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WORK-LIFE BALANCE ASPECTS IN REMOTE WORK CONDITIONS OF GENERATION Z

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Purpose: The aim of this study is to identify the indicators that have the greatest impact on the work-life balance experienced by remote employees from Generation Z.
Design/methodology/approach: This paper presents a segment of the research results concerning respondents' opinions on the impact of remote work on work-life balance.
Findings: The presented results indicate that the most significant factor influencing the sense of WLB is the comfort that remote work provides, likely due to the ability to organize one's workspace and workflow while avoiding direct supervision and managerial pressure Respondents highlight the convenience that remote work brings in reconciling professional and private life, although some point out that this form of work disrupts their day-night rhythm. Interestingly, unlike findings from other studies, the sense of isolation associated with remote work was not emphasized by respondents and showed virtually no effect on perceived WLB (-0.07).
Research limitations/implications The research findings can be used by managers in organizations, among other things, in relation to: changing the management model, supporting occupational health and personalizing benefits. It would be interesting to conduct comparative studies and gather insights from representatives of other generations in this area.
Originality/value: A key contribution of this research lies in its focus on the opinions of Generation Z employees working remotely.
Keywords: work-life balance, remote working, gen-Z
Category of the paper: Research paper

1. Introduction

The contemporary reality, characterized by pervasive digitalization and the transformation of traditional work models into remote or hybrid ones, compels employees to maintain a balance between professional and personal life. Employees must find ways to preserve a healthy equilibrium between work and private life and prevent burnout while working remotely. Employee well-being is key to productivity. Those who achieve a balance between work and personal life derive greater job satisfaction and demonstrate higher engagement in their duties,

which in turn fosters loyalty to the organization and reduces employee turnover. This contributes to enhancing the employer's image and reputation in the labour market.

Expectations toward employers are increasing — not only salary and employee benefits are important, but also, and perhaps above all, good work organization and a flexible employment system. The concept of work-life balance (WLB) should become a key element of HR strategy, and solutions such as remote work, flexible working hours, and adjustable work schedules can serve as pillars of a modern approach to employment — especially when demographic changes are taken into account. These changes often influence the overall age structure of both current and future employees. The observed generational shift is a natural part of the life cycle, including professional life. Younger employees are entering the labour market, among them representatives of Generation Z. For this group, work is not only a source of income but also a means of personal development. Notably, they display a strong tendency to seek balance between professional and private life.

The aim of this study is to identify the indicators that have the greatest impact on the work-life balance experienced by remote employees from Generation Z.

2. Theoretical background

The concept of work-life balance (WLB) is based on the approach that professional and personal life complement each other and operate in synergy (they are mutually reinforcing), although they can also be perceived as competing domains (Crompton, Lyonette, 2006, pp. 379-393; Beauregard, Henry, 2009, pp. 9-22). WLB can also be defined as the balance between professional and private (non-professional) life and refers to the relationship between paid work and other human activities. It usually denotes a certain harmony or equilibrium between the spheres of work and life (personal or family) (Chang, McDonald, Burton, 2010, pp. 2381-2413). Discussions surrounding WLB concern the degree to which an individual has control over when, where, and how much time they devote to tasks in both professional and personal domains. It is, therefore, an optimal proportion between time spent on work and time allocated to non-professional life. It should be emphasized, however, that this optimum varies across individuals. Every working person, regardless of age or gender, faces the challenge of reconciling work with personal life. An analysis of this issue allows for the observation of characteristic attitudes among representatives of different generations toward this problem There are numerous factors that influence how individuals from a given generation approach issues related to work-life balance (WLB). These include social, cultural, and economic changes, technological advancements, as well as life experiences characteristic of many people within that generation. A particularly important factor is an individual's attitude toward work and the position that work, family, and leisure occupy within their personal hierarchy of values.

Work-life balance holds particular importance for members of Generation Z — the youngest generation currently entering the labour market, comprising individuals born between 1995 and 2012. They have ambitious plans for the future, display an entrepreneurial spirit, and enjoy using the Internet as a source of knowledge. They are open, direct, and have a strong need for peer interaction. At the same time, they are often perceived as a generation that spends relatively little time in the "real" world. As they enter the workforce, Generation Z individuals prioritize career development and financial stability, while also valuing flexibility and attention to their everyday needs. They possess a strong desire to change the world. This generation is characterized by its natural familiarity with modern technologies and the tendency to automate tasks. Their personality traits and skills make them well-suited for remote work (Jankowska, 2021, pp. 88-99; Tomaszuk, Wasiluk, 2023, pp. 83-93).

Members of Generation Z, who highly value independence, tend to start their first paid jobs earlier than representatives of previous generations — often during high school or shortly after graduation. Although these are usually part-time or temporary jobs, they play a crucial role in shaping young people's expectations about their future careers In their professional lives, they are guided by the same values that they follow in their personal lives, striving to build their careers quickly. Having grown up in an era characterized by easy access to knowledge and information, they possess competencies that are highly valued in today's labour market. Their distinguishing traits include quick decision-making, a lack of fear of taking risks, and, at the same time, a sense of uncertainty about their professional future (Ławińska, Korombel, 2023, pp. 17-18).

Remote work is a well-recognized phenomenon in both academic discourse and business practice, with its roots tracing back to the 1970s — specifically to the first oil crisis, which brought about drastic fuel price increases and heightened awareness of environmental threats caused by excessive emissions These events prompted American physicist J. Nilles in 1973 to conduct the first experimental project in the field of telecommuting. This new, flexible form of work was later popularized by A. Toffler (1980) in his book The Third Wave and by futurist F. Kinsman in The Telecommuters (Szluz, 2013). Remote work, performed outside the employer's premises — typically from the employee's home — using various means of electronic communication and often within irregular time frames, emerged as a result of increased flexibility in employment regarding both workplace and working hours (Florczak, 2015, pp. 24-26).

For many years, remote work was not widely adopted in traditional employment due to practical difficulties in its implementation. Even the legal regulation of telework as a form of remote work did not lead to its widespread use. The breakthrough came during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the need for isolation made remote work a necessity, allowing employees to continue performing their professional duties. This shift in perception transformed remote work from an exceptional arrangement into a viable and often preferred form of employment even after the end of the public health emergency. The development of modern technologies has

significantly facilitated the use of remote work — work performed independently of a specific location or fixed hours — which has, in turn, had a major impact on maintaining balance between professional and private life. However, this form of work has two contrasting sides. On the one hand, remote work offers greater flexibility in managing working hours and adapting them to personal activities and responsibilities. On the other hand, it often leads to disruptions in the balance between work and private life (Ludera-Ruszel, 2021, pp. 511-521).

A comprehensive definition of remote work is provided by E. Bąk (2006), who describes it as any intellectual work performed outside the standard workplace, the results of which are transmitted to the employer using information and telecommunication technologies.

The benefits of remote work include, above all, enhanced technical competencies among employees, fewer conflicts, reduced stress levels, greater creativity, increased autonomy, and improved concentration. However, remote work also has its drawbacks, and employees may experience negative effects such as weakened team integration, disrupted work-life balance, feelings of isolation, diminishing identification with the company, potential decreases in efficiency, limited promotion opportunities, reduced access to traditional training and organizational resources, as well as stress related to technical issues. (Penc-Pietrzak, 2023, pp. 41-65).

3. Methods

This study employed the technique of structural equation modelling (SEM) (Januszewski, 2011, pp. 213-245). Structural modelling allows for the creation of models that include latent (unobservable) variables (Lowry, Gaskin, 2014). The primary purpose of using this technique in data analysis is to determine the likelihood that the observed data structure arises by chance or is explained by the causal relationships proposed in the tested theory. The starting point for applying structural modelling should always be a theory that assumes specific relationships between the studied variables (Kacprzak, 2018). Structural modelling enables the evaluation of both the research instrument used (the measurement model) and the theory being tested (the structural model). For the purposes of verifying the theoretical model, SPSS AMOS was used.

The research findings presented in this study are part of a quantitative survey titled “Managerial Aspects of Remote Work Management”, conducted among young people from Generation Z who work remotely. The survey was carried out in December 2022. This paper presents a segment of the research results concerning respondents’ opinions on the impact of remote work on work-life balance. Among the questions addressed in the study was the following: How does remote work influence Generation Z employees’ perception of balance between professional and personal life?

The study focused on young people from Generation Z whose remote work experience spanned at least the year 2022. The classification which is most popular in literature defines Generation Z as persons born after 1995, although some researchers may include those born in 1990 in this group, whereas in other approaches the group only includes the people who were born in 2000 or later (Dreyer, Stojanová, 2022; Skýpalová et al., 2023; Urick et al., 2017).

It was conducted using quantitative research methods, specifically through a survey technique. Due to the lack of statistical data on the number of people aged 15-34 in Poland engaged in remote work, the study concentrated on young, professionally active individuals representing this age group. Based on data from the Statistical Yearbook of Labor 2021, the population of people working in Poland within this age range was estimated at 4802 (in thousands) individuals. The structure of the studied population by gender and age is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Structure of respondents by age and gender

age categories	**women population indicators**	**sample size women**	**men population indicators**	**sample size men**	**population in general (in thousands)**	**study sample size**
15-24	357 38,93%	28	560 61,07	45	917 19,09%	73
25-29	760 43,16%	61	1000 56,84	80	1761 36,67%	141
30-34	928 43,69%	74	1196 56,30	96	2124 44,23%	170
Study sample size	2045 42,59%	163	2756 57,39%	221	4802 100%	384

Source: own study.

For the estimated population, and under the following statistical assumptions — fraction size: 0.5; confidence level: 95%; maximum error: 5% — the required sample size was determined to be 384 individuals. The survey was conducted by the specialized market research agency Fieldstat sp. z o.o. The study employed two survey techniques: a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) for 50% of respondents and a Computer-Assisted Web Interview (CAWI) for the remaining 50%. Contact was made with 2,783 individuals working remotely. Some declined to participate, while others did not qualify due to the study criteria (e.g., lack of remote work experience in 2022) or because the sample quotas for age or gender had already been filled. The criterion of having remote work experience in 2022 was applied to exclude employees whose remote work was solely due to the COVID-19 pandemic (the definition of remote work includes voluntary choice of work format, whereas during the pandemic, it was often a necessity rather than a choice). Including opinions of respondents compelled to work remotely due to external circumstances could have led to inaccurate conclusions regarding their attitudes and beliefs. Ultimately, 387 correctly completed surveys were obtained (slightly exceeding the planned sample size does not disrupt the intended structure of the study group).

The research instrument was a standardized questionnaire consisting of 57 closed-ended statements and 8 questions regarding the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics. Responses were measured using a Likert scale (from 1 to 5), which allows for the assessment of the relative intensity of different answers (Babbie, 2004, p. 192). This format enables reliable and rapid analysis of the collected data and facilitates data processing (Churchill, 2002, p. 309). The questionnaire is an original tool, developed by members of the research team — staff of the Department of Applied Sociology and Human Resource Management at the Faculty of Management, Częstochowa University of Technology.

4. Results

Respondents were asked to express their opinions on nine statements concerning perceived work-life balance in the context of remote work.

The responses indicate a generally positive attitude toward the topic under study (Table 2). The highest levels of agreement were observed for statements suggesting that remote work "promotes stress-free work", "provides greater freedom/independence at work", and "makes the employee feel comfortable", with mean scores of 3.80, 3.76, and 3.73, respectively, on a five-point Likert scale.

Table 2.
Means and standard deviations

Statements **Remote work:**	**Mean**	**Std. deviation**
W1. Allows balancing work and private life	3,423773	1,051154
W2. Enables flexible time management	3,444444	1,047518
W3. Disrupts day-night rhythm	2,767442	1,239536
W4. Helps protect boundaries between work and private life	3,480620	1,122780
W5. Facilitates support from supervisors	3,080103	1,043754
W6. Leads to feelings of isolation	3,266150	1,216879
W7. Provides greater freedom/independence at work	3,764858	0,994287
W8. Promotes stress-free work	3,801034	1,040227
W9. Makes the employee feel comfortable	3,739018	1,023861

Source: own study.

The first step in the analysis process was to assess the adequacy of the proposed set of indicators. The reliability of the questionnaire, measured using Cronbach's alpha, was 0.7238. The Cronbach's alpha values for individual indicators are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.
Cronbach's Alpha values for individual indicator

Statements Remote work:	**Mean = 30.7674, St. dev. = 5.47464, Valid N: 387 Cronbach's alpha: 0.723803 Standardized Alpha: 0.752729 Average inter-item correlation: 0.296640**				
	Mean if deleted	**Variance if deleted**	**St. dev. if deleted**	**Corrected Item Total Correlation**	**Alpha if deleted**
W1.	27,34367	22,49430	4,742815	0,632445	0,657208
W2.	27,32300	22,12048	4,703241	0,678741	0,648607
W3.	28,00000	31,44703	5,607765	-0,222216	0,811111
W4.	27,28682	23,79629	4,878144	0,442466	0,691238
W5.	27,68734	24,29242	4,928734	0,439416	0,692428
W6.	27,50129	28,26550	5,316531	0,011744	0,771525
W7.	27,00258	22,66924	4,761223	0,659800	0,655107
W8.	26,96641	22,37355	4,730069	0,655417	0,653422
W9.	27,02842	22,46173	4,739380	0,658963	0,653629

Source: own study.

Cronbach's alpha is a measure of the internal consistency of a set of questions or statements. This coefficient allows us to assess whether the survey items are consistent and measure the same underlying construct. The value of Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0 to 1, with a level above 0.7 generally considered acceptable. This statistic indicates how well the set of variables measures a single, unidimensional latent aspect of the phenomenon. Analysis of Cronbach's alpha in this study suggests that statements W3 and W6 weaken the internal consistency of the measured factor.

The value of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure, which assesses the adequacy of the proposed set of observed variables, is 0.832. The KMO values for individual variables are presented in Table 4.

Table 4.
K-M-O criterion - general and for individual variables

General KMO	**Statements**								
	W1.	**W2.**	**W3.**	**W4.**	**W5.**	**W6.**	**W7.**	**W8.**	**W9.**
0,832	0,832	0,837	0,709	0,821	0,853	0,421	0,894	0,862	0,854

Source: own study.

The KMO measure, also known as the measure of sampling adequacy, evaluates whether the partial correlations among the analysed variables are small. Its value ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating stronger relationships among variables. A commonly accepted minimum threshold for adequacy is 0.5 or 0.6. (Mazur, Rószkiewicz, Strzyżewska, 2008, pp. 49-55) In the analysed set of statements, the KMO indicators are very high overall. However, similar to the Cronbach's alpha analysis, statements W3 and W6 show a weakening effect on the remaining variables.

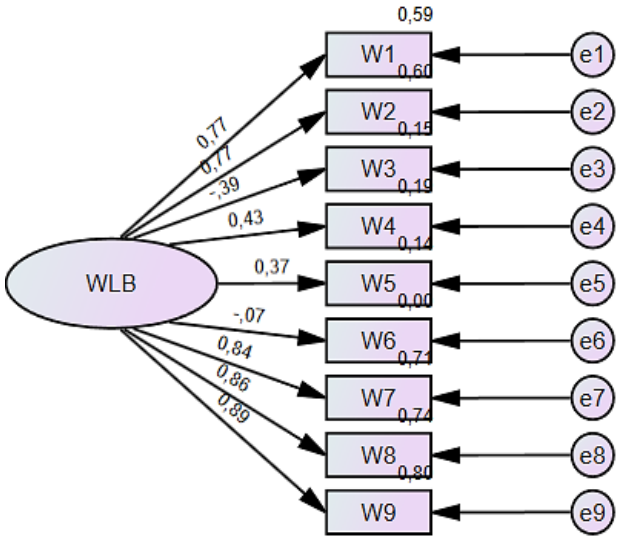


Figure 1. Standardized regression weights.

Source: own study.

Analysing the above model (Figure 1), where WLB (work-life balance) is the latent variable, it can be observed that the largest proportion of the variance in WLB is explained by statements W9, W8, and W7. Specifically: W9 – "Remote work makes the employee feel comfortable" (r = 0.89, α = 0.80), W8 – "Remote work promotes stress-free work" (r = 0.86, α = 0.74), W7 – "Remote work provides greater freedom/independence at work" (r = 0.84, α = 0.71). Additionally, statements W1 – "Remote work allows balancing work and private life" (r = 0.77, α = 0.59) and W2 – "Remote work enables flexible time management" (r = 0.77, α = 0.60) also have a strong influence on the latent variable WLB. All of the above variables show a highly significant effect ($p < 0.001$). "Remote working allows for flexible time management" (r = 0.77, α = 0.60). In contrast, W6 – "Remote work leads to feelings of isolation" not only has a negative effect but is also statistically non-significant (r = -0.07, α = 0.00, p = 0.195).

5. Discussion

Respondents' statements indicate a generally positive perception of remote work in the context of work-life balance. For the younger generation, the most important aspects are that remote work promotes stress-free work, provides greater freedom and independence, and makes employees feel comfortable. These factors also have the strongest impact on overall perceptions of WLB. These observations are consistent with the findings of A. Istiana Hidayat (2024, pp. 28-37), which show that young people emphasize independence, innovation, and strong preferences for flexible forms of work. They value autonomy and the ability to work from any location. This approach highlights their commitment to maintaining a balance between

professional and personal life as well as pursuing personal fulfilment. It appears that Generation Z will fundamentally shape the future of work through their entrepreneurial mindset and evolving attitudes toward traditional career paths.

According to research conducted by Enpulse in 2025, work flexibility is not a key factor in choosing an employer, but it definitely determines employee engagement. The option of remote work or flexible work hours is a valuable benefit for Generation Z employees, although it does not replace the fundamental expectations of salary and employment stability (Pietkiewicz, Szklarski, 2025).

The second group of variables highlights that remote work allows for flexible time management, which in turn enhances the perceived work-life balance. Notably, respondents partially acknowledged that remote work can lead to feelings of isolation; however, this factor has practically no impact on overall perceptions of WLB. According to research by J.J. Kołodziej and M. Jaworek (2024, pp. 9-22), hybrid work, by offering more flexible working hours compared to on-site work while maintaining direct contact with colleagues, satisfies both the need for autonomy and the maintenance of fulfilling interpersonal relationships. This approach aligns significantly better with the currently promoted concept of work-life balance than traditional on-site work.

Furthermore, respondents disagreed with the statement that remote work disrupts the day-night rhythm, and this perception has a statistically significant effect on experienced work-life balance. In other words, the stronger their disagreement with this statement, the more positive their overall perception of WLB. Interestingly, respondents also acknowledged that remote work helps protect boundaries between work and private life; however, this factor has less impact on overall WLB than the variable indicating that remote work allows balancing personal life with professional duties. The statement that remote work facilitates support from supervisors was perceived most neutrally and had only a small, though statistically significant, effect on WLB. These observations are also supported by research presented in the article by E. Bielińska-Dusza and M. Hamerska (2023, pp. 22-37), which indicates that younger individuals tend to prefer remote work and evaluate it positively in terms of time management and task efficiency.

6. Summary

Maintaining a proper balance between professional and personal life is crucial for health, satisfaction, and work engagement. Employers should support employees in achieving work-life balance (WLB), as this brings benefits not only to the employees themselves but also to the organization, through increased productivity and loyalty. The study's findings indicate that, for Generation Z employees, the very form of remote work can significantly contribute to the

perception of work-life balance. The analysed group primarily included young individuals, likely without family obligations, for whom remote work appears attractive and convenient. Notably, this form of work is perceived as stress-free and comfortable. The results are confirmed by research conducted by consulting companies, according to which Generation Z employees prioritize attractive pay, employer recognition, but value the ability to maintain a work-life balance. Organizations that adapt their strategies to their needs will have the potential to attract and retain young talents, as well as build long-lasting and engaged teams. Meeting these expectations, however, requires implementing changes in the areas of salary and motivation, organizational culture, interpersonal communication, work organization, including work formats, professional development and training strategies. It would be interesting to conduct comparative studies and gather insights from representatives of other generations in this area.

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