KWARTALNIK NAUK O PRZEDSIĘBIORSTWIE

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Willingness versus opportunities. An analysis of remote work in Poland from a Finnish perspective[1]

Chęci kontra możliwości. Analiza pracy zdalnej w Polsce z fińskiej perspektywy[2]

Abstract: Although many countries have standardized remote work, organizational practices often fail to align with employee expectations. The aim of the article is to examine how employment and demographic variables determine employees' current and expected remote work in Poland, while comparing to Finnish practices. A survey (CAWI) was conducted among employees (N = 762) who declared that their work could be performed outside the organization's headquarters using new technologies. As a result of the survey, it was found that expectations regarding remote work are significantly higher than the opportunities currently available (Δ 14.72). Current remote work is influenced by age, net income, employment sector, and enterprise size. In turn, remote work expectations are differed by gender and age. Authors see greater possibilities for using remote work in organizations than is currently the case: satisfied employees can be more effective and more loyal, while employers, incurring lower labor costs and gaining access to global talent resources, will achieve a competitive advantage [IPC Research Institute, 2020, p. 60].

1 The study was conducted as part of the statutory research of the Collegium of Business Administration at the Warsaw School of Economics, under the project titled "Smart Business – Smart Regions – Smart Society: Towards a New Paradigm" (KNOP/S24/1.1).

2 Badania przeprowadzono w ramach badań statutowych Kolegium Nauk o Przedsiębiorstwie Szkoły Głównej Handlowej w Warszawie, w ramach projektu pn. „Inteligentny biznes – inteligentne regiony – inteligentne społeczeństwo: w stronę nowego paradygmatu" (KNOP/S24/1.1).

Słowa kluczowe:
praca zdalna,
czynniki demograficzne,
czynniki zatrudnienia,
zarządzanie kapitałem ludzkim

Streszczenie: Pomimo iż wiele krajów wprowadziło standaryzację pracy zdalnej, praktyki organizacyjne często nie są zgodne z oczekiwaniami pracowników. Celem artykułu jest zbadanie, w jaki sposób zmienne zatrudnieniowe i demograficzne determinują obecną oraz oczekiwaną pracę zdalną pracowników w Polsce, jednocześnie porównując je do fińskich praktyk. Przeprowadzono badanie ankietowe (CAWI) wśród pracowników (N=762), którzy zadeklarowali, że ich praca może być wykonywana poza siedzibą organizacji przy użyciu nowych technologii. W wyniku badania stwierdzono, że oczekiwania dotyczące pracy zdalnej są znacznie wyższe niż obecnie dostępne możliwości (Δ 14,72). Obecna praca zdalna jest uwarunkowana wiekiem, dochodem netto, sektorem zatrudnienia i wielkością przedsiębiorstwa. Z kolei oczekiwania dotyczące pracy zdalnej różnią się w zależności od płci i wieku. Autorki dostrzegają większe możliwości wykorzystania pracy zdalnej w organizacjach niż ma to miejsce obecnie: zadowoleni pracownicy mogą być bardziej efektywni i lojalni, a pracodawcy, ponosząc niższe koszty pracy i zyskując dostęp do globalnych zasobów talentów, osiągną przewagę konkurencyjną [IPC Research Institute, 2020, p. 60].

JEL:
J24, M12, M54

Introduction

The ongoing digitalization, further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic – a phenomenon that has profoundly impacted societies worldwide [Bešić et al., 2022] – has enabled work to be performed anytime and from anywhere [Messenger, 2017, p. 301]. Remote and hybrid work arrangements have become increasingly prevalent [Dojwa-Turczyńska, 2021].

The COVID-19 pandemic affected people across the globe [Kaźmierska-Jóźwiak et al., 2022, p. 70]. The highest shares of remote workers were recorded in the Netherlands (53%), Finland (40%), the EU overall (22%), and Poland (12%) [Eurostat, 2022]. In 2022, Finland ranked fifth in Europe for teleworking, based on the proportion of employed individuals working from home at least occasionally. By 2023, 426.9 thousand people in Poland worked remotely, representing 3.4% of all occupied jobs [GUS, 2023]. The largest share of remote workers was found in large enterprises, particularly in the information and communication sector (33.4%). The highest rates of remote work were observed in the United Kingdom and Nordic countries. Statistics Finland [2023] reported that 35% of employees worked remotely in 2023, with women (37%) engaging in remote work more frequently than men (33%). Moreover, Finland ranked second only to Ireland in terms of the proportion of employees working

remotely for more than half of their working time [Helsinki Times, 2023]. Remote work models, initially popularized by the pandemic, have now become the "new normal" [Sidor-Rządkowska, 2023], and have been formally incorporated into Poland's labor law framework.

As 77% of medium and large enterprises require employees to work in the office for a certain number of days, hybrid work has the potential for further development in Poland [EY Polska, 2024]. This work model allows employees to adjust their work schedules to personal needs; however, it can also become more intensive, extending working hours under increasing employer supervision [Eurofound, 2022]. At the same time, the pace of digitalization and the development of tools and infrastructure for remote work vary across countries, such as Poland and Finland, as well as among employees. Workforce demographics, employment conditions, and organizational factors shape both the feasibility and expectations of remote and hybrid work. Factors such as age, gender, family situation, type of employment contract, company size, and industry sector have all been identified as key determinants [Radziukiewicz, 2021; Grafström 2023; EY Poland, 2024].

This study assumes that employee expectations for remote work in Poland exceed the actual possibilities of its implementation, and that specific demographic and employment factors contribute to these differences.

The article is structured into five main sections. The first section reviews scientific literature, legal regulations, and industry reports concerning remote work, focusing on both its current status and employee expectations. The second section, building on literature and industry analyses, explores factors influencing remote work, both in its present state and anticipated future developments. The third section outlines the research methodology used in the study, while the fourth section presents research findings. In the fifth part, the authors discussed the research results. The article concludes with a summary of the study's key insights, along with identified limitations and recommendations for future research.

Remote Work – Current Status and Expectations

Telework, e-work, mobile work, distance work, work from home, and remote work all fall under the category of digitalized work arrangements enabled by ICT technologies, allowing tasks to be performed outside the traditional workplace. While these forms of work are well-established, they continue to evolve and undergo transformation [Fan, Moen, 2023].

Today, remote work is closely associated with digital technologies, flexible working arrangements, and the ability to operate from a distance [Charles et al., 2022]. It is

defined as work conducted at a location separate from where its outcomes are expected or where it would traditionally take place within a conventional employment structure, utilizing available information and telecommunication technologies [Piotrowicz, 2023, p. 74]. Remote work is typically characterized by two key aspects: (1) it is performed outside the formal workplace, and (2) it depends on information technologies to execute job tasks for an employer [Aleem et al., 2022]. For the purposes of this study, remote work is defined as work performed outside the company's headquarters using modern ICT technologies.

In Poland, remote work was formally legalized in labor law in 2024. According to the legislation, remote work may be performed fully or partially at a location chosen by the employee, including their residential address, and must be agreed upon with the employer through electronic communication. Employers are required to ensure appropriate working conditions, covering not only hardware and technical support but also additional expenses such as Internet, and equipment maintenance costs. Both employers and employees are responsible for ensuring compliance with data protection and information security regulations; however, the employer bears the primary responsibility for implementing adequate tools and procedures to safeguard sensitive data (Dz.U. 2023, poz. 240).

In contrast, in Finland, regular teleworking is a well-known form of work well established in Remote work is automatically subsidized through a tax deduction for working from home. The Finnish total working time system allows employees to freely choose their work hours and location without requiring prior approval from the employer. This system eliminates time tracking, separate vacation time, and additional overtime compensation, making it particularly suited for the education sector and expert roles, where remote work is predominant [Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, 2025]. For example, Finnish universities operate under an annual working time model of 1,612 hours, covering teaching, research, and other duties without restrictions on time and location [Finnish Union of University Professors, 2025].

Poland still operates under a "low-digital" economic model, characterized by limited access to digital infrastructure, including broadband Internet and the adoption of ICT tools. According to the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI), Poland ranks low in digitalization, particularly in areas such as Internet usage and digital service integration. In 2023, only 21.2% of enterprises in Poland achieved a high or very high level of digital intensity, placing the country 21st in the European Union [Polski Fundusz Rozwoju, 2024]. Additionally, the share of ICT specialists in total employment in Poland is 3.6%, below the EU average of 4.6% [European Commission, 2023]. Conversely, Finland lead in digitalization, with rates ranging 60–79% [Eurostat, 2023]. These structural differences in digitalization and business models may limit Poland's potential for expanding remote work opportunities.

From a business perspective, the future of work is unlikely to be predominantly remote. Executives anticipate modest increases in both the fully remote and hybrid modes of work by 2028 [Bloom et al., 2023]. Two out of there of managers (64%) predict a complete return to the stationary work model by 2026, while only 7% believe that fully remote work will become a common standard [KPMG, 2024; Smagło, 2024].

Meanwhile, the interest in remote work among employees in Poland exceeds the current availability of this form of work [Hays Poland, 2023]. The primary reasons for this disparity include the lack of appropriate policies, concerns about decreased productivity, and a lack of employer trust, which is often linked to the need for continuous monitoring of work outcomes. In Finland, 24% of employees who had not previously worked remotely expressed an interest in doing so in 2023. According to a Deloitte [2022] study, nearly half of employees expressed a willingness to change employers if required to spend more days working in the office.

The authors, identify a discrepancy between employees' high expectations for remote work and the limited availability of such opportunities provided by employers. The following hypothesis was formulated:
H1: *Expectations for remote work are higher among employees than the possibilities of its provision.*

Factors Differentiating Remote Work

Remote Work – Current Status

The literature indicates that women are more likely than men to prefer remote work, often due to caregiving responsibilities [Waszkiewicz, 2022]. Women, particularly those with children, favor remote work as it provides greater flexibility in balancing household and professional responsibilities [Catalyst, 2020; McKinsey & Company, 2023], Furthermore, A. Parry [2025] highlights the blurring of work and home life due to digital technologies and the expansion of remote work, noting that flexible work arrangements can lead to self-exploitation – with men overworking in their professional roles and women overworking in their domestic responsibilities.

Younger employees, particularly those from Generation Z, tend to prefer remote work, valuing its flexibility and its alignment with their digital lifestyle and competencies [Kanoniak, 2025]. In contrast, older employees from Generations Baby Boomers and Y tend to favor on-site work, perceiving it as more effective [Bielińska-Dusza, Hamerska, 2023, p. 29]. Remote work is primarily a domain of highly educated professionals and reach almost half of them [Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, 2020, p. 5; Randstad Research Institute, 2020].

Remote workers are also more likely to earn higher incomes, as remote work is predominantly found in high-skill sectors such as finance and consulting, which are more profitable than sectors reliant on repetitive, manual tasks [McKinsey & Company, 2021]. Additionally, remote worker have option to reside in lower-cost areas, while earning more in pay range [Owl Labs, 2020] as well enables them to take on additional freelance projects or side jobs, leading to higher overall earnings [Upwork, 2020].

Remote work is often associated with increased work intensity. During the pandemic, approximately 57% of women and 45% of men reported working longer and harder in remote settings than they had in office environments. Although other studies, a common finding was that remote employees worked more than before the pandemic, with an average increase of 26 additional hours per month [Petrus, 2021]. Increased workload, difficulty in maintaining focus, and the lack of clear time boundaries were cited as key contributors to longer working hours [OECD, 2023]. While this phenomenon was initially observed during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is assumed that the trend of work intensification in remote settings continues. Two out of three (68%) middle managers and business owners would like to continue working remotely, while among employees, this percentage is lower and amounts to 48% [Rzeczpospolita, 2024].

Remote work is most commonly found in the private sector, particularly in service-based industries. 60% of private-sector employees prefer at least partial remote work. In contrast, only 30% of manufacturing companies offer remote work opportunities, typically limited to administrative roles [EY Polska, 2024]. According to GUS [2023], one in five public-sector employees and one in ten private-sector employees worked remotely in 2023 [Matyjas-Łysakowska, Maroń, 2022, p. 387] suggest that some remote work models can be effectively implemented in public administration.

The Grant Thornton report [2024] found that nearly three-quarters of large and medium-sized enterprises in Poland offer remote work options. However, Central Statistical Office [GUS, 2023] data indicates that among large enterprises (50+ employees), remote workers constitute only 4.6% of the total workforce. Employees in large firms report that remote work improves work-life balance and reduces commuting-related stress, while in smaller enterprises, remote work is often informal and arranged on a case-by-case basis, relying on cost-free solutions and existing infrastructure [IPC Research Institute, 2020].

To summarize, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1a: *The intensity of currently performed remote work is higher among younger, women. with higher education, who earn higher incomes, work longer hours, and hold higher positions –provided they are employed in the private sector and within a large enterprise.*

Remote Work – Expected State

A significant proportion of men report higher expectations for remote work [Waszkiewicz, 2022]. They anticipate that the flexibility provided by remote work will become a permanent feature of their professional lives [Gartner, 2021]. Moreover, men are more likely than women to have access to a dedicated workspace for remote work, which enhances their experience and fosters positive expectations regarding the future of this work model [Microsoft, 2021].

Younger employees engaged in remote work perceive it as an opportunity to achieve their long-term professional goals and develop their careers in alignment with their aspirations. Their greater adaptability to technology, interest in working from anywhere in the world, and openness to new career models contribute to higher expectations for remote work availability [Deloitte, 2023].

Employees with higher education are more likely to view remote work as a permanent component of the work environment due to higher earnings, a preference for flexibility and autonomy, and a greater openness to non-traditional work arrangements. Interestingly, the OECD [2022] report highlights that employees with higher education are less likely to lose their jobs due to digitalization. As a result, they favor remote work as a future norm, as it does not compromise their stable position in the labor market.

However, the preference for continuing remote work may be associated with lower earnings. Half of employees are willing to accept a pay reduction in exchange for the ability to work remotely [HRTechSeries, 2024]. At the same time, employees who spend more time in the office can earn up to 30% more [Smith, 2024].

Interestingly, 71% of remote workers expect their working hours to be reduced, believing that better work-life balance will allow them to manage their professional and personal responsibilities more efficiently [Howington, 2025]. Remote workers are also increasingly aware of the risk of burnout, which is why they emphasize the importance of shorter working hours as a means to reduce stress and prevent exhaustion [Microsoft, 2021]. Additionally, T. Galanti et al. [2021] emphasizes that employers should address both job demands (e.g., work-family conflict) and job resources (e.g., job autonomy and self-direction) to enhance employee well-being and productivity.

According to around three out of four managers plan to continue supporting rather hybrid than fully remote work policies due to their importance in attracting and retaining global talents and improving international team management and efficiency [Upwork, 2023].

Private-sector employees expect remote work to continue, recognizing both personal benefits and advantages from their employees [Deloitte, 2022a]. The private sector has also adopted new technologies more rapidly, providing employees with greater access to resources and digital tools that further reinforce expectations for remote work [Gartner, 2022].

Furthermore, 68% of employees in large enterprises expect to continue working remotely in the future [The Adecco Group, 2023]. This is primarily due to the formalization of remote work strategies, increased access to training, and ongoing technical support.

To summarize, the following hypothesis is proposed:
H1b: *Expectations for remote work are higher among younger men, with higher education, who are willing to accept lower earnings in exchange for remote work, expect reduced working hours, and hold higher positions – provided they work in the private sector and within a large enterprise.*

The authors assume that each demographic and employment variable will differentiate the intensity of both current and expected remote work in the same direction.

Research Method and Organization

In September 2023, a quantitative study was conducted using the Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI) technique on a randomly stratified sample of employees working in Poland. Respondents were recruited through the Opinia 24 research panel. The final research sample consisted of employees (N=762) who reported that their work could be performed outside their company's headquarters using modern technologies. Therefore, all respondents had the potential opportunity to work remotely, at least partially. The collected data were subjected to statistical analysis using IBM SPSS 29.

Description of the Research Sample

The research sample was relatively large (N=762). The gender distribution was balanced, with 51% men (n=389) and 49% women (n=373). The sample was diverse in terms of age, with the youngest respondent being 18 years old and the oldest 65 years old – covering the entire working-age population (for men). In terms of educational background, the largest group consisted of respondents with higher education (64%, N=488), followed by those with secondary education (28.6%, N=218). Regarding declared net income, the most common income ranges were 2,001–4,000 PLN and 4,001–6,000 PLN. Meanwhile, the average salary in Poland's private sector in Q2 2023 was PLN 5,202.20 net. Respondents held non-managerial positions 68.8% (N=524) and 60.6% (N=462) were employed in the private sector. More than one-third of respondents worked in medium-sized enterprises (50–249 employees). The least represented groups were employees from micro-enterprises (8.3%, N=63) and large enterprises (13.3%, N=101). Notably, SMEs, particularly micro-enterprises, contribute significantly to Poland's GDP in 2022.

Analyzed Variables

Respondents evaluated key aspects of remote work, including work out of employer site, while using employer-provided IT systems, remote work organization, and supervision. They shared their experiences with ICT tools for internal and external communication, handling administrative processes, and supporting professional development.

The study focused on eight core statements, each assessing the current and expected state of remote work, e.g. work conducted exclusively through an ICT system (e.g., applications, software) required by the employer, remote organization and supervision of work by a manager or client or remote monitoring of work intensity.

Each statement was designed to allow respondents to express their opinions on both current and expected remote work. Responses were recorded using a continuous scale (slider in the CAWI application) ranging from 1 to 100.

The eight statements measuring current remote work formed a highly reliable measurement scale (Cronbach's alpha = 0.923). Similarly, the eight statements measuring expected remote work formed another reliable measurement scale (Cronbach's alpha = 0.915).

For data analysis, aggregated mean values were calculated for current and expected remote work indicators. The factors explaining differences in current and expected remote work intensity included: gender, age, education level, net income from work, weekly working hours, position held (managerial vs. non-managerial), employment sector (private vs. public), and enterprise size.

Variance analysis of current and expected remote work

The average level of current remote work (M=45.73, SD=25.88) is lower than the expected level (M=59.45, SD=24.71), which confirmed H1. The Kolmogorov Smirnov test indicates a distribution other than normal ($p<0.001$) in terms of both current and expected remote work. However, the small skewness of the mean results, for current remote work 0.126 and expected –0.040, does not indicate the complete lack of normality of the distribution. The homogeneity of variance with Levene's test was rejected for all factors of current remote work, as the significance values oscillated between =,059 and =,895.

In terms of the variability of the expected remote work, the homogeneity of variance was proven for income groups, position held and enterprise size. The application of the nonparametric Kruskal-Wallis test also showed the lack of significant asymptotic differences for them, p=.222, p=.262 and p=.279, respectively. Numerous subgroups for the factors of mean comparisons and the need to use tests sensitive to differences

strengthened the decision to conduct the ANOVA analysis of variance, with Bonferroni post-hoc tests. The results are included in Table 1.

The results of the analyses of the variance of the means in terms of significantly differentiating factors were presented successively for current and then expected remote work. First, the variables that significantly differentiated the average level of remote work were presented, and then some of them were not significant.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

Dependent variable	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*Sk.*	*Kurt.*	*Min.*	*Maks.*	*p*	*D*
Current remote work		45.73	25.88	0.126	–0.945	1	100	<0.001	0.061
Expected remote work	762	59.47	24.71	-.040	–0.568	1	100	<0.001	0.051

Source: own study based on reports from IBM SPSS 29.

Variability of average current remote work

Current remote work is significantly differentiated by age (p<0.00). Test statistic F (2.759) =12.80, so we are dealing with significant differentiation in the sample. Details are included in Table 2.

Table 2. Current remote work and age

Dependent variable	Group	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*df*	*p*	η^2
Current remote work	16–29 years	110	51.57	22.95	12.80	2;759	<0.001	0.03
	30–49 years	432	47.85	26.46				
	50 years and more	220	38.68	24.73				

Source: own study based on reports from IBM SPSS 29.

The differences in means between the age categories of the respondents estimated with the Bonferroni post hoc test (estimated for this and other demographic and employment variables) indicate that employees aged 50 and over perform remote work less intensively (M=38.68) than those younger than them. Despite the greater intensity of remote work among the youngest employees in the 16–29 age group (M=51.57), they can be classified in one category as employees aged 30–49 (M=47.85). Details are included in Table 3.

Remote work is significantly and clearly differentiated between employees with different net income from work (F=(3.687)=7.61, η^2=0.4, p<0.001). Post-hoc tests were used to analyze the four income ranges. Currently, remote work was performed to the great-

est extent by people earning 8001 PLN and more (M=56.63), and their average results are significantly different from other income groups. Details are included in Table 4.

Table 3. Post-hoc tests for current remote work and age

					95% *CI*	
Dependent variable	Compared groups	Difference in averages	*SE*	*p*	*LL*	*UL*
Current remote work	50 years and more-16–29 years	–12.89	2.98	<0.001	–20.04	–5.75
	50 years and more-30–49 years	–9.17	2.73	<0.001	–14.24	–4.11

Source: own study based on reports from IBM SPSS 29.

Table 4. Current remote work and net income from work

Dependent variable	Group	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*df*	*p*	η^2
Current remote work	2001–4000 PLN	222	39.86	26.00	10.317	3;687	<.001	0.4
	4001–6000 PLN	256	47.10	26.02				
	6001–8000 PLN	117	46.86	22.79				
	8001 PLN and more	96	56.63	23.63				

Source: own study based on reports from IBM SPSS 29.

A comparison of averages shows that the greatest differences occur between those earning the most and those earning around the national minimum (2.100–4.000 PLN, –16.77). In other income groups, the intensity of remote work is lower (between 7.24 and 9.77). Details are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Post-hoc tests for current remote work and income from work

					95% *CI*	
Dependent variable	Compared groups	Difference in averages	*SE*	*p*	*LL*	*UL*
Current remote Work	2100–4000 – 4001–6000 PLN	–7.24	2.31	0.011	–13.35	–1.13
	2100–4000 – 8001 PLN and more	–16.77	3.08	<0.001	–24.91	–8.64
	4001–6000 – 8001 PLN and more	–9.53	3.01	0.010	–17.51	–1.56
	6001–8000 – 8001 PLN and more	–9.77	3.47	0.030	–18.94	–1.60

Source: own study based on reports from IBM SPSS 29.

The results of the mean comparison analyses indicate that currently remote work is performed to a varying extent by employees in the private and public sectors (F (1;760) =12.39, p=0.000). Current remote work is more often experienced by employees in the private sector (M=48.38) than in the public sector (M=41.67), as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Current remote work and employment sector

Dependent variable	Group	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*df*	*p*	η^2
Current remote work	public sector	300	41.67	25.51	12.39	1; 760	<0.001	0.02
	private sector	462	48.38	25.80				

Source: own study based on reports from IBM SPSS 29.

The size of the entity in which the respondents worked significantly changed the intensity of remote work (F(4.761)=3.72, p=0.006) and differentiates the results between the averages M=38.48 (micro enterprise) and M=51.04 (very large enterprise). The results are included in Table 7.

Table 7. Current remote work and enterprise size

Dependent variable	Group	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*df*	*p*	η^2
Current remote Work	micro (1–9 employees)	63	38.48	25.93	3.72	4; 761	0.006	0.02
	small (10–49 employees)	174	42.93	25.93				
	medium (50–249 employees)	245	45.38	24.17				
	large (250–499 employees)	101	46.57	24.69				
	very large (500 and more employees)	179	51.04	27.53				

Source: own study based on reports from IBM SPSS 29.

Distinguishing four categories of enterprise: from micro to very large enterprises employing 500 or more people, post-hoc tests indicated the significance of differences between micro and small and very large enterprises. It can be assumed that currently the larger the enterprise, the greater the potential and possibilities of remote work.

The results of multiple comparisons allow us to note that significantly higher results are obtained by respondents working for the largest enterprise M=51.04 compared to those from micro M=38.48 and small M=42.92 enterprise (differences of + –12.56 and + –8.12, respectively). On the other hand, the distribution of the two subsets indicates that the values of the averages of micro and largest enterprises, i.e. their average, are the furthest apart. Therefore, the level of remoteness is significantly lower in case of smaller enterprises than in the largest ones. Details are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Post-hoc tests for current remote work and enterprise size

					95% *CI*	
Dependent variable	Compared groups	Difference in averages	*SE*	*p*	*LL*	*UL*
Current remote work	micro (1–9 employees) – very large (500 and more employees)	–12.56	3.76	0.009	–23.16	–1.96
	small (10–49 employees) – very large (500 and more employees)	–8.12	2.73	0.031	–15.82	–0.42

Source: own study based on reports from IBM SPSS 29.

However, the intensity of current remote work is not differentiated by gender (p=0.745), education (p=0.2111), weekly working time (p=0.950) and position held (managerial or non-managerial, p=0.111). As a result, H1a was confirmed to a limited extent.

Variability of the average expected remote work

As already indicated, the expectations of remote work are greater than its current provision, and the range of variation in the scope of employment and demographic variables should be similar.

Gender significantly differentiates the average level of expected remote work (F= =(1.760)=7.57, p=0.006) in contrast to the current work performance. Expectations of greater remote work are significantly higher among women (M=61.98) than men (M=57.07). Details are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Expected remote work and gender

Dependent variable	Group	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*df*	*p*	η^2
Expected remote work	woman	389	61.98	24.63	7.57	1; 760	0.006	0.01
	Man	473	57.07	24.58				

Source: own study based on reports from IBM SPSS 29.

The level of expected remote work exists and is quite clearly differentiated by employee age (F(2.759)=15.6, η^2=0.04, p<0.001). Expectations of remote work were the highest in the age group 16–29 years (M=65.49). The test statistics indicate that we are dealing with greater differentiation in the sample than was the case with current remote work. Details are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Expected remote work and age

Dependent variable	Group	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*df*	*p*	η^2
Expected remote work	16–29 years	110	65.49	21.73	15.60	2; 759	<0.001	0.04
	30–49 years	432	61.73	24.13				
	50 years and more	220	52.03	25.64				

Source: own study based on reports from IBM SPSS 29.

Multiple comparisons between the three age categories of respondents indicate that employees aged 50 and over expect remote work significantly less than the youngest (+ -,13.45, p<0.001) and middle-aged (+ –9.70, p<0.001). Details are presented in Table 11.

The oldest among the respondents were classified in a separate subset than the younger ones. Expectations of remote work are significantly lower in the group of older respondents, although this difference is smaller than in the assessment of current remote work.

Table 11. Post-hoc tests for expected remote work and age

					95% *CI*	
Dependent variable	Compared groups	Difference in averages	*SE*	*p*	*LL*	*UL*
Expected remote work	50 years and more - 16–29 years	–13.45	2.83	<0.001	–20.24	–6.65
	50 years and more - 30–49 years	–9.70	2.01	<0.001	–14.52	–4.89

Source: own study based on reports from IBM SPSS 29.

Table 12. Summary of significant differences between current and expected remote work

		Current remote work (from 1 to 100)		Expected remote work (from 1 to 100)	
		45.73		**59.47**	
Education					
Weekly working hours					
Position held (managerial or non-managerial)					
Gender	Woman				61.98
	Man			57.07	
Age	16–29 years		51.57		65.49
	30–49 years		47.85		61.73
	50 years and more	38.68		52.03	

		Current remote work (from 1 to 100)		Expected remote work (from 1 to 100)	
Net income from work	2001–4000 PLN	39.86			
	4001–6000 PLN		47.10		
	6001–8000 PLN		46.86		
	8001 PLN and more		56.63		
Employment sector	public sector	41.67			
	private sector		48.38		
Size of enterprise	micro (1–9 employees)	38.48			
	small (10–49 employees)	42.93			
	medium (od 50–249 employees)	45.38			
	large (od 250–499 employees)		46.57		
	very large (500 and more employees)		51.04		

Note: Mean values marked in gray are values that are not significantly different from other categories in the variable.
Source: own study based on reports from IBM SPSS 29.

The level of education of the respondents (p=0.628), weekly working time (p=0.549) and the sector of employment (public or private) (p=0.137) do not differentiate the expectations of remote work. Nonparametric analyses using the Kruskal-Wallis test also confirmed the lack of differentiation in asymptotic significance between respondents with different net income from work (p=0.222), different weekly working time (p=0.549), or holding a managerial or non-managerial position (p=0.262). As a result, H1b was confirmed to a limited extent. The summary of the results is presented in Table 12.

Discussion

The potential for the development of remote work, as well as the controversies and diversity of views on it, is the subject of scientific discussion. However, in literature there is still no agreement on whether, to what extent, in which professions or organizations remote work will be the dominant form, and in which only occasional or completely marginalized. The article elaborated on employees' expectations for remote work in Poland exceed the actual possibilities of its implementation, and that specific demographic and employment factors contribute to these differences.

The authors adopted hypothesis H1 that the expectations of remote work are higher among employees than the possibilities of its provision [Microsoft, 2022; McKinsey & Company, 2023], which was positively tested during the study. The average level of current remote work (M=45.73, SD=25.88) turned out to be lower than expected (M=59.47, SD=24.71).

Representatives of younger generations on the labor market more often formulate positive opinions about remote work and expectations towards it in the future [Kanoniak, 2025], which enhances the dynamic development of digital tools [Gartner, 2022]. The study results (H1a) confirm this fact. They believe organizations to be able to provide remote work, but they do not approach it completely uncritically [Chomątowska, Janiak-Rejno, 2022]. Also higher income is correlated with greater intensity of current remote work, which is consistent with earlier observations by McKinsey & Company [2021] that remote work dominates in highly skilled and well-paid professions. Current remote work is more often experienced by employees of the private sector than the public sector, as H1as hypothesized, which reflected with the results presented in industry reports – incl. McKinsey & Company [2022] or Eurofound [2022]. However, in the public sector, employees are more likely to work part-time. Also, the larger the enterprise, the greater the potential and possibilities of current remote work. Currently, the availability of remote work does not depend on employee preferences, but to a large extent on the resources of the enterprise, which increase with its size. As the data shows, access to digital tools in Polish enterprises is still limited [Polski Fundusz Rozwoju, 2024] – unlike in enterprises in Finland.

Expectations of greater remote work were highest among young employees (16–29 years old) and among women than men, which is contrary to the assumptions of the authors of the article (H1b). Simultaneously, older employees (50+), who are the least likely to perform remote work, express a relatively highest expectation for its increase (Δ 13.35). The need to perform remote work to a greater extent may result from the increased demands of Polish women in meeting their family needs [Björk-Fant et al., 2023]. Women working from home are exposed to more interruptions at work than men, what can affect their productivity [Gaskell, 2023]. Comparing data from Finland, which has a different model of personal roles and greater availability of remote work, where women engage in such work more often than men, it can be inferred that the provision of remote work opportunities for women in Poland is insufficiently addressed.

It can therefore be stated that demographic factors differentiate the current and expected remote work, but current remote work is significantly differentiated by more employment factors. Interestingly, education, weekly working hours and position held (managerial or non-managerial) did not differentiate current and expected remote work.

Employees associate remote work primarily with greater flexibility, while for employers it means the need to provide appropriate conditions, equipment or ongoing support [Galanti et al., 2021; The Adecco Group, 2023]. Employees expect greater intensity of remote work, but within a limited scope of its implementation in Polish organizations. Poland still remains a country with low digital intensity, which limits the scale of remote work and makes it difficult for employers to meet employees' demands regarding remote work, contrary to Finns work model.

The authors see greater possibilities for the use of remote work in organizations than is currently the case: satisfied employees can be more effective and more loyal, while employers, incurring lower labor costs and gaining access to global talent resources, will achieve a competitive advantage [IPC Research Institute, 2020, p. 60]. The target state should be to provide remote work wherever it is organizationally possible, supports organizational processes and allows for achieving the desired results and job satisfaction. In order for its implementation to be successful, it is necessary to select forms of communication, ensure a balance between the work and private life of employees [Stankevičiūtė, Kunskaja, 2021; Howington, 2025; Parry, 2025] and provide the latest technological infrastructure [Urbaniec et al., 2022; Charles et al., 2022; Piotrowicz, 2023], which is particularly important in connection with the observed generational changes, what goes along with conclusions made by R. Ferreira et al. [2021]. Combing remote work settings with sustainable work conditions would support long lasting development for organizations and societies as well [Abrahamsson, Johansson, 2021].

Due to limitations of the study, it was conducted on a non-representative research sample, but significant in number. The study was conducted using online surveys, which excluded the possibility of explaining ambiguities and doubts to respondents while filling in the questionnaire. The inclusion of respondents in the study was conditional on their declaration of the ability to perform remote or hybrid work. This may imply that the conclusions drawn require clarification of the context.

In future studies, it would be necessary to consider – also in terms of cross-sector and-cross-national comparisons. Also, it is essential to investigate the negative aspects of remote work in greater detail, which is also mentioned in Eurofound's research [2022]. Specifically, adverse effects such as insomnia, emotional exhaustion, and work-related loneliness, which may result from involuntary remote work [Becker et al., 2022], should be considered in the context of human resource management (HRM) and employee well-being.

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