

WORK-LIFE RELATIONS AND REMOTE WORK MANAGEMENT OF THE GENERATION Z EMPLOYEES

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Purpose: The aim of the article is to present the opinion of the Generation Z representatives on the relationship between work and non-work life in remote work with regard to the possibility of using them in the management of employees of this generation.

Design/methodology/approach: The empirical part of the study was prepared based on the results of a survey conducted at the turn of 2021/2022 among young people representing the Generation Z, living in the Silesia Province in Poland.

Findings: The results of the study show that, according to young Generation Z people, remote work allows to combine work with private life, including family life. The respondents emphasized such advantages of remote work as: the possibility of flexible management of one's own time, a sense of freedom/independence, limitation of professional stress. However, the opinions of the surveyed representatives of the Generation Z were not devoid of a critical look at selected aspects of the impact of remote work on shaping the work-life balance.

Research limitations/implications: The limitations of the conducted research include the pilot nature of the research and the related small number of people participating in the survey research. Future research can be extended to include management opinion analysis and consider the current limitations.

Practical implications: The conducted research and the conclusions drawn from it can be used in the practice of managing generation Z employees, in particular in activities supporting building positive relationships with employees performing remote work.

Social implications: The research results, presenting the opinions and expectations of young generation Z people, can contribute to a better understanding of their needs regarding the work-life relationship in the context of remote work, and thus improve the quality of their lives.

Originality/value: Conclusions from the research described in the article are the basis for reflection and actions of managers managing remote work, especially the Generation Z employees.

Keywords: work-life balance, generation Z, remote work.

Category of the paper: research paper.

1. Introduction

Work-life balance presupposes the possibility of meeting a person's needs both in the personal and professional spheres. Considerations on the work-life relationship relate to the individual having an influence on when, where and how much time he or she will devote to carrying out tasks in the sphere of work and private life. Work-life balance can therefore be defined as the optimal ratio between the time devoted to work and the time devoted to life outside work. However, it should be emphasized that this optimum is relative and differs from person to person. As the issue of reconciling work and private life concerns every working person, regardless of their age, as a result, one can speak of a wide variety of attitudes towards this problem (Chen, Powell, Greenhaus, 2009; Gregory, Milner, 2009). However, a careful analysis of this issue allows us to see the specific attitudes of individual generations towards this issue. The way people from a given generation approach issues related to work-life balance is influenced by many factors, including: technological development, economic, social and cultural changes, as well as life experiences common to many individuals from a given generation. Importantly, how the representatives of a given generation perceive work-life balance is of key importance for their attitude to work and the place that work, family and free time occupy among the values they believe (Robak, 2017).

Relationships between work and non-work life are of particular importance for the representatives of the youngest Generation Z on the labour market. Employees from this generation are perceived as people who attach significant importance to their private life, and therefore - expect freedom and flexibility at work. They perfectly move in the globalized world thanks to the ease of using the latest digital technologies and good education. According to the researchers of the functioning of the Generation Z in the labour market, it has high requirements for employers concerning not only interesting and challenging work, but also a partnership approach of managers, manifested in openness to their suggestions and ideas. Managing the Generation Z employees brings many challenges, because these young people want to know and have an impact on what is happening in the organization in which they work, and they want to be aware that their work makes sense. Most of all, however, they expect cooperation in a good atmosphere and maintaining a balance between professional and personal life. Meeting these challenges is particularly difficult in the situation of remote work, which, due to the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, increasingly often, apart from hybrid and stationary work, functions in the contemporary labour market. Managing remote work of the Generation Z employees is gaining increased importance, considering that these people are aware of their needs and expectations in terms of professional and personal priorities and are also able to define and respect the boundaries between these two areas of their lives.

The aim of the article is to present the opinion of the representatives of the Generation Z on the relationship between work and non-work life in remote work with regard to the possibility of using them in managing employees of this generation. The empirical part of the study presents the results of a survey conducted among young people representing the Generation Z. As part of the research, the following research problem was posed: How do the representatives of the Generation Z perceive the impact of remote work on shaping the work-life balance? The study also posed a number of detailed problem questions regarding the work-life balance and employee well-being with regard to remote work. A number of statistical hypotheses were adopted for the analysis of the study results. The paper presents relationships verified by statistical tests, which authorize to infer the regularities in the study group.

2. WLB and remote work theoretical basis of the problem

Balance between work and non-professional life occurs when work does not appropriate non-professional life, and vice versa, when non-professional life is not at its expense (Rusu, 2018). For individuals, this means being able to combine work with other dimensions of human life - home, family, health, social activity, private interests, etc. Kirchmeyer (2000) defines work-life balance as an even distribution of time, energy and commitment to all areas of life, so as to achieve satisfaction in all of them. Whereas Greenhaus, Collins and Shaw (2003) refer to the extent to which a person is equally committed and equally satisfied with their role at work and their role in the family when describing the work-life balance. Thus, they emphasize the importance of the family in the area of non-work life. In the literature on the subject, work-life balance is also seen as a satisfying and effective functioning, both at work and at home, with a minimal role conflict (Clark, 2000; Michel et al., 2011). The main type of conflict is the work-family conflict, which is analysed in relation to the role conflict theory, assuming that people have a limited amount of time and energy that they can have at their disposal to function in various roles (Greenhaus, Beutell, 1985).

In coping with the work-life conflict, employees are helped by the active approach of companies, which recognize that it has a significant impact not only on employee satisfaction and work atmosphere, but also on their motivation and quality of work (Dąbrowska, 2014). By initiating activities promoting work-life balance, organizational relations are formed that favour the employees' feeling of safety, psychological comfort and the possibility of professional development, and at the same time build respect and trust for the employer. The image of the company, built through the implementation of initiatives that meet the needs of employees in the field of shaping the work-life relationship, not only enables the acquisition and retention of talented employees, but also maintains their commitment at the desired level and allows them to use their personal resources effectively.

Maintaining the balance between work and non-work life is particularly important, especially for the representatives of the youngest generations on the labour market. It turns out that when they start working, they want not only attractive earnings and benefits as well as development opportunities, but also maintaining the right relationship between professional and private life. Especially the representatives of the youngest Generation Z want to work in a place where there are good employee relations, and the employer understands their need to maintain a balance between work and non-professional life.

The Generation Z (also referred to as the Internet generation, the multitasking generation) is usually defined as people born after 1995 (although some researchers include people born after 1990, and representatives of another approach - people born in 2000 and later). Unlike the previous generation Y, which was gradually entering the digital world, this generation already grew up in the world of modern technologies. People from the Generation Z are people who have the ease of working on several tasks at the same time, which is the result of wide access to information and social networks. They are characterized by a high level of computerization and easy assimilation of technical novelties, as well as self-confidence, an optimistic outlook on their future professional life, as well as entrepreneurship and creativity. Representatives of this generation believe that the professional environment is extremely important in their development, and therefore they expect their superiors to perform the role of mentors and support, but also autonomy (Duffy et al., 2018; Dolot, 2018). In addition, they have a need for sustainable development as well as a strong need for security, reflecting their desire to have a suitable job and a decent salary. It is worth emphasizing that the social environment for this generation is a crucial factor shaping the organizational culture related to a good working atmosphere and positive employee relations. It is particularly important for them to fulfil their dreams and feel happy. If they cannot achieve the above-mentioned goal, they often quit their job at a given company (Singh, Dangmei, 2016).

A large distinction between time spent at work and time devoted to their private life is extremely important to them. Therefore, it is unlikely that they will engage in additional activities at work that disrupt their work-life balance. On the other hand, they are willing to use the various programs offered by the company to help balance work and personal life, which indicates a more determined attitude of the young generation to shaping their own work-life balance.

Shaping the balance between work and non-work life, so important for young people entering the labour market, is a particularly difficult challenge for managers in the situation of remote work (Felstead, Henseke, 2017; Grant, Wallace, Spurgeon, 2013). This form of work, forced in many companies by the COVID-19 pandemic, has now become very popular - apart from stationary work and work in a hybrid model, i.e. provided both remotely and at the employer's premises (Stankeviciute, Kunska, 2022). Remote work means work with the use of means of direct remote communication, performed wholly or partially in a place indicated by the employee and agreed with the employer, including at the employee's residence address.

The main organizational advantages of remote work include, above all, an increase in organizational flexibility, a reduction in operating costs and a decrease in employee absenteeism. The employer does not invest in renting office space and preparing the workplace, and the employee saves on commuting to the workplace. Remote work is also conducive to the employment of the disabled workers living in places far from industrial centers, as well as workers caring for children or other dependent persons. Another benefit for the employee is the flexible working time agreed with the employer (Sanchez et al., 2021; Pyöriä, 2011). Apart from these unquestionable advantages, this form of work also has some drawbacks. Remote employees, having limited contact with co-workers and superiors, have less chance of integration, support, sharing experiences and current observations, but also exchange of knowledge. In addition, remote work, impressing its specificity on employee relations, does not contribute to shaping the working atmosphere based on close ties and trust in colleagues (Sandoval-Reyes, Idrovo-Carlier, Duque-Oliva, 2021; Hamilton, 2002).

The amendment to the law in the field of remote work, long awaited by Polish employers and employees, is a response to market trends manifested in the need to provide employees with a work-life balance, and at the same time to enable employers to expand recruitment by acquiring competent employees throughout Poland, without the need to open new branches. Importantly, employers introducing the remote work model have greater ease in recruiting new employees, because the possibility of remote work is indicated by job candidates as one of the key benefits considered when choosing a good employer.

3. Methodology

The study results presented in the study are part of a survey conducted at the turn of 2021/2022 among young people living in the Silesia voivodeship in Poland. The research focused on the impact of young people's distance learning experiences on their preferences for remote working in terms of work-life balance and work relationships, knowledge, development and learning, motivation, communication, teamwork, creativity and work organization.

The survey was conducted with the use of quantitative research methods which use the survey technique. The deliberate selection of the research sample was related to the availability of interviewees, and the basic criteria for the selection of the respondents were their age and education at higher education. The study covered young people studying various faculties, because in relation to these people, due to their predispositions resulting from generation characteristics and professional competences, it is highly probable that they will use remote work in the future.

The research tool used was a standardised questionnaire consisting of closed questions and statements. A Likert scale was used for the responses, which enables the relative intensity of the various responses to be determined. This form of established and specified conditions allows for a reliable and quick analysis of the collected material, as well as uniformity and ease of development. The reliability of the scale was verified with the Cronbach's Alpha test, i.e. the measure of internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.9338$). The research tool - the questionnaire of the survey was original and was formulated by the members of the research team - employees of the Department of Applied Sociology and Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management of the Czestochowa University of Technology. The research tool included:

- a record containing the respondent's data on age, gender, employment status, education, work experience, remote work and remote learning experience,
- the main part containing the statements to which it was necessary to respond by marking the appropriate point on a scale of 1-5, where: 1 meant – I disagree completely, 2 – I rather disagree, 3 – neither agree nor disagree, 4 – I rather agree, 5 – I fully agree. N/A meant – not applicable.

This study presents an excerpt from the research results on work-life balance and employee well-being. The aim of the study is to analyse the opinions of the Generation Z representatives on the relationship between work and life outside work in the context of remote work. As part of the research, the following main research problem was raised: How do the representatives of the Generation Z perceive the impact of remote work on shaping the work-life balance? The study also posed a number of detailed problem questions concerning the work-life balance and employee well-being in relation to remote work.

- In the opinion of people from the Generation Z, remote work allows you to combine work and private life?
- In the opinion of the Generation Z, how does remote work affect family relationships?
- Does remote work disrupt the border between work and private life, according to the representatives of the Generation Z?
- In the opinion of the representatives of the Generation Z, remote work disturbs the rhythm of the day and night - blurring the boundaries between the individual times of the day and the behaviours attributed to them?
- Do people from the Generation Z believe that remote work requires constant readiness to work?
- Does remote work allow for flexible time management in the opinion of the Generation Z?
- In the opinion of the Generation Z, working remotely allows for greater freedom/independence?
- Do people from the Generation Z think remote working reduces work-related stress?

STATISTICA software was used in the process of compiling the research results. The non-parametric ANOVA Kruskal-Wallis test and the Mann-Whitney U test were used to assess the significance of the differences in the analysed variables. The publication by Stanisiz (2006) was used to analyse the obtained statistics. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was used to assess the strength of correlations occurring between variables. For the purposes of analysing the results of the study, a number of statistical hypotheses were adopted regarding the occurrence of significant differences in the responses of the respondents due to their socio-demographic characteristics and experience in the field of work, as well as remote learning and remote work. It was assumed that H_0 is a hypothesis that there are no differences due to the grouping variable, while H_1 is an alternative hypothesis that there are such differences. These hypotheses were verified with the use of a statistical test which allowed for the rejection of the null hypothesis about the lack of significant differences and the adoption of an alternative hypothesis about the existence of significant differences. The study presents dependencies verified with statistical tests, which authorize conclusions about regularities occurring in the studied group.

4. Results

226 people studying at 13 different faculties took part in the study. Among them, 50.44% were women, 48.23% were men, and 1.33% did not enter their gender in the questionnaire. The Generation Z was dominant in the study group. Due to the fact that statistical tests did not reveal statistically significant differences in the opinions of Z representatives and other respondents regarding the analysed issues, in the description and analysis of the research results, the overall results were presented without distinguishing between the Generation Z and the respondents of the older generation Y.

The majority of respondents (86.73%) had experience in remote education (only 12.83% did not learn remotely, and 0.44% did not provide information on this issue). People with professional experience also dominated among the respondents (86.28%). Only 13.28% of the respondents did not have any professional experience, and 0.44% did not provide any information on this subject. On the other hand, work experience in remote work was declared by 48.67% of respondents (50.89% of respondents did not work remotely and 0.44% did not provide information on this subject). Moreover, the respondents declared that in the future they would like to work: stationary (35.4% of indications), hybrid (50% of indications), remotely (12.39% of indications), and 2.21% of respondents did not indicate any of the above employment options.

With regard to the analysed issue, from the entire research material, a number of indicators were selected, which present the opinions of respondents on the impact of remote work on shaping the balance between work and private life and employee well-being. The main research problem was directly related to the question regarding the possibility of balancing professional and private life by people performing remote work. According to the data obtained, the majority of respondents stated (57.52% of responses) that remote work allows to reconcile work with private life. In this, 29.2% of respondents tended to agree with this statement, and 28.32% - completely agreed. Only 16.37% of the respondents had a different opinion, and 22.57% - did not give a clear answer on this issue (Table 1). The statistical analysis carried out revealed that the opinions of the respondents regarding the possibility of reconciling work and private life varied due to the form of work they preferred in the future (results of the Kruskal-Wallis test ($p = .0011$), with the adopted significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), indicate the rejection of the null hypothesis being verified). Survey participants who would like to work remotely relatively more often (78.57%) in the future than respondents preferring hybrid work (62.83%) and respondents opting for stationary employment (42.5%) - agree with the statement that remote work allows to reconcile work and private life.

Table 1.
Percentages of answers in the field of remote work

Remote work	strongly disagree	mostly disagree	neither agree nor disagree	mostly agree	strongly agree	N/A	total
allows you to combine work and private life	5.75%	10.62%	22.57%	29.2%	28.32%	3.54%	100%
disturbs family relationships	23.01%	18.14%	25.66%	14.60%	13.28%	5.31%	100%
disrupts the border between work and private life	9.29%	15.49%	18.59%	25.22%	27.43%	3.98%	100%
disturbs the sense of the rhythm of the day and night	16.37%	12.39%	23.01%	22.57%	21.68%	3.98%	100%
forces constant readiness to work	16.81%	18.59%	23.01%	20.35%	16.81%	4.43%	100%
allows for flexible time management	3.54%	7.52%	9.29%	34.96%	39.82%	4.87%	100%
allows for greater freedom/independence	2.65%	3.10%	11.50%	31.86%	47.79%	3.10%	100%
reduces work stress	9.74%	15.04%	23.45%	26.11%	21.24%	4.42%	100%

Source: own study.

When asked if remote work disturbs family relationships, most of the respondents (41.15%) did not notice such a negative impact. Only 27.88% of respondents noticed the negative impact of this form of work on family life, and every fourth respondent (25.66%) did not express an unambiguous opinion regarding this statement. The respondents' assessments of the impact of remote work on family relationships were also differentiated due to the form of preferred work (AKW test $p = .0128$; $\alpha = 0.05$). The most often opposed to this statement were people inclining to work remotely 50% or 46.02% hybrid work in the future. On the other hand, the respondents

who preferred stationary work mostly (41.25%) agreed that remote work disturbs family relations.

Additional light on the assessment of the impact of remote work on the work-life relationship is shed by the respondents' answers regarding other factors influencing the formation of work-life balance. Most of the surveyed representatives of the Generation Z (52.65%) stated that remote work disturbs the border between work and private life. Only 24.78% of the respondents had an opposite opinion, and 18.59% did not express an unambiguous opinion on this issue. In addition, the respondents were also critical of remote work in terms of its disruptive impact on the rhythm of the day and night (blurring the boundaries between the various times of the day and the behaviours attributed to them). Such an opinion was expressed by 44.25% of respondents. 28.76% were of the opposite opinion, and 23.01% were undecided on this issue. Importantly, the respondents also stated that remote work requires constant readiness to work and thus does not allow them to break away from professional activities. However, their answers were not so unambiguous, because although 37.16% of the respondents stated that remote work requires constant readiness to work, 35.40% of the respondents had a different opinion, and 23.01% did not give an unambiguous answer regarding this statement.

The results of the statistical analysis show that the opinions of the respondents regarding the impact of remote work on disturbance of the sense of the rhythm of the day and night varied according to their age (Mann-Whitney U test ($p = 0.0131$) with the adopted level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$) indicates the rejection of the verified null hypothesis) and preferences regarding the form of work (AKW test $p = .0101$; $\alpha = 0.05$). Respondents born in 1990 and earlier expressed this critical opinion much more often (48.4%) than younger people (23.68%). The respondents wishing to work stationary in the future, more often, 58.75% noticed the impact of remote work on blurring the boundaries between particular times of the day and night than those who preferred hybrid work 38.05% or remote work 25%. On the other hand, the statement that remote work necessitates constant readiness to work relatively more often 60.71% was disagreed by people who want to work remotely than people who intend to work hybrid 38.94%, or stationary 22.5%.

Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the people participating in the study were very unanimous in the statement that remote work allows for flexible time management. As many as 74.78% of respondents agreed with this statement (including 39.82% of respondents strongly agreed). Only 11.06% of the respondents were of the opposite opinion, and 9.29% did not give an unambiguous answer. Moreover, the respondents, when asked if remote work allows for greater freedom/independence, also had positive opinions on this subject. Most of the respondents, as much as 79.65%, were of the opinion that remote work allows employees a greater sense of independence than stationary work (including 47.79% of respondents strongly agreed with such a statement). Only 5.75% of the respondents were of the opposite opinion and 11.50% were undecided in this matter.

As indicated by the results of the statistical analysis, the opinions of the respondents regarding the impact of remote work on flexible time management were differentiated by their gender (AKW test $p = .0191$; $\alpha = 0.05$) and the preferred future form of work (AKW test $p = .0435$; $\alpha = 0.05$). Women relatively more often 84.21% than men 64.22% indicated that remote work allows for flexible time management. The advantage of remote work, related to the free management of their own time, was more often emphasized by the respondents inclining to work remotely in the future by 89.28%, compared to 77.88% preferring hybrid work and 65% choosing stationary work. The opinions of the respondents on the impact of remote work on the sense of freedom/independence were also varied due to their preferred form of work (AKW test $p = .0004$; $\alpha = 0.05$). Relatively more often the freedom/independence resulting from remote work was indicated by the respondents who preferred hybrid work in the future, 87.61%, than those choosing remote work 85.71% or stationary work 65%.

Since the relationship between work and non-work life is also significantly influenced by factors related to the sense of employee well-being - the survey participants were also asked: does remote work reduce work-related stress. Most of the respondents (47.35%) confirmed the positive impact of remote work on reducing the feeling of stress resulting from professional work. The remaining respondents were almost equally divided between the opponents of this statement, 24.78% and those who did not have an unambiguous opinion on this matter, 23.45%. (a detailed list of the respondents' answers regarding the balance between work and private life and employee well-being in remote work is presented in Table 1). Moreover, the statistical analysis revealed that the opinions of the respondents regarding the impact of remote work on the reduction of stress resulting from work were differentiated due to the form of work they preferred in the future (AKW test $p = .0304$; $\alpha = 0.05$). Survey participants who would like to work remotely relatively more often in the future (64.28%) than respondents preferring hybrid work (48.67%) and respondents opting for stationary employment (40%) agree with the statement that remote work reduces work stress.

Studying the analysed issue, as part of the statistical analysis, an attempt was made to determine the relationship between the variables using the Spearman's rank correlation index. The analysis of the level of dependence between selected indicators concerning the impact of remote work on shaping the work-life balance was conducted (Table 2).

Table 2.

Spearman's rank order correlation for selected variables at $p < 0.001$

Remote work	forces constant readiness to work	allows you to combine work and private life	disrupts the line between work and private life	disturbs the sense of the rhythm of the day and night
disturbs family relationships	0.576775	-0.27724	0.486221	0.427794
forces constant readiness to work	1.000000	-0.246575	0.580275	0.431143

Source: own study.

When examining the results of the correlation of Spearman's rank order between the indicators, it was noticed that the respondents who indicated that remote work disturbs family relations were also convinced that it was a form of work that forced permanent readiness to work. Moreover, it was observed that the respondents who noticed the negative impact of remote work on family relations also stated that remote work disturbs the border between work and private life, and also saw its negative effects in the form of disturbing the sense of the rhythm of the day and night. Noteworthy are the correlations indicating that the respondents, convinced of the need to maintain constant readiness to work while performing remote work, believed at the same time that this form of work disturbs the border between work and private life and disturbs the sense of the rhythm of the day and night. It was also observed that the respondents positively assessing the possibility of reconciling the professional and private spheres when performing remote work disagreed with the statement that remote work disturbs family relationships and did not agree with the opinion that this form of work requires constant readiness to work.

5. Discussion and limitations

The information obtained from the respondents representing the Generation Z allowed for the emergence of interesting observations related to the analysed issues. The analysis of the research results shows that the opinions of the respondents regarding the form of work they prefer in the future were significantly related to the perception of the impact of remote work on shaping the work-private life balance. The respondents who would like to work remotely in the future - more often than the respondents who prefer hybrid work and the respondents opting for stationary employment - stated that remote work allows to reconcile work and private life and does not disturb family life. This positive perception of remote work, in terms of good functioning in the non-professional area, by this category of respondents may result from the fact that the majority of young people from Generation Z do not have parental responsibilities yet and therefore work-life balance has a different meaning for them. It should be emphasized, however, that among the total number of respondents, only 12.39% of the respondents declared the will to work remotely in the future, although as many as 48.67% of respondents had professional experience in such work. On the other hand, the respondents who wanted to work stationary in the future, mostly expressed the opinion that remote work disturbs family relationships, and more often saw the negative effects of remote work regarding forcing permanent readiness to work and blurring the boundaries between individual times of the day and night.

It is also worth paying attention to the obtained information in relation to the gender of the respondents. The research shows that the advantage of remote work - related to the free management of one's own time - was emphasized more often by women than by men. These results confirm the fact, often indicated in previous work-life balance studies, that this issue is of special importance to women, as they are more burdened with parental responsibilities and housework. Therefore, it can be assumed that for the surveyed women, remote work, having a significant advantage in the form of flexible time management, will enable them to reconcile the obligations arising from performing various roles in professional and private life.

Another interesting observation is related to the opinions of the respondents regarding the impact of remote work on the disturbance of the sense of the rhythm of the day and night. It turns out that respondents born in 1990 and earlier expressed such a critical opinion more often than younger persons. These differentiated perceptions of the negative impact of remote work may result from the greater flexibility of the youngest representatives of the Generation Z regarding the time during which they perform professional duties and private activities.

It should also be emphasized that the obtained information corresponds to previous studies on the influence of several factors on the work-life balance (Shirmohammadi, Wee Chan Au, and Beigi, 2022; Muralidhar, Prasad, Mangipudi, 2020). Positive assessments of the respondents regarding the impact of remote work on the sense of independence and flexible management of one's own time, enabling the balancing of the professional and private spheres, have their reference to other studies on this subject. The positive impact of work autonomy on the shaping of work-life balance has been confirmed in numerous studies (Haar et al., 2019; Mellner, Aronsson, Kecklund, 2014). Moreover, as shown by research analyses, remote work can cause both positive and negative consequences concerning the work-life balance (Stankeviciute, Kunsakaja, 2022; Ugwu, Enwereuzor, Mazei, 2022). While the freedom and flexibility of remote work can enhance a sense of this balance among employees, it may be more difficult to achieve because remote work often blurs the lines between home and work (Rodríguez-Modroño, López-Igual, 2021).

The conducted research, in line with the discourse on shaping the balance between work and non-work life in relation to remote work, was not without some limitations. These include the pilot nature of the conducted research and the related small number of people participating in the polls. Therefore, the obtained results do not represent an opinion representative for the studied population in Poland, narrowing it down only to people residing in the Silesian Voivodeship. Moreover, the diversity in the literature regarding the criteria for the division of generations in the labour market means that the boundaries related to the birth year of people belonging to Generation Z are adopted differently. However, these studies, although they do not allow for drawing conclusions representative of young Polish workers, point to prominent issues that can be used in wider studies devoted to this issue.

6. Conclusion

Shaping the balance between work and private life is related to employees having an influence on how much time, when and where they spend on activities in the field of work and activities related to non-work life. Especially for the employees of the Generation Z, the possibility of taking advantage of a specific autonomy in this area applies not only to the quality of work but also to the overall quality of life.

The presented research results reveal interesting dependencies on the impact of remote work on shaping the work-life balance. As the analysis of data obtained from the survey shows, the majority of Generation Z representatives believed that remote work allowed to reconcile work and private life. Moreover, the majority of respondents expressed a positive opinion on the relationship between remote work and family life. People participating in the study were very unanimous in saying that remote work allows flexible time management and allows for greater independence. In addition, most of the respondents noticed the positive impact of remote work on reducing the feeling of stress resulting from work. It should be emphasized, however, that the respondents from Generation Z were not deprived of a critical view of remote work. They pointed to its negative aspects in relation to blurring the division between work and private life and disrupting the rhythm of the day and night - and thus disrupting the boundaries between particular times of the day and the behaviours attributed to them. The respondents also believed that remote work requires constant readiness to work and does not allow them to tear themselves away from professional activities.

When analysing the presented results, several conclusions are drawn that are important for the management of Generation Z employees. Firstly, the superiors of these young people should know that positive assessments of remote work in relation to work-life balance are related to the possibility of implementing values that are particularly important for representatives of this generation, which are: flexible management of one's own time, a sense of independence and work without stress. Secondly, managerial actions cannot be indifferent to the fears of young employees that remote work will not allow them to break away from professional activities and will blur the division between professional and private life and disrupt their rhythm of day and night. In this context, a conclusion can be drawn that the basic challenge for managers of Generation Z employees is to know the needs, expectations and concerns of subordinates regarding shaping the work-life balance. Good, open relationships in this area are necessary due to the fact that the reconciliation of professional and personal roles is related to dynamic relationships that change and depend not only on the individual needs of the employee, but also on changes in his environment. Such open communication with the supervisor, but also with colleagues, enables support in problems related to building proper relationships between professional and private life, and also shapes a friendly working atmosphere and a sense of employee well-being, so important for employees from the Generation Z. It should be

emphasized that the awareness of the management staff about the importance of this issue is of key importance for building managerial support and initiating various organizational activities.

Issues related to supporting employees in coping with the ability to balance professional and personal spheres are a very current topic for human resource managers. Especially for the superiors of employees from the Generation Z, this issue is a source of many challenges, because the failure to meet the expectations of these young people in the aspects of work and personal life that are particularly important to them, often results in resignation from work. The concept of smart working may be the answer to these challenges. This method of work, which uses remote work, is based on the independence and responsibility of employees, as a result of which they have the flexibility to act in the implementation of the set goals. Smart working, oriented on responsibility and participation, assumes the freedom of employees to decide where, when and how they will perform their work in accordance with the adopted strategies and objectives. Regardless of the adopted vision of human resource management in the organization, the specificity of supporting employees in shaping the work-life balance requires a constant dialogue within the company and at the same time belongs to those research topics which, by analysing the changes in the needs and expectations of employees, contribute to the improvement of managerial activities in this area.

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