associated with remote work. However, in a subsequent study, Song and Gao (2020) found that bringing work home on weekdays is associated with less happiness compared to working in the workplace. Based on the mixed findings of previous research, the following three competing hypotheses were proposed:

Hypothesis 1a: A linear and positive relationship between remote work and subjective well-being will be expected;

Hypothesis 1b: A linear and negative relationship between remote work and subjective well-being will be expected;

Hypothesis 1c: An inverted U relationship between remote work and subjective well-being will be expected.

The relationship between remote work and subjective well-being may differ between male and female gender. In an investigation of levels of satisfaction among home-based teleworkers, Wheatley (2012) posited that “home workers, especially women, are more satisfied with work than workers based in more traditional office (or similar) environments.” According to Wheatley, remote work provides temporal and spatial flexibility that contributes to better work-life balance. Gender norms concerning caring roles and double shift burden (e.g., housework) may increase the attractiveness of working from home among women compared to men. Therefore, it is possible to hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 2: The relationship between remote work and subjective well-being will be moderated by gender, such that male workers benefit less from remote work than female workers.

Previous research seems to suggest that the role of family caring roles and housework as critical factors that affect remote work may be a function of household size and living with a child/children under the age of 12 (e.g., Pataki-Bittó and Kun, 2022, Golden *et al.*, 2006). Specifically, there is evidence that although smaller households do not exacerbate the effects of remote work on family-to-work conflict, for people with large households, remote work has a significant positive relationship with family-to-work conflict (Golden *et al.*, 2006). In addition, subjective well-being was lower among remote workers living with a child/children under the age of 12 compared to those living in a household without a child/children under the age of 12 (Pataki-Bittó and Kun, 2022). Taken together, these findings suggest that, in larger households or households with a child/children under the age of 12, barriers between work and family life are more porous, and family demands and expectations tend to be higher. In other words, in larger households or households with a child/children under the age of 12, accessibility and proximity of remote workers to household members are associated with greater demands, expectations, and strains. In sum, the relationship between remote work and subjective well-being may be moderated by household size and the presence of children under the age of 12 in the household.

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between remote work and subjective well-being will be moderated by household size, such that remote workers with large households tend to report lower subjective well-being compared to remote workers with small households.

Hypothesis 4: The relationship between remote work and subjective well-being will be moderated by the presence of children under the age of 12 in the household, such that remote workers living with a child/children under the age of 12 tend to report lower subjective well-being compared to remote workers without a child/children under the age of 12.

The Present Study

The present study aimed at investigating the impact of remote work on subjective well-being among Italian workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Italy was the first Western country to be hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and to introduce stringent lockdown measures. During the COVID-19 pandemic, remote work expanded considerably (e.g., Peters *et al.*, 2022, Dunatchik *et al.*, 2021). In the present work, the focus was on those workers who have jobs where remote work is not possible because workers with higher job insecurity and from low social strata and lower socioeconomic are more likely to have jobs where remote work is not possible (Gama *et al.*, 2021). The hypotheses were investigated in cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses.

Method

Data and Sample

The present study used data from the Survey on Household Income and Wealth (SHIW, Bank of Italy, 2022a, Bank of Italy, 2022b). The SHIW has been conducted repeatedly in Italy by the Bank of Italy starting from the 1960s. The aim of the SHIW was to select a nationally representative sample of the Italian population. In the last waves, the final sample was determined by a two-stage selection process. Specifically, municipalities and households were, respectively, the primary and secondary sampling units in the two-stages sampling process. Before selecting the primary units, they were stratified by population size and region of Italy. To increase design efficiency, starting from the 2020 edition, second-stage units were drawn after identifying an appropriate stratification based on household income and debt (second-stage unit stratification). The interviews were conducted with the reference person who is the person most knowledgeable about or primarily responsible for the household budget. For each household, the reference person was identified by household members. The interviewer asked the reference person to provide all the information about the individual members of the household.

A portion of respondents interviewed in the previous wave (panel households) is included in the final sample with the aim of analyzing the trends. The present study used data from the 38th edition of

the SHIW for the year 2020. The 38th edition of the SHIW was initially supposed to be conducted in 2020 in reference to 2019. However, the survey was postponed to 2021 because of the pandemic. The sample used in the 38th edition of the SHIW included 6.239 households (15.198 participants) located in about 300 Italian municipalities. Anonymized survey data are freely available for research on the website of the Bank of Italy (Bank of Italy, 2022a). The methodological notes issued by the Bank of Italy (2022b) report detailed information about the main methodologies used in the 38th edition of the SHIW.

In the 38th edition of the SHIW, the employed persons working habitually from home as a percentage of the total employment was 10.3%. This percentage is similar to the percentage of Italian employed persons working from home reported in the (Eurostat, 2023) data (12.2%). Moreover, the percentage of employed male and female persons working habitually from home was 10.0% and 11.2%, respectively. These percentages are similar to the percentages of the Italian male and female employed persons working from home reported in the (Eurostat, 2023) data (10.7% and 14.3%, respectively).

Inclusion criteria for the current analysis were: (1) being employed and (2) being engaged in work activities that are amenable to teleworking (teleworkability). In the 38th edition of the SHIW, 1.103 reference persons of the household (e.g., people who are mainly responsible for the household budget or most knowledgeable about it) reported that they have a job and that their work can be carried out remotely (the question was “Can your work be carried out remotely (e.g. from home)?”). Among these 1.103 respondents, a subsample of 184 people (from the panel households) was also interviewed at the 37th edition of the SHIW which was conducted in 2016. Therefore, the sample for cross-sectional analysis included 1.103 participants, while the longitudinal analysis involved a subsample of 184 participants. Tables 1 and 2 provide a description of the demographic characteristics of the cross-sectional and longitudinal samples, respectively.

Instrument

All the measures used in the current study were taken from the 2020 edition of the SHIW, except for subjective well-being. To document the potential effect of remote work on change in subjective well-being in longitudinal analysis, data on subjective well-being were taken from both the 2016 and 2020 editions of the survey. Subjective well-being was assessed using the following single-item question: “Considering all the aspects of your life, how happy would you say you are? Please score on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means “extremely unhappy” and 10 “extremely happy,” and the intermediate numbers serve to graduate the response.” The same item was used to assess subjective well-being in both the 2016 and 2020 editions of the SHIW. In the 2020 edition, the mean score for subjective well-being was 7.98 ($SD = 1.27$, Min = 1, Max = 10). Participants who had a job and reported that their work could be carried out remotely were asked to report how many days per month (in a normal month) they worked remotely at the time of the survey. Participants reported a mean of 8.19 days per month ($SD = 8.45$, Min = 0, Max = 31). The household size was measured using the following question: “I would first like to record the composition of the household. Please list all household members on 31-12-2020. (Include all persons normally living in the dwelling on 31-12-2020 who contributed at least part of their income to the household. Include any members temporarily absent — e.g. on vacation, away for study, etc. — and any non-relatives living permanently in the home on 31-12-2020. Do not include children born in 2021.)” For each member of the household, respondents reported the year of birth. A new variable was created such that respondents living in a household including a member whose age was 12 years or lower were assigned a score of 1 while other respondents were assigned a score of 0.

Covariates included gender, age, education, and the perceived financial stress of the household or the ability to make ends meet. The ability to make ends meet can be considered a proxy variable for the economic status of a household and was assessed through the following question: “Is your

household's income sufficient to see you through to the end of the month? (1—with great difficulty, 2—with difficulty, 3—with some difficulty, 4—fairly easily, 5—easily, 6—very easily).”

Analysis Plan

Missing data analysis revealed that the responses had no missing data. Departure from linearity was tested using the NLCHECK module in Stata (Jann, 2008). The ordered probit model was performed to test the hypotheses of the present study. Gender, age, education, multigenerational household (e.g., including two or more adult generations), and perceived economic condition were included as covariates in the analyses. In the longitudinal analysis, baseline levels of subjective well-being (i.e., from SHIW for the year 2016) were included in the model.

Results

Cross-Sectional Analysis

The linearity assumption did not seem to be violated, $F(9,1092) = 0.40, p = .935$. Figure 1 displays the relationship between remote work and subjective well-being. Results from ordered probit model are presented in Table 3. None of the three competing hypotheses (Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c) about the relationship between remote work and subjective well-being were supported. The relationship between remote work and subjective well-being was not moderated by gender (Hypothesis 2). The association between remote work and subjective well-being was not moderated by household size (Hypothesis 3). The relationship between remote work and subjective well-being was not moderated by the presence of children under the age of 12 in the household (Hypothesis 4).

Longitudinal Analysis

In the prediction of the effect of remote work on subjective well-being while controlling for baseline levels of subjective well-being, the linearity assumption did not appear to be violated, $F(9,172) = 1.11, p = .352$. Table 4 displays the results of the ordered probit model. The analysis did not show support for any of the three competing hypotheses (Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c) about the relationship

between remote work and subjective well-being. The association between remote work and subjective well-being did not appear to be moderated by gender (Hypothesis 2). The relationship between remote work and subjective well-being was not moderated by household size (Hypothesis 3). Finally, the association between remote work and subjective well-being was not moderated by the presence of children under the age of 12 in the household (Hypothesis 4).

Additional Analyses

Additional analyses were performed to respond to an anonymous Reviewer's comments. The Reviewer argued that the person most knowledgeable about the budget might be the one with a bigger income and thus negotiating capacity regarding remote work. If this hypothesis were true, then we should expect a significant relationship between the perceived economic status and the number of days working at home. However, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was not statistically significant, $r_s = .04$, $p = .230$, indicating that there is no relationship between the perceived economic status and the number of days working at home.

The reviewer also argued that multigenerational households and having a family budget that allows household members to make ends meet might have had an influence on the current findings. Therefore, an additional analysis using the longitudinal sample was conducted to assess whether the economic status of a household and the presence of multigenerational households influenced the relationship between remote work and subjective well-being. The relationship between remote work and subjective well-being was not influenced by multigenerational households, $b = 0.03$, $SE = 0.06$, $p = .617$, 95% CI [-0.08, 0.14], and economic status of a household, $b = -0.00$, $SE = 0.01$, $p = .864$, 95% CI [-0.02, 0.02].

Discussion

The main aim of the present study was to investigate the relationship between remote work and subjective well-being among Italian workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although there is evidence

of an increase in remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., Peters *et al.*, 2022, Dunatchik *et al.*, 2021) and that the pandemic had a (relatively small) impact on the well-being of Italian people (Prati, 2021), the findings of the present study suggest that the extent of remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic did not have an impact on subjective well-being. The findings of the present study are in line with those of Vittersø *et al.* (2003) who found that remote work did not affect subjective well-being. One possible explanation for such finding could be that the benefits such as freedom, flexibility, elimination of commuting time, and autonomy were offset by negative aspects such as “fuzzier” boundaries with private life, difficulty working remotely (e.g., due to inadequate technology and workspaces), and isolation from colleagues and managers (Peters *et al.*, 2022). Vittersø *et al.* (2003) also hypothesized that a more moderate number of days working at home may be optimal for subjective well-being. Such a hypothesis was tested in a subsequent study conducted by Virick *et al.* (2009) who found an inverted U-shaped relation between the extent of remote work and life satisfaction. In the present study, the idea of an optimal level of remote work that maximizes subjective well-being was not supported. Indeed, the relationship between remote work and subjective well-being was flat, supporting the notion that different factors might cancel each other out, leading to no detectable difference in subjective well-being based on the extent of remote work. It is also possible to hypothesize that remote work during the pandemic was introduced swiftly, not allowing enough opportunities for training and the creation of adequate workspaces as well as social norms in both the family and work settings. It should be noted that the idea of remote work was implemented during the pandemic with the primary aim of minimizing infection, job/income loss, and the suspension of business activities. Therefore, the findings of the current study refer to Italian workers in that specific context (i.e., during the COVID-19 pandemic) and cannot rule out the hypothesis that remote work can be associated with subjective well-being in other contexts and situations. This study has an implication for theory that remote work per se

cannot be considered a beneficial working condition (Gajendran and Harrison, 2007, Zoch *et al.*, 2022), at least when considering subjective well-being as the outcome variable.

There is clear evidence that the COVID-19 pandemic has had an unequal impact on women compared to men both globally (Peck, 2021, Dunatchik *et al.*, 2021) and in Italy (Prati *et al.*, 2021, Cannito and Scavarda, 2020, Prati, 2021). The analyses showed that the relationship between remote work and subjective well-being did not differ across women and men. This finding can be explained by the fact that remote work is a double-edged sword for women. On the one hand, it may facilitate work-to-family integration, while, on the other hand, it may reinforce gendered social roles and expectations, especially the traditional domestic division of labor. There is evidence that men whose partners did not switch to remote work during the pandemic spend more time on housework than before the pandemic (Del Boca *et al.*, 2020) and that the traditional division of family work was affected differently by pandemic-related altered working conditions including remote work depending on the gender of the worker (Zoch *et al.*, 2021, Hank and Steinbach, 2021, Abendroth *et al.*, 2022). It is interesting to note that women were less likely to switch to remote work before the pandemic (Lott and Abendroth, 2020) and such gender-specific cultural barriers in organizations decreased during the pandemic (Abendroth *et al.*, 2022, Dunatchik *et al.*, 2021).

Household size and the presence of children under the age of 12 in the household did not moderate the relationship between remote work and subjective well-being. Previous studies revealed that among people living in larger households or with a child/children under the age of 12, remote work was associated with family-to-work conflict (Golden *et al.*, 2006) and lower subjective well-being (Pataki-Bittó and Kun, 2022). Taken together, these findings may indicate that living in larger households or with a child/children under the age of 12 may also have potentially positive effects which can compensate for the negative effects. For instance, although remote workers living in larger households or with children may perceive fuzzier boundaries between family and work, they may also enjoy the possibility of

spending more time with their family members. Moreover, social isolation due to remote work may be reduced in larger households or those with children. It should be noted that living with children or being a caregiver during COVID-19 reduced feelings of social isolation (Okabe-Miyamoto *et al.*, 2021).

To properly interpret the findings of the current research, some limitations need to be considered. The associations found in cross-sectional and longitudinal research designs preclude inferring a causal relationship. Future experimental or quasi-experimental studies are needed to investigate causal relationships. In addition, subjective well-being was assessed using a single-item measure. Notwithstanding, it should be noted that a single-item measure of subjective well-being can be as valid as multiple-item measures (e.g., Cheung and Lucas, 2014). It is also important to note that the findings of the current study are based on self-report measures, which may be affected by response biases (e.g., inaccurate recall, social desirability bias). Finally, due to inclusion criteria, the sociodemographic characteristics of the subsample of participants are not representative of Italian society. In the current study, analyses were conducted on a subsample of participants who were currently employed and whose jobs could be carried out remotely (i.e., occupation groups with very high or full teleworkability). There is clear evidence showing that unemployment is related to poverty (e.g., Gallie *et al.*, 2003) and that the level of teleworkability is very strongly and positively correlated with worker's hourly earnings (e.g., Brussevich *et al.*, 2022). Therefore, the subsample cannot be representative of the Italian society.

Implications for Practice and Research

The findings of the present study suggest that the “one size fits all” approach in remote work is limited. There is evidence that people express different beliefs about working remotely (Donati *et al.*, 2021) and this may indicate that an individualized approach is required to maximize the benefits of remote work. Future studies may use a congruence approach (Prati, 2022) to identify a ‘person-remote work fit’ based on workers’ preferences, beliefs, training, needs, availability of suitable workstation and

technology, work-spaces design, and satisfaction with workspace indoor environmental factors (e.g., Donati *et al.*, 2021, Xiao *et al.*, 2021, Wodajeneh *et al.*, 2022). Moreover, additional research is needed to investigate the impact of remote work on the division of housework and care work within the family.

Conclusion

Overall, the findings of the present study, along with the mixed evidence of previous studies, suggest that the effect of remote work on subjective well-being, if any, is limited in the context of the pandemic. The findings of the current study cannot be generalized to the Italian population because the current study focused on employed people performing tasks that allow them to adopt remote work. Potential explanations may be that the transition to remote work during the pandemic was abrupt, often unprepared and unplanned, motivated by other reasons (e.g., social distancing), and perceived as a temporary measure. Moreover, it was hypothesized that a tailored approach to the adoption of remote work would be capable of maximizing its benefits. Finally, it is interesting to note that the relationship between remote work was not moderated by gender and childcare duty.

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Table 1*Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Sample for the Cross-Sectional Analysis*

	<i>n</i>	%	<i>M(SD)</i>
Age			56.70 (10.91)
Gender (female)	352	31.91	
Education level			
Lower secondary education or less	31	2.81	
Upper secondary education	345	31.28	
Higher education	727	65.91	
Ability to make ends meet			
With great difficulty	15	1.36	
With difficulty	38	3.45	
With some difficulty	182	16.5	
Fairly easily	426	38.62	
Easily	282	25.57	
Very easily	160	14.51	

Note. *n* = 1.103.

Source: Author's own creation/work.

Table 2*Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Sample for the Longitudinal Analysis*

	<i>n</i>	%	<i>M(SD)</i>
Age			58.80 (9.04)
Gender (female)	70	38.04	
Education level			
Lower secondary education or less	6	3.26	
Upper secondary education	83	45.11	
Higher education	95	51.63	
Ability to make ends meet			
With great difficulty	4	2.17	
With difficulty	11	5.98	
With some difficulty	47	25.54	
Fairly easily	72	39.13	
Easily	42	22.83	
Very easily	8	4.35	

Note. *n* = 184.

Source: Author's own creation/work.

Table 3

Model Parameters from Ordered Probit Model Predicting Subjective Well-Being (Cross-Sectional Analysis;

n = 1.103)

Predictors	<i>b</i> (<i>SE</i>)	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Remote work	-0.00 (0.01)	.748	[-0.03, 0.02]
Remote work × Gender	-0.00 (0.01)	.738	[-0.02, 0.01]
Remote work × Household size	0.00 (0.00)	.372	[-0.00, 0.01]
Remote work × Living with child	0.01 (0.01)	.568	[-0.01, 0.03]

Note. Pseudo $R^2 = 0.04$. Child refers to the presence of at least one child under the age of 12 in the household; CI = confidence interval; *SE* = standard error. Results were controlled for gender, age, education, perceived economic condition, household size, multigenerational household, and living with child.

Source: Author's own creation/work.

Table 4

Model Parameters from Ordered Probit Model Predicting Subjective Well-Being (Longitudinal Analysis; n = 184)

Predictors	<i>b</i> (<i>SE</i>)	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Remote work	-0.03 (0.03)	.350	[-0.10, 0.03]
Remote work × Gender	-0.00 (0.02)	.851	[-0.04, 0.03]
Remote work × Household size	0.01 (0.01)	.187	[-0.01, 0.03]
Remote work × Living with child	-0.02 (0.03)	.617	[-0.07, 0.04]

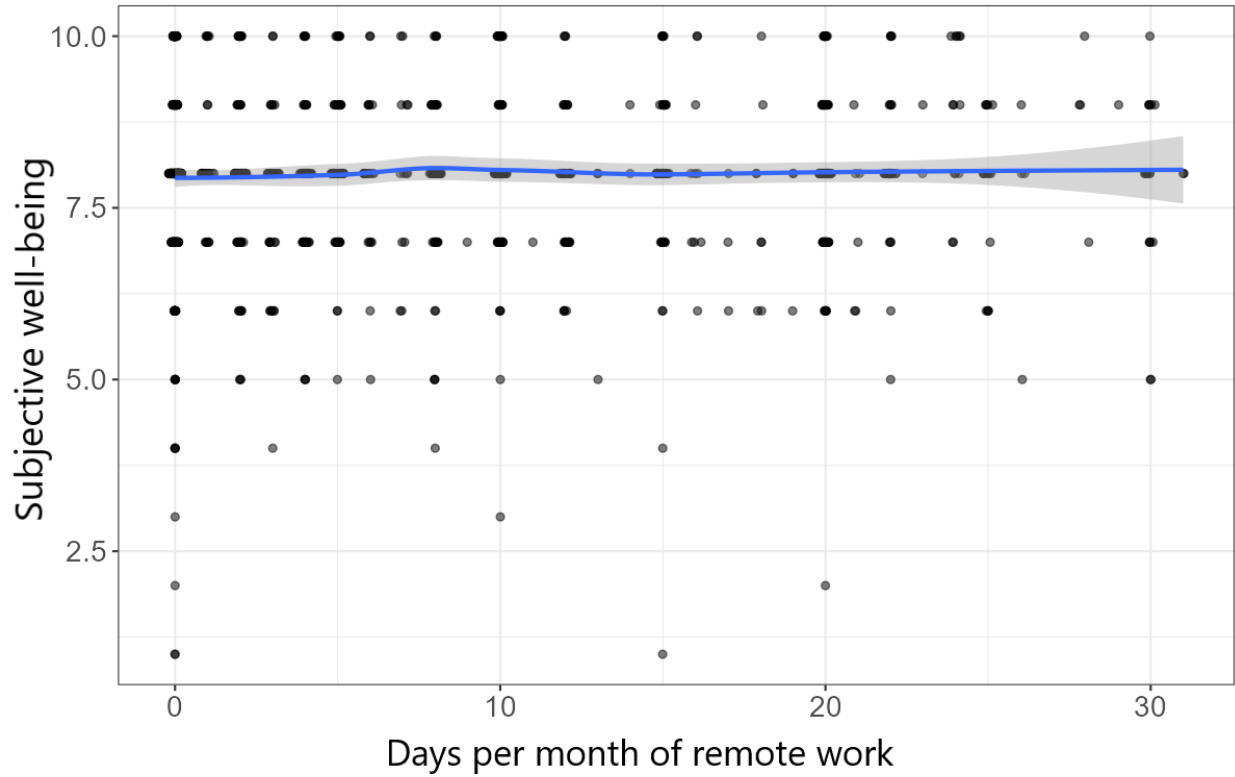
Note. Pseudo $R^2 = 0.10$. Child refers to the presence of at least one child under the age of 12 in the household; CI = confidence interval; *SE* = standard error. Results were controlled for baseline level of subjective well-being, gender, age, education, perceived economic condition, household size, multigenerational household, and living with child.

Source: Author's own creation/work.

Figure 1

Scatterplot Depicting the Relationship Between Day per Month of Remote Work and Subjective Well-

Being



Note. A non-parametric loess smoothed line was fit to the data.

Source: Author's own creation/work.