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WORK–LIFE BALANCE AS A DRIVER OF EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING AMONG GENERATION Z

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Abstract

The accelerating pace of technological, economic, and social change has increased the complexity of work environments and blurred the boundaries between professional and personal life, making work–life balance particularly important for Generation Z employees. Despite extensive research, prior studies have predominantly focused on narrow outcomes such as job satisfaction, leaving the multidimensional nature of well-being insufficiently explored.

This study examines the relationship between work–life balance and multiple dimensions of well-being among Generation Z employees. A quantitative research design was applied using a structured questionnaire (N = 413). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis.

The results reveal that work–life balance is a significant and multidimensional predictor of well-being, explaining between 36.1% and 56.7% of variance across outcomes. Work–life balance (compatibility) emerged as the strongest predictor across all dimensions, particularly for psychological and emotional well-being. In contrast, the impact of work on personal life showed weaker and less consistent effects. Generation Z reported consistently lower evaluations across all dimensions compared to older generations, indicating higher expectations and greater sensitivity to imbalance.

This study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence on the multidimensional structure of well-being and demonstrating the central role of work–life balance as a key resource shaping employee outcomes. The findings highlight the importance of work-personal life compatibility as a primary driver of well-being among Generation Z employees.

Keywords: *Employee well-being, Generation Z, Multidimensional well-being, Work-life balance, Work-life compatibility.*
JEL Codes: *I31; J28; M12.*

Introduction

The accelerating pace of technological change, globalization, and shifting societal expectations is fundamentally transforming contemporary working life and creating new challenges for both employees and organizations (Urbaniec et al., 2022). These developments have intensified debates about the future of work–life balance, particularly in the context of flexible and non-standard forms of employment (Warren, 2021). As a result, the boundaries between work and personal life have become increasingly permeable, especially under remote and hybrid work arrangements. This blurring of boundaries complicates the management of multiple life roles, intensifies role conflict, and may negatively affect employees' psychological, social, and physical well-being (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Becker et al., 2022). Although flexible work enhances autonomy, it also introduces risks, including social isolation, technostress, and work intensification (Hill et al., 2024).

Work–life balance has therefore become a central issue, particularly for Generation Z as the newest cohort entering the labour market. Compared with previous generations, Generation Z places greater emphasis on flexibility, meaningful work, and personal well-being (Barhate & Dirani, 2021; Trifan & Pantea, 2024). They are more likely to seek work arrangements that support the integration of professional and personal life while maintaining a sense of fulfillment. Empirical evidence suggests that their well-being is shaped by multiple factors, including organizational support, meaningful work, and work–life balance (Guest, 2017; Ratnasari et al., 2023). As a result, organizations are increasingly required to adopt more flexible and employee-centered

management practices (Allen et al., 2015; Leslie et al., 2021).

From a theoretical perspective, the relationship between work–life balance and employee well-being can be explained through the job demands–resources framework, which suggests that employee outcomes are shaped by the interaction between job demands and available resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Within this framework, work–life balance can be understood as a key resource that enables individuals to cope with demands and maintain well-being.

Despite the growing body of research on work–life balance, prior studies have predominantly focused on relatively narrow outcomes such as job satisfaction, engagement, and performance, while the multidimensional nature of employee well-being remains insufficiently explored (Sirgy & Lee, 2017; Waworuntu et al., 2022). Well-being itself is a complex construct that encompasses both hedonic aspects related to subjective happiness and life satisfaction (Diener, 1984) and eudaimonic aspects associated with psychological functioning and personal growth (Ryff, 1989).

Moreover, well-being is often conceptualized in a fragmented manner, with limited attention to its broader psychological, social, physical, and work-related dimensions (Zheng et al., 2015; Martela, 2024; Khalid & Syed, 2023). Existing research also frequently relies on cross-sectional designs and mixed generational samples, limiting insights into Generation Z-specific experiences and sensitivities to work–life imbalance (Zaitouni et al., 2024; Trifan & Pantea, 2024).

Consequently, the relationship between work–life balance and multidimensional well-being remains insufficiently explored in the context of Generation Z. Addressing this gap is particularly important, as younger employees may be more sensitive to work conditions and work–life imbalance, which can have a stronger impact on their overall well-being (Prasad et al., 2025). This is further supported by bibliometric evidence showing growing scholarly attention to Generation Z as a distinct workforce group with distinct expectations and behavioral patterns (Benítez-Márquez et al., 2022).

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between work–life balance and multidimensional well-being among Generation Z employees and to assess its impact across different well-being dimensions. A quantitative research design based on a questionnaire survey was employed to analyze these relationships. The study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence specific to Generation Z and advancing a multidimensional perspective on employee well-being.

Literature review

The concept of work–life balance has evolved across multiple theoretical perspectives. Early research conceptualized it through role conflict theory, emphasizing the incompatibility between professional and personal roles and its negative implications for individual well-being (Kahn et al., 1964; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Similarly, border theory highlights individuals' active management of boundaries between work and personal life domains (Clark, 2000).

More recent approaches adopt a holistic perspective, viewing work–life balance as a dynamic and subjective process shaped by individual needs and life circumstances (Frone, 2003; Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Zaitouni et al., 2024). Within this perspective, work–life balance can be understood as the degree of compatibility between work and non-work roles, reflected in the effective allocation of time, energy, and satisfaction across life domains (Rothbard, 2001; Sirgy & Lee, 2017).

Employee well-being is widely recognized as a multidimensional construct encompassing psychological, emotional, social, and physical dimensions (Keyes et al., 2002; Gallagher et al., 2009; Zheng et al., 2015; Martela, 2024; Park et al., 2022). Rather than representing a single outcome, well-being reflects a dynamic interaction between individual functioning and contextual conditions, including workplace factors (Jarden & Roache, 2023). This multidimensional understanding has recently been reinforced by a systematic bibliometric review of employee well-being research spanning 2005–2025, which confirms that the field has shifted from fragmented, single-indicator approaches to integrative models that simultaneously capture psychological, social, and work-related dimensions (Ashfan et al., 2026). Building on this trajectory, Martela (2025) proposes an integrative organizing framework

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that distinguishes functional well-being – comprising having, loving, and doing – from perceived well-being, offering a theoretically grounded basis for treating well-being as a construct composed of distinct yet interrelated dimensions rather than a single underlying factor.

The relationship between work–life balance and employee well-being can be explained through the job demands–resources (JD-R) framework, which suggests that employee outcomes are shaped by the interaction between job demands and available resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Within this framework, work–life balance can be conceptualized as a key resource that enables individuals to cope with demands, reduce strain, and maintain well-being.

Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that work–life balance is positively associated with multiple employee outcomes, including job satisfaction, engagement, and overall well-being, while imbalance is linked to stress and burnout (Sirgy & Lee, 2017; Waworuntu et al., 2022; Zaitouni et al., 2024). However, existing research often focuses on single outcomes rather than a multidimensional understanding of well-being.

These issues are particularly relevant to Generation Z, whose workplace expectations are shaped by rapid technological and socio-economic changes (Mărginean, 2021). Generation Z employees tend to place strong emphasis on flexibility, meaningful work, and well-being, and actively seek work environments that support work–life balance (Barhate & Dirani, 2021; Trifan & Pantea, 2024; Ratnasari et al., 2023). In this context, supportive HR practices and organizational resources play a critical role in enhancing work–life balance and employee well-being (Medina-Garrido et al., 2023; Nielsen et al., 2017).

Based on these theoretical and empirical insights, work–life balance can be conceptualized as a central factor influencing multiple dimensions of employee well-being. The conceptual model presented in *Figure 1* illustrates the expected relationships between work–life balance components and psychological, work-related, social, and physical well-being. Accordingly, work–life balance is expected to act as a key driver of multidimensional well-being among Generation Z employees.

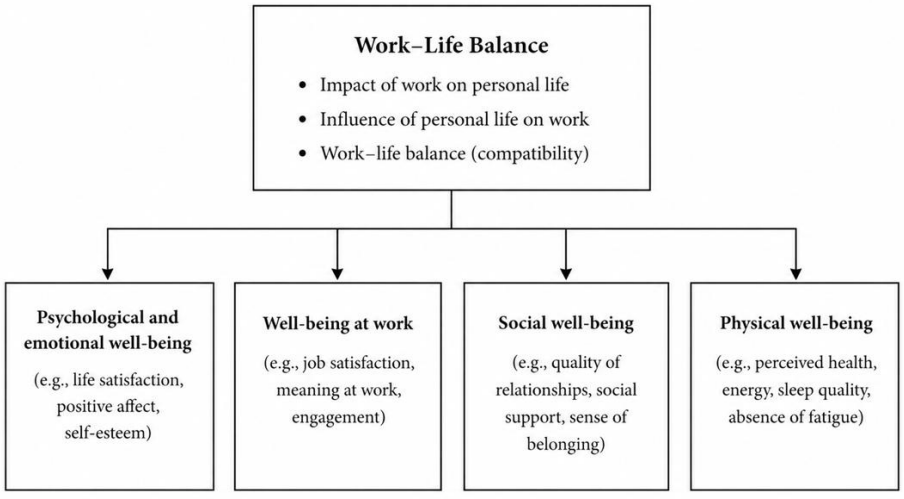

Figure 1. Conceptual model of work-life balance and multidimensional employee well-being

Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:
H1: Work–life balance is positively associated with **psychological and emotional well-being**.
H2: Work–life balance is positively associated with **well-being at work**.
H3: Work–life balance is positively associated with **social well-being**.
H4: Work–life balance is positively associated with **physical well-being**.

Research methods

This study employs a quantitative research approach to examine the relationship between work–life balance and multidimensional well-being among Generation Z employees. A questionnaire-based design was selected for its suitability in identifying patterns and analyzing relationships between variables (Creswell, 2009).

Data were collected using a structured online questionnaire. A convenience sampling approach was applied, with participants recruited through social networks. The survey was conducted between February 25 and March 25, 2025. A total of 434 responses were collected; after data cleaning, the final sample consisted of 413 respondents. The sample size was determined using Cochran's (1963) formula, yielding a minimum required sample of 384 respondents; thus, the final sample exceeded this threshold.

The questionnaire was developed using previously validated scales. Work–life balance was measured using items adapted from Fisher et al. (2009) that cover three dimensions: the impact of work on personal life, the influence of personal life on work, and perceived compatibility between these domains. Employee well-being was assessed using items adapted from Kinderman et al. (2011) and Pradhan and Hati (2019) to capture psychological and emotional well-being, social well-being, physical well-being, and well-being at work. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire consisted of 41 items grouped into two sections, along with demographic questions (Appendix A).

The sample included representatives of different generations, with Generation Z (born 1997-2012) comprising the largest group (39%; N = 161), followed by Generation Y (born 1981-1996), N = 153, Generation X (born 1965-1980), N = 74, and Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964), N = 25, enabling generation-specific analysis. The gender distribution was uneven (67% female and 33% male), but this did not affect the analysis.

Data analysis was conducted using Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data. Relationships between variables were examined using Pearson correlation analysis, and one-way ANOVA with post hoc Tukey HSD tests was used to assess generational differences. In addition, multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the predictive effects of work–life balance on different dimensions of employee well-being. Pearson correlation and ANOVA were considered appropriate for this study because all subscale scores were computed as composite means across multiple five-point Likert items rather than analyzed as single ordinal items; such composite scores, particularly when scale reliability is high, are widely treated as approximating interval-level data and are robust to parametric analysis (Norman, 2010). The use of one-way ANOVA was further supported by the sample size (N = 413), since parametric F-tests have been shown to remain robust to moderate departures from normality under these conditions (Blanca et al., 2017).

Reliability analysis demonstrated high internal consistency across all subscales. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.789 to 0.922, indicating acceptable reliability (Taber, 2018). The overall reliability of the work–life balance scale was 0.922, and that of the well-being scale was 0.947. The total questionnaire reliability was excellent ($\alpha = 0.962$).

The study followed fundamental research ethics principles, ensuring anonymity, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any time. No personally identifiable information was collected, and all data were used solely for academic purposes.

Results

To ensure a structured analysis, the results were examined across seven subscales: three related to work–life balance (the impact of work on personal life, the influence of personal life on work, and work–life balance compatibility) and four related to employee well-being (psychological and emotional well-being, well-being at work, social well-being, and physical well-being).

Descriptive statistics indicate moderate variation across the assessed dimensions. The highest mean scores were observed for psychological and emotional well-being (M = 3.69) and social well-being (M = 3.69), whereas the lowest values were recorded for the impact of work on personal life (M = 3.34) and physical well-being

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(M = 3.44). The remaining dimensions demonstrated intermediate mean values, ranging from 3.56 to 3.61.

One-way ANOVA was conducted to examine generational differences across work–life balance and well-being dimensions (*Table 1*). Statistically significant differences between generations were observed for all three work–life balance dimensions, including the impact of work on personal life ($F(3, 409) = 3.73$, $p = .011$, $\eta^2 = .026$), the influence of personal life on work ($F(3, 409) = 3.15$, $p = .025$, $\eta^2 = .023$), and work–life balance (compatibility) ($F(3, 409) = 4.10$, $p = .007$, $\eta^2 = .029$).

For well-being dimensions, significant generational differences were found for well-being at work ($F(3, 409) = 3.21$, $p = .023$, $\eta^2 = .023$) and physical well-being ($F(3, 409) = 6.05$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .042$). In contrast, no statistically significant differences were identified for psychological and emotional well-being ($F(3, 409) = 1.44$, $p = .231$, $\eta^2 = .010$) or social well-being ($F(3, 409) = 1.08$, $p = .356$, $\eta^2 = .008$). Overall, effect sizes were small ($\eta^2 = .008$–$.042$), indicating modest yet consistent generational variation across the dimensions examined.

Table 1. One-way ANOVA results for work-life balance and well-being dimensions by generation

Dependent Variable	Between Groups SS	df	MS	Within Groups SS	df	MS	Total SS	df	*F*	*p*	*η²*
Impact of work on personal life	8.653	3	2.884	316.241	409	0.773	324.893	412	3.730	.011	.026
Influence of personal life on work	4.791	3	1.597	207.632	409	0.508	212.424	412	3.146	.025	.023
Overall work–life balance	7.212	3	2.404	240.004	409	0.587	247.215	412	4.097	.007	.029
Psychological and emotional well-being	2.667	3	0.889	252.665	409	0.618	255.332	412	1.439	.231	.010
Well-being at work	6.767	3	2.256	287.100	409	0.702	293.868	412	3.214	.023	.023
Social well-being	1.573	3	0.524	197.764	409	0.484	199.337	412	1.084	.356	.008
Physical well-being	8.656	3	2.885	195.046	409	0.477	203.701	412	6.050	< .001	.042

**Note. N = 413; SS = sum of squares; df = degrees of freedom; MS = mean square; η² = eta squared. F values represent one-way ANOVA results.*

Post-hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD indicated that generational differences were not evenly distributed across all groups, but were primarily driven by contrasts involving Generation Z (*Table 2 and Table 3*). Specifically, Generation Z reported significantly lower scores than Baby Boomers in the impact of work on personal life ($p = .019$), the influence of personal life on work ($p = .040$), and work–life balance (compatibility) ($p = .023$). In addition, Generation Z reported lower well-being at work than Generation Y ($p = .029$). For physical well-being, Generation Z scored significantly lower than both Generation X ($p = .042$) and Baby Boomers ($p = .002$), representing the strongest and most consistent generational differences observed in this study. No statistically significant pairwise differences were identified for psychological and emotional well-being or social well-being, indicating relative stability of these dimensions across generations.

Table 2. Post-hoc comparisons (Tukey HSD): summary of homogeneous subsets

Dimension	Gen Z (161)	Gen Y (153)	Gen X (74)	Boomers (25)	Subset 1	Subset 2
Impact of work on personal life	3.21	3.34	3.48	3.76	Z, Y, X	Y, X, B
Influence of personal life on work	3.50	3.63	3.69	3.90	Z, Y, X	Y, X, B
Overall work–life balance	3.41	3.64	3.60	3.88	Z, Y, X	Y, X, B
Psychological and emotional well-being	3.62	3.74	3.65	3.93	Z, Y, X, B	—
Well-being at work	3.40	3.66	3.67	3.62	Z, Y, X, B	—
Social well-being	3.62	3.76	3.70	3.76	Z, Y, X, B	—
Physical well-being	3.29	3.48	3.55	3.83	Z, Y	Y, X, B

**Note. Values represent group means. Generations appearing within the same subset do not differ significantly at $p < .05$ according to Tukey HSD post hoc test. Z = Generation Z; Y = Generation Y; X = Generation X; B = Baby Boomers.*

Table 3. Significant pairwise differences (Tukey HSD)

Dimension	Comparison	Mean Difference (I–J)	p	95% CI
Impact of work on personal life	Z – B	-0.55	.019	[-1.04, -0.07]
Influence of personal life on work	Z – B	-0.41	.040	[-0.80, -0.01]
Overall work–life balance	Z – Y	-0.23	.043	[-0.45, -0.01]
	Z – B	-0.47	.023	[-0.90, -0.05]
Psychological and emotional well-being	—	—	—	—
Well-being at work	Z – Y	-0.26	.029	[-0.51, -0.02]
Social well-being	—	—	—	—
Physical well-being	X – Z	0.26	.042	[0.01, 0.51]
	B – Z	0.55	.002	[0.16, 0.93]

**Note. Only statistically significant pairwise comparisons ($p < .05$) are reported. CI = confidence interval. Mean differences are calculated as (I – J). Z = Generation Z; Y = Generation Y; X = Generation X; B = Baby Boomers.*

A consistent pattern emerged across the results, indicating a clear generational gradient. Generation Z reported the lowest mean scores across all examined dimensions, whereas Baby Boomers consistently demonstrated the highest levels (*Figure 2*). Generations Y and X occupied intermediate positions and frequently overlapped within homogeneous subsets. This distribution suggests that generational differences are gradual rather than discrete, with intermediate generations functioning as transitional groups between younger and older cohorts.

The findings further highlight the multidimensional nature of well-being. While work–life balance dimensions showed consistent generational differences, well-being dimensions exhibited a more differentiated pattern. Specifically, psychological and emotional well-being, as well as social well-being, remained relatively stable across generations, whereas physical well-being showed the most pronounced variation. Well-being at work showed a weaker but still statistically significant effect.

Overall, these results indicate that generational differences are more strongly expressed in structural aspects of work–life balance and physical well-being than in core psychological or social functioning.

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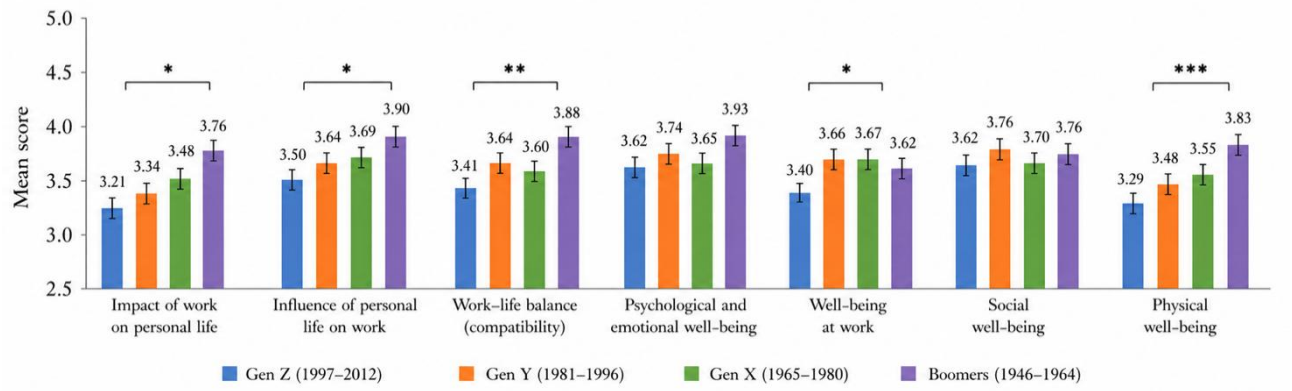

Note: Error bars represent standard deviations. Statistically significant differences are indicated ($^{*}p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$).

Figure 2. Mean scores on work-life balance and well-being dimensions by generation

Correlation analysis revealed statistically significant positive relationships between work–life balance and all well-being dimensions (*Table 4*). In the full sample, the strongest association was observed between work–life balance (compatibility) and the impact of work on personal life (r = .78), followed by psychological and emotional well-being (r = .72). The weakest relationships were found for physical well-being (r = .50–.59), although these remained moderate and statistically significant.

In the Generation Z subsample, the relationships were consistently stronger across all dimensions. The highest correlations were observed between work–life balance (compatibility) and both psychological and emotional well-being (r = .81) and the impact of work on personal life (r = .81). As in the full sample, physical well-being demonstrated comparatively weaker, yet still significant, associations.

Table 4. Pearson correlations between work–life balance and well-being subscales

Subscale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Panel A. Full sample (N = 413)							
1. Impact of work on personal life	1						
2. Influence of personal life on work	.64	1					
3. Work–life balance (compatibility)	.78	.69	1				
4. Psychological and emotional well-being	.59	.66	.72	1			
5. Well-being at work	.59	.58	.65	.71	1		
6. Social well-being	.52	.56	.62	.71	.72	1	
7. Physical well-being	.53	.52	.56	.59	.50	.51	1
Panel B. Generation Z sample							
1. Impact of work on personal life	1						
2. Influence of personal life on work	.72	1					
3. Work–life balance (compatibility)	.81	.69	1				
4. Psychological and emotional well-being	.72	.72	.81	1			
5. Well-being at work	.74	.62	.73	.78	1		
6. Social well-being	.53	.58	.62	.71	.68	1	
7. Physical well-being	.53	.50	.60	.56	.57	.55	1

Note. All correlations are statistically significant at $p < .001$.

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the impact of work–life balance components on well-being across different dimensions (*Table 5*). All models were statistically significant ($p < .001$), explaining between 36.1% and 56.7% of variance across outcomes.

Work–life balance (compatibility) emerged as the strongest and most consistent predictor across all well-being dimensions, including psychological (β = .494), work-related (β =

.381), social (β = .423), and physical well-being (β = .270) (all p < .001).

The influence of personal life on work also showed stable, statistically significant effects across all dimensions (β = .216–.318, p < .001).

In contrast, the impact of work on personal life showed weaker and less consistent effects. It was not significant for psychological (β = .005, p = .928) and social well-being (β = .037, p = .547), but had a small yet significant effect on work-related (β = .144, p = .014) and physical well-being (β = .184, p = .004).

Table 5. Effects of work–life balance dimensions on employee well-being (multiple regression analysis)

Outcome	Predictor	β	t	p
Psychological and emotional well-being	Work → personal life	.005	0.09	.928
	Personal life → work	.318	6.89	< .001
	Compatibility	**.494**	8.78	< .001
Work-related well-being	Work → personal life	.144	2.46	.014
	Personal life → work	.228	4.44	< .001
	Compatibility	**.381**	6.10	< .001
Social well-being	Work → personal life	.037	0.60	.547
	Personal life → work	.243	4.55	< .001
	Compatibility	**.423**	6.49	< .001
Physical well-being	Work → personal life	.184	2.87	.004
	Personal life → work	.216	3.85	< .001
	Compatibility	**.270**	3.95	< .001

**Note. All models were statistically significant (p < .001). Psychological well-being: R^2 = .567; Work-related well-being: R^2 = .465; Social well-being: R^2 = .417; Physical well-being: R^2 = .361. β = standardized regression coefficients. Multicollinearity diagnostics indicated no issues (VIF = 2.01–2.98).*

The results support all proposed hypotheses, confirming that work–life balance is a significant predictor of all examined dimensions of well-being. The strongest effects were observed for psychological and emotional well-being, whereas weaker relationships were identified for physical well-being. These findings indicate that the influence of work–life balance is not uniform but varies across different dimensions of well-being.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that work–life balance is a significant and multidimensional predictor of well-being among Generation Z employees, with the strongest relationships observed for psychological and emotional well-being. This supports prior research suggesting that work–life balance is a central determinant of employee well-being, particularly among younger generations (Waworuntu et al., 2022; Stankevičienė et al., 2021). From a theoretical perspective, these results are consistent with the job demands–resources (JD-R) framework, which highlights the role of resources in reducing strain and enhancing well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

A key contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that the relationship between work–life balance and well-being is not uniform across dimensions. The strongest effects were observed for psychological and emotional well-being, suggesting that work–life balance is primarily experienced at the psychological level. In contrast, weaker associations were found for physical well-being, indicating that physical health is influenced by a broader range of factors beyond work–life balance. This finding supports the view that well-being is a multidimensional construct shaped by distinct mechanisms (Zheng et al., 2015). This pattern can be explained by the proximity of work–life balance to cognitive-affective appraisal processes: compatibility between roles directly shapes how individuals evaluate control, meaning, and self-worth, which are the core components of psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989). This mechanism is consistent with recent evidence that boundary management and psychological segmentation strategies – the cognitive separation of work and personal life roles – predict psychological well-being and reduced work–life conflict more strongly than structural or time-based interventions (Prasad et al., 2025).

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Physical well-being, by contrast, depends substantially on behavioral and biological factors – sleep patterns, diet, exercise habits, and genetic predisposition – that are only indirectly linked to how work and personal life are balanced. Consequently, work–life balance functions as a resource for psychological functioning rather than a determinant of physical health outcomes, which require sustained behavioral investment independent of role compatibility.

The results also reveal an asymmetry in the relationship between life domains. Work was found to interfere with personal life more strongly than vice versa, suggesting that work-related demands remain a dominant factor influencing overall well-being. At the same time, the positive influence of personal life on work suggests that non-work domains may serve as important resources that support motivation and resilience. This aligns with resource-based perspectives emphasizing the role of non-work resources in buffering work-related stress. A plausible explanation for this asymmetry lies in the structural and temporal dominance of work over personal life in contemporary employment: working hours are fixed and externally imposed, technology enables continuous availability beyond formal hours, and organizational expectations often carry greater social and economic consequences than personal obligations (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Personal life, being comparatively more flexible and self-regulated, is therefore more easily compressed or rescheduled to accommodate work demands, whereas work boundaries are less permeable to personal-life pressures. This structural imbalance, rather than a lack of resilience among employees, helps explain why work-to-life interference consistently outweighed life-to-work interference in the present sample.

The findings further highlight Generation Z's sensitivity to work–life balance. Stronger relationships observed within the Generation Z subsample, combined with consistently lower evaluations across all dimensions, suggest that this cohort is more responsive to both positive and negative aspects of work–life balance. Rather than indicating poorer adaptation, this pattern reflects higher expectations and changing values, including a stronger emphasis on flexibility, personal development, and well-being (Fatima & Srivastava, 2024; Leslie et al., 2021). Several interrelated factors may account for this heightened sensitivity. First, Generation Z entered the labour market during a period marked by economic uncertainty, the normalization of remote and hybrid work, and intensified digital connectivity, all of which have shaped a generational expectation that work should accommodate personal life rather than the reverse (Barhate & Dirani, 2021). Second, having had less time to develop coping resources, establish routines, or accumulate financial and career security, younger employees may view smaller imbalances as more consequential than older, more established colleagues do. Third, Generation Z's socialization through social media and peer comparison may amplify awareness of alternative, more flexible work arrangements, raising the perceived gap between actual and desired conditions; recent evidence indicates that social media exposure shapes Generation Z's career expectations and intensifies comparison-driven anxiety, while psychological resilience moderates how effectively this cohort manages the resulting strain in digitally mediated work settings (Rattanaburi et al., 2026). Taken together, these mechanisms suggest that the observed generational gap reflects a shift in reference standards rather than an objective decline in working conditions.

An important implication of this study is its multidimensional approach to well-being. While prior research has often focused on single outcomes such as job satisfaction or engagement, the present findings demonstrate that work–life balance influences a broader set of outcomes, including psychological, social, physical, and work-related well-being. This supports recent calls for more integrative approaches to employee well-being (Pandey et al., 2025).

From a practical perspective, the findings highlight the importance of work–life balance for organizations seeking to attract and retain Generation Z employees. In particular, the results emphasize the role of work-personal life compatibility in shaping employee well-being. Because compatibility, rather than the unidirectional spillover measures, showed the strongest and most

consistent effects, organizational interventions are likely to be most effective when they target the perceived fit between roles rather than simply reducing working hours. Practical measures consistent with this finding include granting employees genuine autonomy over scheduling (e.g., flexible start and finish times, compressed work weeks), establishing explicit norms around after-hours availability and digital disconnection, and training managers to recognize and accommodate role conflict rather than treating it as an individual performance issue. Given the comparatively weaker link between work–life balance and physical well-being, organizations should not assume that flexibility initiatives alone will improve employees' physical health; complementary measures such as access to recreational facilities, health screenings, or structured breaks may be required. Finally, because Generation Z reported the lowest evaluations across all dimensions, organizations aiming to engage this cohort should treat work–life compatibility as a core element of the employee value proposition rather than a peripheral benefit, particularly during recruitment and onboarding when expectations are first formed.

Conclusions

The findings of this study are consistent with the research purpose – to examine the relationship between work–life balance and multidimensional well-being among Generation Z employees – and confirm that work–life balance is a significant predictor across all well-being dimensions examined.

First, the results demonstrate that work–life balance explains a substantial proportion of variance in well-being outcomes, ranging from 36.1% to 56.7%. The strongest effect was observed for psychological and emotional well-being ($R^2 = 0.567$), while the weakest – though still significant effect was found for physical well-being ($R^2 = 0.361$). This indicates that the influence of work–life balance is not uniform but varies across well-being dimensions.

Second, among the examined dimensions of work–life balance, compatibility between work and personal life emerged as the strongest predictor across all well-being outcomes ($\beta = 0.270–0.494$, $p < .001$). In contrast, the impact of work on personal life showed weaker, less consistent effects, confirming an asymmetric relationship between the life domains.

Third, the findings reveal consistent generational differences. Generation Z reported lower mean values across all dimensions, particularly in physical well-being ($M = 3.29$) and work–life balance compatibility ($M = 3.41$), compared to older generations. This suggests higher expectations and greater sensitivity to imbalance rather than lower well-being per se.

Fourth, the results confirm that work–life balance functions as a multidimensional resource that influences not only work-related outcomes but also psychological, social, and physical well-being. This supports the applicability of the job demands–resources (JD-R) framework in explaining the role of work–life balance as a key resource.

Fifth, from a practical standpoint, because compatibility consistently outperformed the other work–life balance dimensions as a predictor of well-being, organizational interventions are likely to be most effective when they target the perceived fit between work and personal-life roles rather than spillover from work to personal life in isolation. Organizations should prioritize policies that enhance work–life compatibility, as this dimension shows the strongest impact on employee well-being. Interventions should focus on reducing work-to-life interference and strengthening supportive work environments, including flexible work arrangements and clear role boundaries.

The study extends existing research by empirically demonstrating that the strength of the relationship between work–life balance and well-being varies across dimensions, with the strongest effects observed for psychological outcomes. Future research should further explore causal mechanisms and longitudinal effects, particularly regarding Generation Z. In particular, qualitative or mixed-method designs – such as semi-structured interviews or diary studies – are needed to clarify the reasons underlying Generation Z's consistently lower evaluations and to explore the lived experience of work–life imbalance in greater depth than a quantitative survey alone can capture.

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Appendix A
Questionnaire used in the study

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.
(1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree)

Block 1. Work–life balance

Impact of work on personal life

1. My work does not interfere with my personal life.
2. My work does not prevent me from participating in important personal activities.
3. After work, I have enough energy to engage in activities I enjoy.
4. It is easy for me to plan vacations due to clear work organization.
5. I can relax at home because I do not think about work once I return.

Influence of personal life on work

6. I do not feel stressed about personal responsibilities while at work.
7. My personal life provides me with energy and motivation for work.
8. My work is not affected by what is happening in my personal life.
9. My personal life gives me strength and inspiration to be effective at work.
10. I successfully manage my work even when I have personal concerns.

Work-life balance (compatibility)

11. I can easily balance my work and personal responsibilities.
12. I do not feel stressed when trying to balance work and personal life.
13. I rarely have to make difficult choices between work and personal life.
14. I successfully pursue my goals both personally and professionally.
15. I allocate my time appropriately between work and personal matters.

Block 2. Employee well-being

Psychological and emotional well-being

16. I do not experience symptoms of anxiety or depression.
17. I feel that I can enjoy life.
18. I feel that my life has purpose.
19. I feel in control of my life.
20. I feel satisfied with myself.
21. I feel that I can grow and improve as a person.
22. I am satisfied with myself and my achievements.
23. I trust my opinions and beliefs.

Well-being at work

24. I am satisfied with my job.
25. I feel that my work is meaningful.
26. My work achievements often become a source of motivation.
27. My workplace is suitable for work.
28. My job provides many opportunities for career growth.
29. My employer cares about employees.

Social well-being

30. I am an important part of my team and organization.
31. My team members value my opinion.
32. I enjoy spending time with my colleagues.
33. I can freely share my problems with colleagues.
34. I am satisfied with my personal and family life.
35. I am satisfied with my friendships and personal relationships.

Physical well-being

36. I take good care of my health.
37. I avoid behaviors that are harmful to my health (e.g., smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, drugs, unsafe driving).
38. I eat healthy and nutritious food.
39. I can afford most of the material things I need.
40. I engage in physical activity to improve my health, build strength and endurance, or enjoy it.
41. I feel physically healthy and strong enough to cope with everyday challenges.