

EVALUATION OF ACTIVITIES SUPPORTING THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE CONCEPT IN AN AGILE ORGANIZATION

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Purpose: The aim of this article is to assess the actions supporting the concept of work-life balance (WLB) in agile organizations. Strategies that support a harmonious combination of work and private life while maintaining organizational agility are analyzed.

Design/methodology/approach: The study was conducted using a survey method on a sample of 303 respondents, supplemented by multiple correspondence analysis (MCA), which allowed for a detailed examination of the perception of activities supporting WLB and their mutual relations.

Findings: Key findings indicate that activities related to flexible solutions tailored to employee needs and rapid response to their needs are perceived as the most important elements supporting WLB in agile organizations.

Research limitations/implications: A limitation of the study is that it was conducted in a specific organizational and geographical context, which may affect the generalizability of the results to other sectors or regions.

Practical implications: The study results provide practical guidance for agile organizations on how to effectively implement actions supporting WLB, especially in the area of flexibility and organizational culture.

Social implications: Promoting WLB in organizations contributes to improved employee well-being, reduced stress and increased engagement, which translates into social benefits such as greater employment stability and social life balance.

Originality/value: The originality of the article lies in combining the perspective of agile organizations with the analysis of activities supporting WLB, which fills the gap in the literature and provides new conclusions in the context of a dynamic work environment.

Keywords: organizational agility, work-life balance concept, organization, employees, multiple correspondence analysis (MCA).

Category of the paper: research paper.

1. Introduction

Modern organizations increasingly face the challenge of reconciling the requirements of a dynamically changing business environment with the needs of employees in terms of work-life balance. Work-life balance has become one of the key topics in both scientific research and management practice, because it directly affects the efficiency, well-being and engagement of employees. In agile organizations, which are characterized by flexibility, fast pace of action and openness to change, this topic gains an additional dimension. A work environment that requires constant adaptation and high efficiency must simultaneously support employees in dealing with the challenges related to work-life balance (Nath, Agrawal, 2020).

Taking action in this area is particularly important because the lack of balance can lead to burnout, reduced productivity and increased employee turnover, which has a direct impact on the condition of the organization (Ramadhana, 2021). On the other hand, effective strategies supporting work-life balance can contribute to increased job satisfaction, better use of team potential and building a competitive advantage. This is why this topic is not only current, but also crucial for organizations that want to maintain their agility and adaptability (Prieto, Talukder, 2023).

The aim of the research presented in the article was to identify activities supporting the concept of work-life balance in agile organizations and to determine their importance in the context of building a work environment that promotes balance and efficiency. The added value of the article is to provide specific recommendations based on research results that can be used in management practice. The originality results from combining the perspective of agile organizations with the analysis of activities supporting work-life balance, which allows for a better understanding of this issue in the context of contemporary challenges. The presented research fills a gap in the literature on effective strategies supporting work-life balance in environments with high dynamics and variability.

1.1. The essence of an agile organization

The concept of an agile organization is its ability to quickly and effectively adapt to a dynamically changing environment, both internal and external. A key element of this concept is flexibility, which allows the organization to respond to new challenges, take advantage of emerging opportunities, and minimize the risk associated with uncertainty (Mrugalska. Ahmed, 2021). In agile organizations, the emphasis is on cooperation, decentralization of decision-making, and active involvement of employees at all levels of the organizational structure. Thanks to this, the organization can effectively use the diversity of experiences, skills, and perspectives of its members (Anderson, Wilson, 2017).

Organizational agility also includes the ability to quickly implement innovations and adapt operational processes in such a way as to maximize efficiency and quality of operation (Kt, Sivasubramanian, 2023). The structure of an agile organization is characterized by flatness and flexibility, which allows for shortening the decision-making chain, reducing bureaucracy and faster response to changing market needs. In this context, agility also means the ability to experiment, learn from mistakes and continuously improve both processes and products (Chen, Li, 2021).

Another important aspect of an agile organization is promoting a culture of openness and trust. In such organizations, employees have the freedom to express their opinions, take the initiative, and engage in projects that require an innovative approach. Agile organizations focus on creating a work environment that fosters creativity, cooperation, and internal motivation. Therefore, building teams based on mutual support and autonomy is a priority, which allows employees to develop their competences and effectively achieve goals (Gao et al., 2020).

The essence of an agile organization is also associated with the use of modern technologies and tools supporting management (Kurnia, Chien, 2020). These technologies enable rapid information flow, process automation and effective data analysis, which contributes to making better decisions. In agile organizations, technologies are treated as support for people, not as their replacement, which additionally emphasizes the humanistic aspect of this concept (He, Harris, 2021).

Organizational agility is not limited to the internal sphere, but also encompasses relationships with customers, business partners, and other stakeholders. Agile organizations strive to build long-term, trust-based relationships that allow for effective cooperation and flexible response to market needs (Luo et al., 2020). In this way, agility becomes not only a feature of the organizational structure, but also a philosophy of operation that permeates all aspects of the organization's functioning (Joiner, 2019).

In summary, the essence of an agile organization is based on flexibility, collaboration, innovation, and rapid adaptation to changing conditions. This approach allows organizations to achieve competitive advantage, increase employee and customer satisfaction, and function effectively in an increasingly complex and dynamic business environment.

1.2. Work-life balance concept

The concept of work-life balance is based on the assumption that the balance between professional and private life is a key factor influencing the well-being of an individual and the effectiveness of an organization (Krzyszowska-Dąbrowska, 2020). This idea has gained particular importance in the era of dynamic changes in the labor market, growing demands on employees and advancing digitalization, which has blurred the traditional boundaries between professional duties and private time. The concept of work-life balance does not only refer to

the amount of time spent at work and outside it, but also to the quality of this time and the sense of satisfaction with the implementation of roles in both areas (Blumberga, Pylinskaya, 2019).

One of the foundations of this concept is a holistic approach that takes into account the diversity of an individual's needs in terms of time, energy and resources allocated to different aspects of life. Employees who can effectively manage these areas demonstrate higher levels of engagement, motivation and creativity, which translates into benefits for both themselves and the organisation. For this reason, work-life balance is increasingly treated as a strategic element of human resources management policy, supporting the development of human and social capital (Galli, 2013; Huras, 2021; Jeran, 2016). Work-life balance is not about perfect time allocation, but about flexible adjustment of priorities depending on current needs and circumstances (Kozłowski, 2020). In this context, it is important for organisations to create conditions conducive to achieving both professional and personal goals. The ability to adjust work schedules, remote work, flexible forms of employment or support systems for parents and carers are examples of activities that help employees achieve better balance (Wróbel, 2021).

The concept of work-life balance is gaining particular importance in the context of changing expectations of employees, especially younger generations, who increasingly value flexibility and the ability to pursue passions or family obligations outside of work (Karcz-Napieraj et al., 2019). Employees expect not only appropriate remuneration, but also added value in the form of understanding their needs, support in the field of mental health and the possibility of self-fulfilment (Leoński, 2015). The lack of balance between work and private life can lead to burnout, decreased commitment and increased employee turnover, which negatively affects the effectiveness of the organization. Work-life balance is also an important element of building the employer's image (Czarnecki, 2011). Organizations that promote work-life balance are perceived as more attractive on the labor market, which makes it easier to attract and retain talent. Therefore, companies are increasingly investing in programs supporting balance, such as time management training, mentoring or benefit packages supporting employee health and well-being (Bortkiewicz et al., 2020).

The importance of work-life balance goes beyond the individual needs of employees. It also has a social dimension, contributing to the development of healthy family relationships, social activity and the general well-being of society. Therefore, this concept finds its place in sustainable development strategies, where organizations play a key role in creating an environment that is conducive to both economic efficiency and quality of life (Walentek, 2019).

In summary, work-life balance is a dynamic concept, the effective implementation of which requires cooperation between employees and employers, flexibility and commitment to building a work environment that takes into account the diverse needs of the individual. This balance not only affects individual well-being, but also the long-term success of the organization and its positive impact on the environment.

1.3. Determinants of the work-life balance concept in an agile organization

The determinants of the concept of work-life balance in an agile organization are based on a set of actions and strategies that support both flexibility and harmony between the work and private life of employees. The foundation of this concept is the adaptation of the organizational approach to the dynamically changing needs of employees and the requirements of the work environment. In agile organizations, work-life balance is not only a goal in itself, but also a tool that supports operational efficiency, team engagement and innovation (Dewicka, Trziszka, 2018).

One of the key determinants of this concept is offering flexible solutions that allow employees to manage their time in a way that is tailored to their individual needs (Fabjański, Sroczyńska, 2015). This flexibility can take various forms, such as variable working hours, the possibility of hybrid or remote work, as well as options to adjust the intensity of work to the stage of professional or private life. Such solutions help reduce stress and increase the sense of autonomy, which in turn has a positive effect on motivation and productivity (Sidor-Rządkowska, 2021).

Another determinant is the implementation of technologies that support work-life balance (Messenger, Gschwind, 2016). In agile organizations, technologies are seen as a key tool for optimizing processes, automating routine tasks, and facilitating communication in distributed teams. Tools such as project management platforms, work time monitoring applications, or solutions enabling remote access to organizational resources support not only work efficiency, but also allow employees to better manage their time and responsibilities (Pruchnik, Pruchnik, 2020).

Promoting a culture of openness in agile organizations is an important element of the work-life balance concept. A culture of openness is based on trust, transparency, and supporting employee initiatives (Józwiak, 2018). Employees who feel heard and have the space to express their needs and ideas are more likely to engage in the organization's activities and better cope with the challenges of balancing different aspects of life. Such a culture also promotes building relationships based on mutual support, which strengthens the sense of belonging and job satisfaction (Nowocień, 2020).

Flexible response to employee needs is another determinant of work-life balance in agile organizations (Mikuła, 2015). It means the ability of the organization to dynamically adapt to changing expectations and situations of employees. These reactions may include providing support in crisis situations, introducing additional employee benefits or modifying organizational policies to better meet the needs of teams. The ability to quickly and adequately respond to employee needs strengthens their loyalty and sense of stability, which in turn positively affects the effectiveness of the organization (Mierzejewska, Chomicki, 2020).

These determinants, as integral elements of work-life balance in agile organizations, are interconnected and create a system supporting both individuals and the entire organization. Striving for work-life balance is not only a response to employee expectations, but also a strategic tool that allows organizations to build agility and competitive advantage. Supporting flexibility, implementing appropriate technologies, promoting openness and dynamic response to employee needs are key determinants that should be at the center of the strategy of every organization striving for efficiency and sustainable development (Makulska, 2012).

1.4. Research Methodology

The aim of the research was to identify activities supporting work-life balance in agile organizations and to determine how they are perceived by employees. The research hypothesis was adopted that organizational activities such as offering flexible solutions, implementing new technologies, promoting a culture of openness and flexibly responding to employee needs have a significant impact on supporting work-life balance in the professional environment. The research asked questions about which of these activities are most often positively assessed by respondents and what differences occur in their perception.

The research method was a survey conducted in April-May 2023 on a sample of 303 respondents. Respondents assessed various aspects of organizational activities supporting work-life balance in agile organizations, which allowed for the collection of quantitative data necessary for further analysis.

To deepen the analysis, the multiple correspondence method (MCA) was used, which allowed for examining the mutual relations between the assessed activities and identifying similarities and differences in their perception. MCA analysis allowed for visualizing the results in a multidimensional space, which facilitated the interpretation of data and the indication of key activities for effective support of work-life balance in agile organizations. Thanks to this, it was possible to more precisely determine the hierarchy of importance of individual activities and their impact on the perception of work-life balance by respondents. In the course of the analysis, detailed sociodemographic data were obtained, which allowed for a precise determination of the structure of the studied group. The results regarding gender showed that the majority of respondents were men (58.7%), while women represented 41.3% of the sample. Age analysis indicates that the largest part of the respondents (47.2%) were people under 25 years of age. The next age groups are people aged 26-35 (30.4%), 36-45 (19.5%) and the smallest group, over 45 (3%).

In terms of positions held, the largest group were employees (57.4%), followed by middle management (25.2%), lower management (11.1%) and top management (6.4%). The analysis of seniority showed that the largest group of respondents had professional experience of up to 5 years (47.7%), while the next groups included people with 6-10 years of experience (33.4%), 11-15 years (13.6%), 16-20 years (3.6%) and over 20 years (1.7%).

In terms of the size of the companies in which the respondents worked, the largest number of people were employed in small enterprises (37.5 %), followed by microenterprises (26.4%), medium-sized enterprises (20.1%) and large enterprises (16.1%). In terms of the period of operation of the companies, the largest group were companies operating for 1 to 3 years (34.9%), followed by companies with periods of operation of 4-7 years (27.1%) and over 8 years (26.1%). The smallest category were companies operating for up to a year (11.9 %).

In terms of industries, the largest share was held by companies from the retail sector (54.8%), followed by education (10.4%), automotive industry (5.4%), healthcare (3%) and other industries (26.4%). The scope of the companies' operations indicates that 32.5 % of them operated at the regional level, 31.5% at the national level, 18.3% at the international level and 17.6% operated locally.

The analysis of the financial situation of the companies revealed that the majority of respondents assessed it as good (55.6%), while 19.9% described it as very good. A bad financial situation was indicated by 4.6 % of the respondents, and a very bad one by 3%. 16.9% of the respondents had difficulties in assessing the financial situation of their company. Presentation of Research Findings.

The research aimed to assess organizational activities supporting work-life balance in an agile organization by analyzing respondents' opinions on four key areas (Table 1).

Table 1.

Activities supporting the concept of work-life balance in an agile organization

Variable	Definitely NOT	Rather not	I don't have an opinion	Rather YES	Definitely YES
Offering flexible solutions tailored to the needs of employees (1)	12	18	33	102	138
Implementation of new technologies supporting work-life balance (2)	15	22	40	95	131
Promoting a culture of openness that fosters harmony (3)	9	15	45	110	124
Responsive response to employee needs (4)	10	20	38	98	137

Source: Own study based on research.

The first one was offering flexible solutions tailored to the needs of employees, where 12 people definitely denied the effectiveness of such actions, 18 assessed them rather negatively, 33 had no opinion on this matter, while the majority, i.e. 102 people, assessed them rather positively, and 138 definitely positively.

The second area was the assessment of the implementation of new technologies supporting work-life balance. In this category, 15 people strongly denied their impact, 22 assessed them rather negatively, 40 people remained neutral, while 95 respondents tended to assess them positively and 131 expressed strongly positive opinions.

The third theme was promoting a culture of openness that supports work-life balance. In this case, 9 people strongly disagreed with such actions, 15 considered them rather unsupportive, 45 had no opinion, 110 people assessed them rather positively, and 124 strongly

positively. The last element analyzed was flexible response to employee needs. In this respect, 10 respondents strongly disagreed with such actions, 20 assessed them rather negatively, 38 people remained neutral, 98 assessed them rather positively, and 137 expressed strongly positive opinions. In order to examine the interrelationships between activities supporting work-life balance in an agile organization, a multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) was conducted. Figure 1 presents the results of this analysis, showing the relationships between four key activities: offering flexible solutions tailored to employee needs, implementing new technologies supporting work-life balance, promoting a culture of openness supporting harmony, and flexibly responding to employee needs.

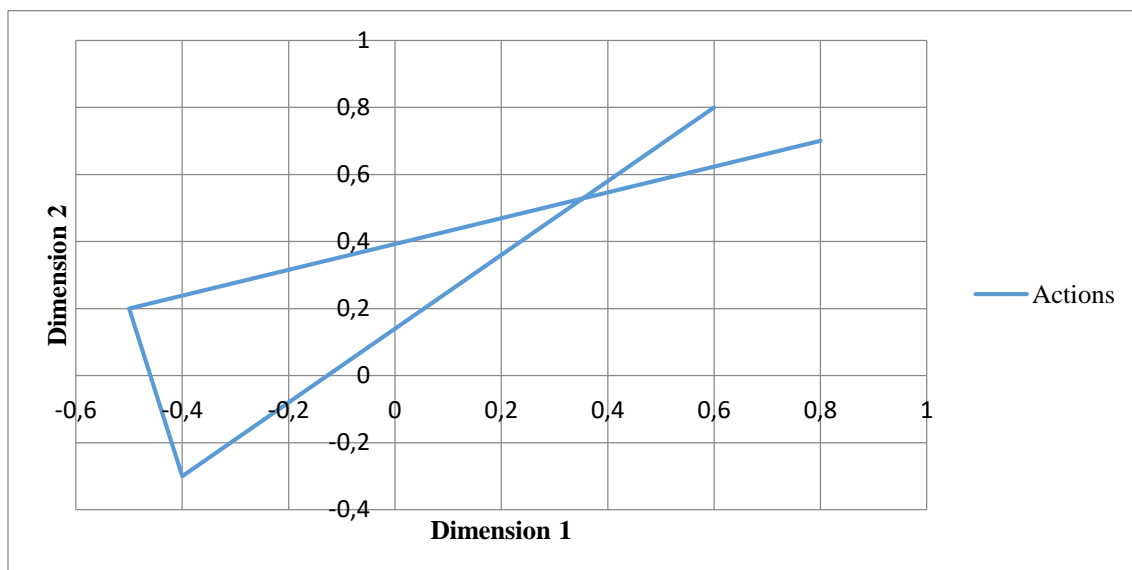


Figure 1. MCA analysis: Actions supporting work-life balance.

Source: Own study.

The horizontal (Dimension 1) and vertical (Dimension 2) axes show coordinates illustrating the positioning of individual activities in the research space. Activities such as “Offering flexible solutions” and “Responding flexibly to needs” are located in the upper right quadrant of the graph, which indicates their mutual similarity and positive perception by respondents as key to supporting work-life balance.

In turn, “Promoting a culture of openness supporting harmony” and “Implementing new technologies supporting work-life balance” were placed closer to the center of the graph and in the quadrants on the negative side of the Dimension 1 and/or Dimension 2 axis. This placement suggests that these activities may be perceived more neutrally or have a slightly less direct impact on work-life balance.

The chart allows for the identification of activities that are most similar in terms of perception and those that are distinguished by a different nature in the perception of respondents. Spatial analysis allows for the possibility of drawing conclusions about the hierarchy of activities in the context of their effectiveness in building work-life balance in agile organizations.

2. Discussion

Based on the research results presented in the table and the multiple correspondence analysis (MCA), several important conclusions can be drawn regarding activities supporting the concept of work-life balance in an agile organization. Activities related to flexibility, such as adapting solutions to the needs of employees and responding to their individual requirements, have been identified as key elements supporting work-life balance. They are seen as fundamental in building a work environment that supports both employee efficiency and well-being.

Promoting a culture of openness that supports harmony between different aspects of life is an important factor, although it requires additional actions to respond more effectively to employee expectations. Openness in an organization that encourages dialogue and the free exchange of ideas, supports positive relationships and increases the sense of community, which contributes to improving work-life balance. The implementation of technologies supporting work-life balance, although assessed as important, seems to be more diverse in its perception. This may indicate differences in their availability, effectiveness or adaptation to the specific needs of employees in different organizations. Technological activities therefore require precise adaptation to organizational conditions and appropriate support in implementation.

The MCA analysis indicated strong links between flexibility-related activities, which highlights their synergistic importance in creating an environment that supports work-life balance. These activities are seen as central to agile organizations that emphasize rapid response to employee needs and adaptation to dynamically changing conditions. In contrast, activities related to technology and open culture, although also important, seem to be more dependent on the organizational context and may require more support in the implementation process.

In summary, the research emphasizes that effective support for work-life balance requires prioritizing activities based on flexibility and an individual approach to employee needs. At the same time, it is important to build an organizational culture based on openness and implement appropriate technologies that harmoniously support the goals of both employees and the organization.

Based on the research results, companies are recommended to focus on creating a work environment that supports flexibility and responds to the individual needs of employees. The priority should be to introduce solutions that allow for adapting working conditions to changing employee expectations, such as flexible working hours or the possibility of remote work. Such activities not only support work-life balance, but also build engagement and increase job satisfaction.

It is also recommended to intensify activities in the area of promoting an organizational culture based on openness and mutual understanding. Implementing strategies that support dialogue, free exchange of ideas and mutual support in teams can contribute to building an atmosphere of trust and cooperation. Creating a space for open communication and involving employees in decision-making processes strengthens their sense of belonging and influence on the functioning of the organization.

In the context of technologies supporting work-life balance, it is recommended that they be carefully tailored to the specifics of the organization and the needs of employees. The implementation of tools facilitating the organization of work, such as planning systems or communication platforms, should be combined with appropriate technical support and training to ensure their effectiveness and widespread use. It is also crucial to take into account the individual preferences of users so that technologies really support them in their daily duties.

Organizations should also regularly monitor the effectiveness of their work-life balance support activities and collect feedback from employees. Based on this data, strategies and activities can be flexibly adjusted to better respond to changing needs. Building work-life balance requires constant commitment and openness to change, which is why it is important for companies to treat it as a dynamic and long-term process. Integrating activities in the field of flexibility, technology and organizational culture with business goals can contribute to both improving the quality of life of employees and increasing the operational efficiency of the organization.

3. Conclusions

The results of the research included in the article can be compared with the results of other researchers who also analyzed activities supporting the concept of work-life balance in organizations. Research conducted by the Polish Economic Institute indicates that flexible forms of work, such as the possibility of working different hours or schedule management, play an important role in building a balance between work and private life. The growing importance of the adaptability of organizations in this area is indicated (Polish Economic Institute, 2024).

Similar conclusions can be drawn from analyses of the HRK SA Employer Branding team, which emphasize the importance of strategies such as flexible working hours and remote work. These activities are indicated as key to creating a work environment conducive to employee well-being. Promoting work-life balance as an element of organizational strategy contributes to strengthening the positive image of the employer on the labor market, while improving the quality of life of employees (HRK SA, 2023). The results of these studies are consistent with the findings contained in the article, which emphasize the importance of flexibility and a culture of openness in agile organizations. In both cases, attention is drawn to the need for an individual

approach to employee needs, as well as the role of activities supporting the balance between different aspects of life as a key element of the human resources management strategy.

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