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Challenges of organizations in the area of reconciling work and private life

Wyzwania organizacji w obszarze godzenia życia zawodowego z prywatnym

The article discusses the main challenges faced by organizations operating in various economic sectors in the area of reconciling work and private life. The study presents the reasons for various approaches to the implementation of the Work – Life Balance (WLB) concept, with particular attention to public organizations and uniformed services, and develops recommendations for public authorities and management practitioners. The conclusions were based on the results of nationwide surveys conducted on a sample of over 10,300 employees.

Key words: organization, economic sector, Work-Life Balance, employee, employer, public authorities.

W artykule omówione zostały główne wyzwania, przed którymi stają organizacje funkcjonujące w różnych sektorach gospodarki w obszarze godzenia życia zawodowego z prywatnym. W opracowaniu przedstawiono przyczyny zróżnicowanych podejść do wdrażania koncepcji Work–Life Balance (WLB), ze szczególnym zwróceniem uwagi na organizacje publiczne i służby mundurowe oraz wypracowano rekomendacje dla władz publicznych, a także praktyków zarządzania. Wnioski oparto o wyniki ogólnopolskich badań kwestionariuszowych przeprowadzonych na próbie ponad 10 300 pracowników.

Słowa kluczowe: organizacja, sektor gospodarki, Work – Life Balance, pracownik, pracodawca, władze publiczne

Introduction

Striving for Work-Life Balance is a key element of ensuring employee well-being and improving their performance and engagement in the workplace. Organizations play an extremely important role in creating conditions conducive to this balance by implementing various programs, strategies and using a number of increasingly different tools tailored to the needs of employees. Regardless of the sector in which they operate, they can offer different approaches to helping employees maintain work-life balance, i.e. the so-called Work-Life Balance (WLB), but the similarities and differences between them depend on many factors, such as: the type of organization, the purpose of its operation and mission, size, organizational culture, budget and many others.

The aim of the article is to show how public, non-governmental organizations and private companies help employees reconcile work and private life. In particular, attempts were made to demonstrate the differences between different approaches to helping in the area of Work-Life Balance and their causes. Additionally, thanks to the results of nationwide questionnaire research, it was possible to assess the activities of organizations operating in various sectors of the economy in terms of WLB, as well as to present the opinions and expectations of employees in this area of the organization's activity. Particular attention was paid to the specific functioning of public organizations, their challenges and opportunities in the use of Work – Life Balance tools. The considerations also take into account specific difficulties in developing and implementing the WLB concept in uniformed services.

Due to its purpose, this article presents only part of the results of my own, nationwide research. The research was conducted among 10,331 respondents, including 7,800 professionally active parents, working in various sectors of the economy and having children to raise. The research was conducted from March 16 to April 2, 2021 using the diagnostic survey method. The technique was the CAWI (Computer Assisted Web Interviewing) online survey, and the questionnaire consisted of 37 questions (mostly closed using a Likert scale, nominal scales and 2 open questions).

The questionnaire was available on the website of the national electronic daily Librus¹ and distributed via the portal directly to user accounts.

The conclusions from the article may be interesting both for theoreticians and researchers of management, as well as for political and administration sciences, for practitioners who are responsible for organizing the work of their employees on a daily basis, and for political decision-makers who influence the shaping of legal solutions regarding the reconciliation of work and private life.

Work-Life Balance in definition

The concept of balancing one's personal and professional life is a complex idea known as Work-Life Balance (WLB). This trend emerged in the United States and Great Britain in the late 1970s and early 1980s, coinciding with the introduction of regulations governing weekly working hours. During this time, the importance of an employee's leisure time in personal development, business growth, and societal well-being started to be recognized. The origins of the WLB concept can also be traced to societal and cultural shifts related to the entry of women into the workforce and the need for a new division of household and caregiving responsibilities. It should be noted that the history of WLB dates back to the late period of the industrial revolution, when high costs (e.g. health costs) associated with excess work were noticed². The next breakthrough was the feminist movement, and the next one was the book by R.M. Kanter³, in which the author drew attention to the need to apply the WLB idea in organizational practice⁴. The topic of WLB has become particularly important since the 1950s and 1960s due to changes in women's activities. Their desire to fulfill themselves not only as a mother and caregiver of

¹ Librus is a supplier of unique systems that support thousands of Polish schools and local government units in their daily work. The Librus company has been operating on the Polish market for 18 years. Librus systems are used by over 6,000 schools, 270,000 teachers and 3.5 million parents and students. Librus is part of the international consulting company Public Consulting Group based in Boston, whose mission is to support the public sector in areas such as education, health, social assistance and technology consulting.

² *Defining Work-Life Balance: Energy is the Missing Ingredient*, <https://www.kumanu.com/defining-work-life-balance-its-history-and-future/>, (accessed on 28/10/2023).

³ R.M. Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation*, Basic Books, New York 1977.

⁴ R.M. Kanter, *Work and Family in the United States: A Critical Review and Agenda for Research and Policy*, Social Science Frontiers, Russell Sage Foundation, 1977, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/9781610443265>, (accessed on 28/10/2023).

the so-called “at home”, but also as an employee. However, for men, the issue of WLB has taken on a new meaning with the introduction of a new model of family functioning (division of parental responsibilities) and the possibility of working online⁵. Since the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, organizations have been implementing various tools enabling the reconciliation of private and professional life. The WLB concept is gaining more and more interest in scientific studies from various fields of science⁶.

The idea of WLB can be analyzed from various perspectives, including psychology, sociology, family policy and management, so it is a very interdisciplinary issue that requires a broader perspective⁷. When talking about the idea of WLB, we should also mention working conditions and the significant role of the work environment⁸, which may be more or less conducive to maintaining Work-Life Balance.

When it comes to the definition of WLB, it is difficult to provide one universal definition that all researchers would agree with. Some people understand WLB as the achievement of both professional and private goals, others as satisfaction in professional and private life⁹. The term Work-Life Balance has been analyzed for a long time, but is often synonymous with terms such as: reflection on one’s own experiences in life and at work, the level of involvement in social roles or life satisfaction, the pleasure of combining work and personal life, conscious control of the roles performed in life, etc.¹⁰. Greenhaus and Allen define Work-Life Balance as a general approach in which there is compliance between an individual’s effectiveness and sense of job satisfaction and

⁵ W. Kirch (ed.), *Work-Life Balance* [in:] *Encyclopedia of Public Health*, Springer, Dordrecht 2008, <https://link.springer.com/referencework/10.1007/978-1-4020-5614-7>; https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-5614-7_3774, (accessed on 28/10/2023).

⁶ *Work-Life Balance – Definition, Significance and Importance*, <https://www.mbaknol.com/human-resource-management/work-life-balance/> (accessed on 22/10/2023).

⁷ S.C. Clark, *Work – Family Border Theory: A New Theory of Work -Family Balance* [in:] *Human Relations*, 53(6)/ 2000, pp. 747–770.

⁸ W. Kirch (ed.), *Working Environment* [in:] *Encyclopedia of Public Health*, Springer, Dordrecht, 2008, https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-1-4020-5614-7_3770, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-5614-7_3770, (accessed on 27/10/2023).

⁹ C. Bulger, *Work-Life Balance* [in:] A.C. Michalos (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research*, Springer, 2014, Dordrecht, pp. 7231–7232, (accessed on 28/10/2023).

¹⁰ M. Ferguson, M. Carlson, S. Zivnuska, D. Whitten, *Support at work and home: The path to satisfaction through balance*, “Journal of Vocational Behavior” vol. 80(2)/2012, pp. 299–307; P. Kalliath, T. Kalliath, *Work–Family Conflict: Coping Strategies Adopted by Social Workers*, “Journal of Social Work Practice” 2013, pp. 1–16.

their compliance with a person's life values¹¹. L.A. McNall indicated three determinants of the WLB concept, i.e.: "work", "non-work" and "health". The first element – "work" – understood as professional life, and is related to the performance of work and the performance of official duties. Another element is the lack of work (so-called *non-work*), which can also be referred to as life outside of work. However, this element should not be associated with unemployment, it is a part of life after work (non-work, private life). The third component – "health" – related to the assessment of how work and life outside work affect employees' health¹². It should be emphasized that in most previous studies, when writing about private life, the authors had family roles in mind (primarily the role of the mother). Nowadays, however, the perspective is slowly broadening. Researchers emphasize that when examining WLB, due to changing social and cultural conditions, private roles other than family ones should also be taken into account (e.g. the role of a friend, the role of a social activist, etc.)¹³.

Due to the fact that there is no single definition of WLB accepted by all researchers, this term must be defined each time for the needs of specific studies. This article assumes that balancing the professional and private lives of employees is an important factor in managing human resources in modern organizations. Activities in the field of Work-Life Balance require involvement in identifying the needs of employees and adapting the organization's activities, which should evaluate over time, but also depending on changes in the environment. It is important to treat Work-Life Balance as a process that should undergo constant changes towards balancing, harmonizing, integrating, adjusting or reconciling professional and private life¹⁴.

There is no consensus in the literature on how to analyze the idea of Work-Life Balance from the point of view of managing organizations. On the one hand, the concept is presented as part of a broader view of

¹¹ J.H. Greenhaus, T.D. Allen, *Work-family balance: a review and extension of the literature* [in:] J.C. Quick, L.E. Tetrick (eds.), *Handbook of occupational health psychology* Washington DC: APA, 2011., pp. 165–183.

¹² L.A. McNall., J.M. Nicklin, A.D. Masuda, *A Meta-Analytic Review of the Consequences Associated with Work-Family Enrichment*, "Journal of Business and Psychology" 2010, vol. 25(3), pp. 381–396, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40682660> (accessed on October 28, 2023).

¹³ C. Bulger, *Work-Life Balance...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 7231–7232.

¹⁴ M. Marzec, A. Szczudlińska-Kanoś, *Work Life Balance as a challenge for management. Theory and practice*; Monographs and Studies of the Institute of Public Affairs of the Jagiellonian University, Kraków 2022; <https://isp.uj.edu.pl/nauka/publikacje/monografie-elektroniczne> (accessed on: 26/10/2023).

management through the prism of corporate social responsibility¹⁵. It is possible to find analyzes linking WLB with the organization's social capital, building the organizational climate or culture. Often, the problem of reconciling work and private life is part of a broader concept of managing human capital, human resources or human resources in an organization, where the benefits and negative consequences of the lack of balance of various spheres of an employee's life for the organization are analyzed. Here, the most frequently analyzed topics include: job satisfaction, professional life satisfaction, the problem of workaholicism, diversity management, forms of employment, the problem of discrimination or occupational diseases, etc. A different group includes activities monitoring the impact of introduced WLB programs and tools on motivation, engagement, productivity, employee retention and workplace attractiveness. Here, one can often notice a gap and problems with determining the perspective of research and strategies for shaping tools for the future, because it shows a completely new perspective on the problem of understanding the needs and expectations of employees or determining factors that strengthen the work engagement of various groups of employees¹⁶. Increasingly, employees are forcing organizations to pay attention to non-wage factors affecting the quality of work performed. Many studies indicate that working conditions, the atmosphere at work and the ability to reconcile professional duties with private life are important to employees. However, not all organizations can afford to expand and implement various WLB instruments. Depending on the specific functioning of the organization, and especially the sector in which these organizations operate, a different approach to the development of this concept should be observed. The implementation of the WLB idea in organizations is influenced by numerous factors, including, in particular, different operational goals, financial possibilities and legal regulations.

¹⁵ W. Leoński *Work-Life Balance as a practice of the concept of corporate social responsibility*, Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Management, XLII – No. 1/2015, pp. 127–137.

¹⁶ A. Szczudlińska-Kanoś, M. Marzec, *Work Life Balance instruments in Poland. Theory and practice*; Monographs and Studies of the Institute of Public Affairs of the Jagiellonian University, Kraków 2022; <https://isp.uj.edu.pl/nauka/publikacje/monografie-elektroniczne> (accessed on 30/09/2023); E. Gross-Gołącka, *Diversity management. Towards diversified human resources in the organization*, Difin, Warsaw 2018, pp. 229, <https://odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl/artykuly/jak-wyglada-zarzadzanie-roznorodnoscia-i-work-life-balance-w-polsce/> (accessed on October 26, 2023); S. Thilagavathy, Geetha SN, *Work-life balance – a systematic review*, *Vilakshan – XIMB Journal of Management* 2021, vol. 20, issue 2, pp. 258–276, <https://econpapers.repec.org/article/emexjmpls/xjm-10-2020-0186.htm> (accessed on 30/09/2023).

Factors shaping the idea of Work–Life Balance in public, private and non-governmental sector organizations

Both public organizations, private companies and non-governmental organizations can offer various programs, tools and initiatives to support employees in maintaining work-life balance. Assessing and providing a clear answer as to which sector of the economy organizations care most about the WLB of their employees is extremely difficult and ambiguous. Differences in the approach to the WLB idea are determined by specific factors that significantly influence the development of this concept in organizations. They can be divided into several groups: managerial, economic, and political and legal factors.

The first of the above – mentioned groups of factors influencing the diversification of the approach to WLB in various sectors of the economy includes the organization’s strategy, defined by researchers in very different ways, but generally understood as a “comprehensive plan for achieving organizational goals”¹⁷, i.e., more broadly, a purposeful and long-term plan of action developed by an organization to achieve its mission and vision goals. Alfred D. Chandler describes strategy as defining the main long-term goals, tasks and objectives and adopting such courses of action and allocation of resources as are necessary to achieve the goals¹⁸. Therefore, the strategy includes the definition of directions of activities, the allocation of resources and the management approach that the organization adopts in order to achieve a competitive advantage or effectively meet its goals. Organizational strategy takes into account both internal aspects of the organization and external factors, such as: market, competition, regulations and industry trends, which allows for conscious planning and decision-making in pursuit of the organization’s success.

The definitions presented above show why strategy is one of the most important factors influencing different approaches to WLB in organizations operating in various sectors of the economy. The basic differences result from the goals, mission and vision of the organization. Public organizations are responsible for providing public services and maintaining their constant availability. These obligations result in more

¹⁷ R.W. Griffin, *Basics of organization management*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2017, pp. 227.

¹⁸ A. Chandler, *Strategy and Structure: Chapters in the History of the American Industrial Enterprise*, MIT Press, Cambridge 1962, pp. 13.

restrictive solutions regarding schedules and determining the working hours of employees. We should also mention the specific nature of the work of uniformed officers, in particular: soldiers, policemen, fire brigade officers, prison service officers, border guards, customs and tax services and many others, as well as health care workers, who are exposed to much more unpredictable and intense working hours. Private companies, on the other hand, may focus more on competitiveness and efficiency, which may lead to greater flexibility in this regard. In companies operating on a competitive market, Work-Life Balance is often treated as a tool for attracting and retaining talent and increasing employee productivity. Companies often offer a wide range of programs and benefits to help employees achieve work-life balance. For many companies, investing in developing healthy living habits of employees is also a priority, which contributes to increasing their efficiency. Non-governmental organizations operate with a social mission, and their goal is usually to help others or solve specific social problems. Employees may be strongly committed to this mission, which undoubtedly affects their level of commitment and dedication to work.

Another important management factor that determines the harmony between employees' professional and private lives is organizational culture. Organizational culture can be defined as *“a set of values, beliefs, attitudes, systems and principles that determine and influence the behavior of employees in an organization. Culture reflects how employees, customers, suppliers and stakeholders experience the organization and its brand”*¹⁹. It is extremely diverse and may even vary within individual organizations. It is determined to the greatest extent by: management style, type of leadership, personnel policy, and values espoused in the organization. In public institutions, where the organizational structure is usually hierarchical, employees may feel greater pressure to comply with rigorous structures and procedures, which may result in difficulties in achieving WLB. In highly bureaucratic organizations, which is also a characteristic feature of the public sector, excess procedures and formalities make it difficult for employees to flexibly manage their time and private life. In order to achieve their goals, non-governmental organizations often try to create friendly work environments that enable employees to engage

¹⁹ K. Wong, *Organizational Culture: Definition, Importance, and Development*, <https://www.achievers.com/blog/organizational-culture-definition/>, June 28, 2023 (accessed on 27/10/ 2023).

in both their work and social activities. Employees are then more willing to devote their time and effort to the organization's mission, but on the other hand they expect flexibility at work. In private companies, especially large corporations, the organizational culture often places emphasis on results and achievements. And here, depending on the organization, either managers expect availability, long, sometimes even excessive working hours from employees, or they promote innovation and flexibility, offering employees greater control over their time and a more friendly working environment, which favors Work-Life Balance. The number of companies that use WLB tools and offer employee support programs is definitely growing, including: child care, free sports activities, medical packages, the possibility of working irregular hours, working from home and many others. In recent years, private organizations have also become a priority to invest in developing healthy living habits of their employees, which in the long run contributes to increasing their efficiency.

One of the most important factors that influences the diverse approach to WLB in organizations operating in various sectors is, of course, financial issues. The ability and opportunity of a specific economic sector or organization to finance WLB-related programs and benefits is crucial. While private companies can basically allocate funds for specific purposes in any way they want, public organizations operate with a limited and top-down budget that must cover many different needs and priorities. Of course, all organizations are subject to legal regulations in this area, but public finances are an area subject to very detailed regulations in terms of planning, execution and control of expenditure. Effective budget management in public organizations is therefore particularly difficult. The laws clearly define the categories of public expenses and revenues and the principles of their management. It is often impossible to allocate financial resources for programs and tools that would help employees achieve harmony between their professional and private lives. Public organizations also operate under high social and political pressure, which forces them to act more focused on meeting society's expectations and requirements than on the Work-Life Balance of employees. Often, the lack of adequate financial resources to update technologies and work tools causes employees to work longer hours to make up for the lack of efficiency, which obviously affects the balance in the WLB area. It should be noted here that one of the basic instruments influencing WLB in public organizations is the social fund. A social fund is a special type

of fund that is established and maintained by public sector organizations to provide various forms of assistance and support to their employees and their families. The social fund aims to improve the living and working conditions of employees and promote their well-being and work-life balance. Although the main goal of the social fund is to provide support to employees and their families in various life situations, such as financial difficulties, illnesses, crisis situations, children's education, it very often supports initiatives and programs aimed at promoting Work-Life Balance, such as: creating and maintaining childcare facilities for employees, flexible working hours or the possibility of remote work. Social funds often conduct educational and preventive programs aimed at improving the health and quality of life of employees and their families. NGO budgets often depend on public funds, ongoing projects or private donations, which may result in financial instability. This fact may, on the one hand, lead to pressure on employees to work longer hours in order to achieve the organization's goals, but on the other hand, it may be quite the opposite. Third sector organizations can strive for employees and encourage them to work by supporting them in reconciling private life with professional duties. Importantly, large organizations, both public, non-governmental and private, may be more likely to offer a variety of Work-Life Balance programs and benefits due to their greater resources and scale of operations. In smaller organizations, these resources may be more limited.

As already mentioned above, legal provisions, both international and individual countries, as well as public policies, especially family and labor market policies, may significantly affect the possibilities of using Work-Life Balance instruments in organizations. Therefore, political and legal factors are the third group of factors most important for the development of WLB in organizations. At the European Union level, two basic directives have been in force for several years to support employees in reconciling work and personal life. These are: Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU²⁰ and Directive (EU) 2019/1152 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on transparent and predictable working conditions

²⁰ Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18 / EU, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu> (accessed on 28/09/2023).

in the European Union²¹. Member States had three years to implement the rules. In practice, in some countries, Poland being an example, there were delays. The first of these documents is an extremely important act that aims to introduce rules and measures to improve work-life balance for parents and carers in Europe. The main objectives of the directive include:

1. Establishing minimum provisions on parental and carer's leave that employees can take when they need to care for children or other people in need of care;
2. Ensuring equal opportunities for women and men in the labor market and promoting gender equality by encouraging the use of parental and carer's leave by both parents;
3. Improving access to flexible forms of work, such as telework and flexible working hours, to make it easier for employees to reconcile work and family responsibilities;
4. Providing appropriate conditions for caregivers of dependent adults, such as elderly or disabled people;
5. Increasing employee protection against discrimination and dismissal due to the use of parental or care leave.

Directive (EU) 2019/1152 is an important step towards improving working conditions and protecting workers in the European Union by introducing more transparent and predictable employment conditions. It is part of the European Union's effort to create a fairer and more sustainable labor market in Europe. Its main goals include, among others:

1. **Increased transparency**, as the document requires employers to provide employees with information on their employment conditions, such as: remuneration, length of working time, contract terms and other relevant information. Employees must be informed in writing about these issues within a specified period of time after starting work.
2. **Ensuring predictability**, as the directive introduces provisions obliging employers to inform employees about their working schedule in advance. Additionally, employees must have the right to access to a predictable and consistent work schedule.
3. **Securing working conditions for a fixed period and supporting the prevention of the abuse of fixed-term contracts**, as the document

²¹ Directive (EU) 2019/1152 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on transparent and predictable working conditions in the European Union, PE/43/2019/REV/1, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu> (accessed on 28/09/2023).

contains provisions limiting the use of fixed-term employment contracts without justified reasons. This is intended to protect workers from excessive uncertainty associated with short-term employment.

4. **Increased protection of workers in situations of job uncertainty**, as the document establishes rules on informing workers about their rights and obligations, as well as introduces measures to protect workers in the event of job loss or situations similar to the bankruptcy of the employer.

It should be emphasized that generally applicable regulations, in particular recently implemented directives, in no way impose different regulations or requirements on organizations operating in different economic sectors, but may have both a positive and negative impact on the functioning of the organization. From the point of view of the employees themselves, the implemented directives should be considered beneficial because, thanks to increased access to parental and care leave and ensuring job security, they help in reconciling work and personal life. However, attention should be paid to the fact that long absences from work, especially with a reduced remuneration base, may affect the amount of current income and future pension and sickness benefits of employees. Women are particularly vulnerable to receiving reduced benefits, but the solutions introduced, thanks to instruments encouraging men to take care and parental leave to a much greater extent than before, have a chance to improve this situation. However, one should be aware of the fact that the main criterion influencing the decision to use leaves and their duration is still the issue of finances and the proportion in obtaining them in households. This is also influenced by a number of other socio-economic and cultural factors, but this is not the subject of this study. What organizations can do in this area, in addition to fulfilling obligations arising from legal provisions, implement such solutions and create such an organizational culture that employees who use the instruments provided by the legislator and other tools offered by employers can be sure that their positions work, promotion path or remuneration will not be changed to their detriment. Employers should act in accordance with both legal and ethical principles.

To sum up, differences in approaches to Work–Life Balance in public, private and non-governmental organizations result from many factors, such as goals, organizational culture, type of work, financial and political and legal issues. Employee values, but also the general economic

situation and labor market competition also play an important role in shaping these approaches. Organizations must adapt their strategies and programs to meet the needs of their employees and achieve work-life balance. Public organizations, primarily due to limited and rigid budgets, have a much more difficult task to meet the challenges related to Work – Life – Balance of employees. The next part of the article presents the results of questionnaire research, which clearly indicate that employers in the public sector enable their employees to achieve harmony between professional and private life to a lesser extent than employers from organizations operating in other sectors of the economy.

Public, private and non-governmental sectors towards the idea of Work – Life Balance – results of questionnaire research

Research methodology

The research results presented in this part are part of my own research. The nationwide survey was conducted among 10,331 respondents, including 7,800 professionally active parents with children, from March 16 to April 2, 2021. The study used the diagnostic survey method, the technique was the CAWI (Computer Assisted Web Interviewing) online survey. The questionnaire consisted of 37 questions (mostly closed using a Likert scale, nominal scales and 2 open questions), was available on the website of the national electronic daily Librus²² and sent via the portal directly to user accounts. The validity of the method used was dictated by the fact that the studied population (working parents) was territorially dispersed and characterized by a large variety of socio-demographic characteristics. Due to the fact that the study was aimed at checking the possibility of combining parents' professional work with child care, it was necessary to select the research group in a purposeful manner. The

²² Librus is a supplier of unique systems that support thousands of Polish schools and local government units in their daily work. The Librus company has been operating on the Polish market for 18 years. Librus systems are used by over 6,000 schools, 270,000 teachers and 3.5 million parents and students. Librus is part of the international consulting company Public Consulting Group based in Boston, whose mission is to support the public sector in areas such as education, health, social assistance and technology consulting.

addressees of the online survey were a specific group of respondents – parents working professionally and Internet users, and in the case of this research, limited to users of only one nationwide electronic daily. On the other hand, it was a group of parents-employees with children whom the authors of the research wanted to reach. The questionnaire study was preceded by a pilot study that took place in 2020.

Due to the purpose of the article, this study pays special attention to those respondents who have at least one child to raise and who are employees only of a public organization, non-governmental organization or a private company. In a detailed analysis of research, the answers of respondents who declared several places of employment in different sectors of the economy were most often presented collectively.

Findings

The scientific study (n=10,331) involved significantly more women – 89% than men – 11%. Of the population of 7,800 people (professionally active parents) analyzed in particular, as many as 7,063 (91%) are professionally active women with children to raise.

In terms of age (n=10,331), the largest age groups were people between 31-40 years of age (45%) and 41-50 years of age (42%). 6% respondents were under 20 years old, 3% each. 21-30 years and 51-60 years, and 1% respondents were over 60 years old. In the research group of professionally active people raising children (n=7,800), people aged 41-50 accounted for 47.9%. respondents, aged 31-40, 46.7% 2.97% respondents were in the age group of 51-60 years, and 1.87% between 21-30 years old. The smallest percent age were people under 20 years old – 0.38%. and over 60 years of age – 0.18%.

Taking into account education (n=10,331), the vast majority of respondents had a university or higher vocational diploma – 69%. 18.9% had secondary education, 6% basic vocational education, and 5% primary education. respondents. Among professionally active parents (n=7,800), as many as 81% had higher or higher vocational education (bachelor's degree), 15.4% secondary education, 2.8% basic vocational, 0.5% basic and 0.3% middle school.

The surveyed respondents (n=10,331) most often lived in large cities with over 500,000 inhabitants. inhabitants – 30.2% or villages – 29.7%.

The fewest respondents lived in towns with a population of 251,000 – 500,000 inhabitants – only 5.2%. Most working people with children to raise (n=7,800) lived in cities with over 500,000 inhabitants – 34.3%, villages – 25.5% and cities with up to 50,000 inhabitants – 18.3%. The least inhabited cities were those with a population of 251-500 thousand inhabitants – 5.5%. The respondents (n=10,331) most often came from the Masovian Voivodeship – 24% and Lesser Poland – 12%. The least number of respondents came from the Opole and Świętokrzyskie Voivodeships – 1% each. Living in regions among professionally active parents was similar. More than ¼ (26.2%) lived in the Masovian Voivodeship, 12.5%. Lesser Poland Voivodeship, 8.9% Lower Silesia, 9.5% Greater Poland Voivodeship, 8.8% Silesia, 6.9% Łódź province. The smallest number of people came from the Opole and Świętokrzyskie provinces – respectively 0.6%. and 1.21%, but these are also the smallest voivodeships. More than half of the respondents (53, 86%) (n=7,800) had two children, and every third respondent had one child.

Table 1. Number of children in care (n=7,800)

Number of children in upbringing	Number	%
One thing	2339	29.98718
Two	4201	53.85897
Three	1023	13.11538
Four	150	1.92308
five	47	0.60256
More than five	40	0.51282
Together	7800	100.00

Source: Own study.

Professionally active respondents constituted a group of 7,994 people, but 7,800 of them were raising children. Among this group, 62% were employees with work experience between 11-20 years, 24% had 21-30 years of experience, and 12% respondents had less than 10 years of professional experience.

When analyzing the forms of employment, it should be emphasized that 80.5% respondents (n=7,800) were employed under a full-time employment contract, 6.7% part-time, 11.4% respondents ran their own business, and 4.3% had a civil law contract.

It is worth noting that parents often held several job titles at the same time. However, people who were employed only under a full-time

employment contract constituted the largest group, 58% respondents, in second place were people who ran their own business only – 6.3%, people who were employed under a part-time employment contract accounted for 4% respondents and having only civil and legal contracts – 1.6%. The respondents, although not very often, combined a full-time contract with their own business – 1.37% and with a mandate contract – 0.8%.

Respondents who took part in the research (n=7,800) most often worked in the private sector – 44.3% and in public institutions – 41.6%. 2.5% of respondents worked in third sector organizations. It should be noted that men were more than twice as likely to take up work in the business sector, while there was no such difference among women.

Table 2. Sector in which respondents work by gender (n=7,800)

Respondents' work sector	Together	Woman	Man
Public institutions	3114	2930	184
Business (private entities)	3316	2927	389
Third sector organizations (foundations, associations, etc.)	142	127	15
Other	1038	919	119
Together	7610	6903	707
People working in several sectors at the same time	190	160	30
Total	7800	7063	737

Source: Own study.

Table 3. Sector in which respondents work by age (n=7,800)

Respondents' work sector	Under 20 years old	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60 years old	Over 60 years old	Together
Public institutions	2	53	1323	1630	104	2	3114
Business (private entities)	4	59	1659	1521	70	3	3316
Third sector organizations (foundations, associations, etc.)	6	3	66	59	4	4	142
Other	12	30	518	429	46	3	1038
Together	24	145	3566	3639	224	12	7610
People working in several sectors at the same time	6	1	79	94	8	2	190
Total	30	146	3645	3733	232	14	7800

Source: Own study.

Older people worked in the public sector more often than in the private sector – aged 41-50 and 51-60. In age groups up to 40 years of age, respondents more often declared working in private entities. More people under 40 were professionally involved in the non-governmental sector.

People working in public organizations most often lived in cities with over 500,000 inhabitants – 907 people (29.13%) and villages – 821 people (26.36%). The least common are cities with a population between 251,000 and 500,000 inhabitants (5.39%). Taking into account private sector employees, as many as 40.5% of them lived in the largest cities. 23.55% company employees lived in villages. The situation was similar among employees of non-governmental organizations. 39.44% of them lived in the largest urban agglomerations, and 23.24% villages.

Table 4. Respondents' work sector according to the form of employment (n=7,800)

Respondents' work sector	Form of employment							
	One form of employment					Together, one form of employment	Various combined employment relations	Total
	Own business	Full-time employment contract	Part-time employment contract	Civil and legal contract	Another			
Public institutions	42	2772	138	29	45	3026	88	3114
Business (private entities)	478	2403	190	68	34	3173	143	3316
Third sector organizations	9	87	21	14	6	137	5	142
Other	109	683	68	55	75	990	48	1038
Together	638	5945	417	166	160	7326	284	7610
People working in several sectors at the same time	15	52	2	4	2	-	190	190
Total	653	5997	419	170	162	7326	474	7800

Source: Own study.

When analyzing the types of employment contracts, it should be emphasized that as many as 89.02% public sector employees were employed on the basis of full-time employment contracts. In business organizations, this percent was 72.47%, and in third sector organizations 61.27%. Part-time work was performed by: 14.79% non-governmental sector employees, 5.73% business sector and 4.43% employees of public organizations. The third sector has the highest percent – 9.86% employees had civil-legal contracts, in the private sector it was 2,05%, and in public sector units less than 1% (0.93%) contracts were concluded on the basis of the provisions of the Civil Code. It is clear from the above that in the public sector, employees are employed full-time under employment contracts much more often than in other sectors.

People working in the public sector most often had higher education – 87.41%, in particular: higher education, at least master’s degree – 78.61%, and higher vocational education – 8.8%. 10.15% had secondary education and 1.98% had professional education. In private companies, the percent of people with higher education was 82.78%. (72.56% higher education, and 10.22% higher vocational education). Over 15% had a high school diploma, and only 1.54% professional. In the third sector worked 75.36% people with higher education (67.61% higher education, and 7.75% higher vocational education) and 14.79% with secondary education. A very small percentage of respondents, regardless of the sector in which they worked, had only a primary or gymnasium school diploma.

Table 5. Work sector of respondents with relative education (n=7,800)

Respondents' work sector	Higher - master's degree	Higher vocational - bachelor's degree	Secondary	Professional	Middle school -gymnasium	Primary	Together
Public institutions	2448	274	316	59	8	9	3114
Business (private entities)	2406	339	510	51	6	4	3316
Third sector organizations	96	11	21	5	1	8	142
Other	494	102	325	99	4	14	1038
Together	5444	726	1172	214	19	35	7610
People working in several sectors at the same time	138	14	28	5	1	4	190
Total	5582	740	1200	219	20	39	7800

Source: Own study.

The sector in which the respondents worked had no impact on the number of children they had. Small differences are noted among employees of the third sector, where employees more often had more than three children to raise.

Table 6. Number of children being raised by the relative sector in which the respondents work (n=7,800)

Respondents' work sector	Number of children in upbringing given in%					
	One child	Two children	Three children	Four children	Five children	More than five
Public institutions	29.06	54.46	13.33	2.09	0.71	0.35
Business (private entities)	30.10	54.89	13.24	1.27	0.33	0.18
Third sector organizations	26.76	51.41	11.27	4.23	2.82	3.52

Source: Own study.

From the point of view of the purpose of the study, it was extremely important to check whether there is any relationship between job satisfaction and the sector for which the work is provided. It should be noted, however, that men are clearly more satisfied with their professional lives than women. When it comes to differentiation by age, in the youngest category we can observe more frequent positive and negative assessments than neutral ones (middle category).

Table 7. Satisfaction with professional life by gender and age (n=7,800)

	Sex			Age			
	Total	Woman	Man	Up to 30 years	31-40 years old	41-50 years old	Over 50 years old
Very dissatisfied	10.2%	10.1%	10.3%	16.5%	11.0%	9.2%	8.5%
2	19.2%	19.1%	19.9%	21.0%	19.0%	19.1%	22.4%
3	33.6%	34.3%	26.9%	21.0%	33.6%	34.3%	31.3%
4	26.0%	25.8%	27.7%	19.3%	26.0%	26.4%	23.6%
Very satisfied	11.1%	10.6%	15.2%	22.2%	10.4%	10.9%	14.2%
Total	7800	7063	737	176	3645	3733	246

Pearson chi-square tests

	Sex	Age
Chi-square	24,753	51,639
df	4	12
Materiality	.000 *	.000 *

Source: Own study.

It turns out that every tenth respondent is very dissatisfied with their job, regardless of the sector in which they work. A similar percentage of respondents are very satisfied, with almost 15% third sector employees declare very high job satisfaction. Generally, every third respondent declares that he is neither particularly satisfied nor dissatisfied with his professional work.

Table 8. Job satisfaction by respondents' work sector (n=7,800)

Respondents' work sector	Job satisfaction					
	1	2	3	4	5	Together
Public institutions	302	628	1069	806	309	3114
	9.70%	20.17%	34.33%	25.88%	9.92%	100%
Business (private entities)	332	638	1073	891	382	3316
	10.01%	19.24%	32.36%	26.87%	11.52%	100%
Third sector organizations	14	24	47	36	21	142
	9.86%	16.90%	33.10%	25.35%	14.79%	100%
Other	121	181	364	257	115	1038
	11.66%	17.44%	35.07%	24.76%	11.08%	100%
Together	769	1471	2553	1990	827	7610
People working in several sectors at the same time	23	28	67	37	35	190
Total	792	1499	2620	2027	862	7800

Source: Own study. 1 – very dissatisfied, 5 – very satisfied.

The situation is different in the opinion of employers in terms of creating conditions for combining professional and private life among employees and offering them specific tools. Half of the respondents answered that the employer makes it easier for them to combine work with childcare and there are no significant differences between women and men. However, the share of women for whom the employer definitely does not help is higher than the share of men.

The facilitation and use of specific WLB tools by employers varies across the sectors in which organizations operate. The research clearly shows that public sector employers are much less likely than other employers to make it easier for their employees to reconcile private and professional life. 14% public sector employees say that the employer definitely facilitates the reconciliation of private and professional life, 29.06% he says it rather makes it easier. In the case of the business sector, these percentages are respectively: 26.15% and 33.47%.

Non-governmental similarly: 27.46% and 32.39. The situation is similar in the case of negative answers. Again, for employees from the public sector, the employer definitely does not make it easier to reconcile both spheres of life (17.28%) or rather does not make it easier (24.63%). In companies it is respectively: 8.35%. and 17.19%

Table 9. The employer makes it easier to combine work with childcare (gender and age) (n=7,800)

	Sex			Age			
	Total	Woman	Man	Up to 30 years	31-40 years old	41-50 years old	Over 50 years old
Definitely yes	19.8%	19.8%	20.4%	20.5%	21.2%	18.9%	11.8%
I guess so	30.8%	30.6%	32.3%	29.0%	31.0%	30.7%	28.9%
I don't think so	21.1%	21.2%	19.8%	15.3%	20.8%	21.4%	25.6%
Definitely not	12.9%	13.2%	9.8%	16.5%	12.5%	12.9%	14.6%
Hard to say	7.7%	7.6%	8.7%	11.4%	7.1%	8.1%	8.1%
Not applicable	7.8%	7.6%	9.1%	7.4%	7.3%	8.0%	11.0%
Total	7800	7063	737	176	3645	3733	246

Pearson chi-square tests

	Sex	Age
Chi-square	10,381	32,064
df	5	15
Materiality	.065	.006 *

Source: Own study.

It is interesting that 37.22% public sector employees answered that the employer does not make it difficult for them to reconcile work and private life, or it definitely does not make it difficult (22.07%). In the private sector it was respectively: 35.27% and 32.27%. However, what is disturbing is the fact that 18.14% people working in the public sector, the employer makes it difficult to maintain WLB. In the private sector this percentage is 11.94% and in NGOs 16.9%. From the above, it should be concluded that for employers from the budget sphere, the WLB of employees is not particularly important, or they do not have the tools to offer support in this area. Public sector employers tend not to make it difficult for employees to combine work and private life, but they are also not active in supporting them. The reasons for this state of affairs should be sought on many levels, which were discussed in more detail in the

theoretical part of the study, however, it is interesting to know whether and what WLB tools are used by employers employing employees in various sectors, and to check what employees expect from them. The answers to the above questions will help develop recommendations not only for employers and organizations, but also for politicians responsible for the implemented changes in this area. Most importantly, they can impact employee satisfaction with both work and personal life. It should be emphasized that the questionnaire research was conducted during the pandemic. The tables below do not include people who declared having an employment relationship at the same time in different sectors.

Research results show that only every fourth public sector employer offered its employees flexible working time, while in the private sector more than half (53.11%) did so. The situation was similar in non-governmental organizations – the percentage was 46.48%.

Taking into account the flexible scope of duties, it should be noted that over 61% public entities do not offer their employees such a tool, and only one in ten of them does it. Both in business and in NGOs, few organizations use this tool, as only over 16% employers offered employees a flexible scope of duties.

Table 10. Employer’s facilitation of combining work with childcare by employment sector (n=7,610).

Respondents’ work sector	Definitely yes	I guess so	I don’t think so	Definitely not	Hard to say	Not applicable	Together
Public institutions	436	905	767	538	252	216	3114
	14.00%	29.06%	24.63%	17.28%	8.09%	6.94%	
Business (private entities)	867	1110	570	277	232	260	3316
	26.15%	33.47%	17.19%	8.35%	7.00%	7.84%	
Third sector organizations	39	46	24	17	11	5	142
	27.46%	32.39%	16.90%	11.97%	7.75%	3.52%	
Other	168	292	243	144	83	108	1038
	16.18%	28.13%	23.41%	13.87%	8.00%	10.40%	
Together							7610

Source: Own study. The list does not include people who declared having an employment relationship simultaneously in different sectors.

Table 11. The employer making it difficult to combine work with child-care due to the employment sector (n=7,610)

Respondents' work sector	Definitely yes	I guess so	I don't think so	Definitely not	Hard to say	Not applicable	Together
Public institutions	203	362	1159	707	292	391	3114
	6.52%	11.62%	37.22%	22.70%	9.38%	12.56%	
Business (private entities)	128	268	1166	1070	233	451	3316
	3.86%	8.08%	35.16%	32.27%	7.03%	13.60%	
Third sector organizations	11	13	50	45	7	16	142
	7.75%	9.15%	35.21%	31.69%	4.93%	11.27%	
Other	69	117	406	197	94	155	1038
	6.65%	11.27%	39.11%	18.98%	9.06%	14.93%	
Together							7610

Source: Own study. The list does not include people who declared having an employment relationship simultaneously in different sectors.

Table 12. Offering flexible working time by the employer depending on the employment sector (n=7,610)

Respondents' work sector	He offers	Does not offer	Hard to say	Not applicable	Together
Public institutions	754	1519	341	500	3114
	24.21%	48.78%	10.95%	16.06%	
Business (private entities)	1761	857	371	327	3316
	53.11%	25.84%	11.19%	9.86%	
Third sector organizations	66	46	16	14	142
	46.48%	32.39%	11.27%	9.86%	
Other	322	381	155	180	1038
	31.02%	36.71%	14.93%	17.34%	

Source: Own study. The list does not include people who declared having an employment relationship simultaneously in different sectors.

Table 13. The employer offering flexible scope of duties depending on the employment sector (n=7,610)

Respondents' work sector	He offers	Does not offer	Hard to say	Not applicable	Together
Public institutions	297	1919	294	604	3114
	9.54%	61.62%	9.44%	19.40%	
Business (private entities)	545	1852	371	548	3316
	16.44%	55.85%	11.19%	16.53%	
Third sector organizations	24	71	26	21	142
	16.90%	50.00%	18.31%	14.79%	
Other	127	534	125	252	1038
	12.24%	51.45%	12.04%	24.28%	

Source: Own study. The list does not include people who declared having an employment relationship simultaneously in different sectors.

Remote work is a tool that is indicated in many studies as desirable by employees and rated the highest among instruments helping to maintain Work-Life Balance²³. Performing professional duties online offers many benefits, but at the same time it is a challenge that must be effectively met. The benefits include: flexibility in the organization of working time, which in turn allows maintaining harmony between professional life and work; saving time and money due to the need to travel to the workplace, thus allowing you to devote more time to your family and loved ones; ability to perform duties in the comfort of home or any other location; increased independence and independence in performing professional duties, or access to modern tools for remote work. Remote work also presents a number of challenges that must be faced. Firstly, social isolation and lack of interaction with colleagues may have a negative impact on the physical and mental health of employees, and the lack of direct contact with colleagues may translate into communication difficulties. Confessions also include: potential difficulties with Internet access and technical failures; cybersecurity threats; limiting access to training and professional development. Remote work requires acquiring great time management skills and the need to maintain self-discipline, because the

²³ M. Shirmohammadi, W. Chan Au, M. Beigi, *Remote work and work-life balance: Lessons learned from the covid-19 pandemic and suggestions for HRD practitioners*, "Human Resource Development International", vol. 25, 2022, Issue 2: Remote Working and HRD, pp. 163–181; J.G. Elnanto, L. Suharti, *The Impact of Work From Home to Work Life-Balance and Its Implication to Employee Happiness: The Moderating Role of Organizational Support*, "International Journal of Social Science and Business", Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha, vol. no. 3. 2021, pp. 311–318.

home environment negatively affects concentration. Only proper adaptation to remote work, developing self-discipline skills, taking care of physical and mental health, as well as using tools and technologies that facilitate communication and the effectiveness of remote work will make remote work a real tool supporting WLB. Remote workers can maximize the benefits of remote work while minimizing its challenges. Ultimately, remote work can change the way people work and live their lives, but only if employees can effectively address its challenges²⁴. The research shows that remote work is more often offered by employers from the private sector (62.58%) and non-governmental sector (54.93%) than the public sector (47.33%).

Table 14. Offering remote work by the employer depending on the employment sector (n=7,610)

Respondents' work sector	He offers	Does not offer	Hard to say	Not applicable	Together
Public institutions	1474	1014	249	377	3114
	47.33%	32.56%	8.00%	12.11%	
Business (private entities)	2075	700	163	378	3316
	62.58%	21.11%	4.92%	11.40%	
Third sector organizations	78	40	10	14	142
	54.93%	28.17%	7.04%	9.86%	
Other	319	430	56	233	1038
	30.73%	41.43%	5.39%	22.45%	

Source: Own study. The list does not include people who declared having an employment relationship simultaneously in different sectors.

It is interesting that before the pandemic, over 93% public sector employees and 73% business did not work remotely at all. This situation was significantly changed by the pandemic in 2020-2022.

Another factor considered as support for achieving harmony between professional and private life is the organization of childcare and bonuses for children provided by employers. The lack of institutional support in the field of care leads to the exclusion of especially women from the labor market, which in turn leads to other negative consequences. The analyzes conducted show that the percentage of entities that offer such

²⁴ K.D.V. Prasad, V.K. Satyaprasad, *The relationship between remote working and work-life balance with mediating and moderating effects of social support: an empirical study of information technology employees*, "International Journal of Organizational Leadership", 12 (3), 235–253.

support, regardless of the sector, is negligible and does not exceed 4% among third sector organizations and 1.5% in the case of public and private institutions.

Table 15. Remote work before the pandemic by employment sector (n=7,610)

Employment sector	I DIDN'T WORK in a remote work system	Yes, I performed my work ONLY remotely	Yes, I performed MOST of my duties remotely	Yes, I performed HALF of my duties remotely	Yes, I performed a MINOR PART of my duties remotely	Hard to say	Together
Public institutions	2914	11	25	27	128	9	3114
	93.58%	0.35%	0.80%	0.87%	4.11%	0.29%	
Business (private entities)	2428	104	114	95	555	20	3316
	73.22%	3.14%	3.44%	2.86%	16.74%	0.60%	
Third sector organizations	111	6	4	3	16	2	142
	78.17%	4.23%	2.82%	2.11%	11.27%	1.41%	
Other	923	23	10	12	53	17	1038
	88.92%	2.22%	0.96%	1.16%	5.11%	1.64%	

Source: Own study. The list does not include people who declared having an employment relationship simultaneously in different sectors.

Table 16. Offering childcare arrangements by the employer depending on the employment sector (n=7,610)

Employment sector	He offers	Does not offer	Hard to say	Not applicable	Together
Public institutions	44	2428	68	574	3114
	1.41%	77.97%	2.18%	18.43%	
Business (private entities)	35	2597	56	628	3316
	1.06%	78.32%	1.69%	18.94%	
Third sector organizations	5	102	7	28	142
	3.52%	71.83%	4.93%	19.72%	
Other	22	729	28	259	1038
	2.12%	70.23%	2.70%	24.95%	

Source: Own study. The list does not include people who declared having an employment relationship simultaneously in different sectors.

Table 17. Employer offering bonuses for children (n=7,610)

Employment sector	He offers	Does not offer	Hard to say	Not applicable	Together
Public institutions	147	2283	103	581	3114
	4.72%	73.31%	3.31%	18.66%	
Business (private entities)	141	2467	81	627	3316
	4.25%	74.40%	2.44%	18.91%	
Third sector organizations	14	92	7	29	142
	9.86%	64.79%	4.93%	20.42%	
Other	60	691	40	247	1038
	5.78%	66.57%	3.85%	23.80%	

Source: Own study. The list does not include people who declared having an employment relationship simultaneously in different sectors.

Bonuses for children, most often in the form of Santa Claus packages, subsidies for recreation, subsidies for nurseries and kindergartens, insurance or sports packages, are offered by less than 5% of public and private organizations and approximately 10% non-governmental organizations.

In order to achieve the purpose of this article and provide recommendations, it is necessary to demonstrate solutions that, in the opinion of employees, would facilitate the reconciliation of professional and private life. Respondents taking part in the study were asked to rate each of the specific aspects using the following categories: it would help a lot, it would help a little, it would not help, it does not matter, it does not apply. The table below summarizes only the frequency of mentioning the “Would help a lot” category.

Various forms that make it easier to combine professional work with child care are mentioned more often by women than men, which may be assumed to be due to the fact that women are more likely to provide care, so they need the facilities more. The desired forms of facilities are related to the age of respondents, i.e. indirectly to the age of their children. Younger people would be more willing than older people to see easier adaptation after maternity or parental leave, subsidies for kindergartens or nurseries, or the organization of childcare by employers. People with higher education are generally more willing than people with lower education to see any forms that facilitate the reconciliation of work and child care. The most significant difference is the frequency of mentioning the possibility of remote work.

Table 18. What changes introduced by the employer would help you combine professional duties with child care? (gender and age) (n=7,800)

Changes	Sex			Age			
	Total	Woman	Man	Up to 30 years	31-40 years old	41-50 years old	Over 50 years old
Possibility to choose working hours	53.8%	54.7%	45.5%	52.8%	55.9%	52.0%	49.6%
Employment flexibility/assignment of duties included in the work regulations	39.4%	40.0%	33.8%	34.7%	40.2%	39.1%	36.2%
Informal working time arrangements	45.7%	46.1%	42.1%	42.6%	46.9%	44.8%	44.7%
A gradual process of adaptation at work after a long absence, e.g. maternity/parental/unpaid leave	28.6%	29.3%	21.6%	35.2%	30.3%	26.8%	23.6%
Subsidies to nursery/kindergarten fees	31.7%	31.7%	31.6%	43.2%	36.6%	26.8%	23.6%
Organization of childcare by the employer, e.g. through company facilities	37.7%	38.4%	30.9%	47.2%	42.9%	33.0%	25.2%
Working in a remote system	52.2%	53.2%	42.7%	43.2%	53.1%	52.1%	47.2%
Other	10.6%	10.8%	9.0%	18.2%	11.2%	9.6%	12.2%
None of the above	21.3%	20.6%	28.1%	23.3%	19.0%	22.9%	28.0%
Total	7800	7063	737	176	3645	3733	246

Source: Own study.

Among the tools that would significantly help employees reconcile work and private life, by far the largest percentage of employees expect two basic amenities – the ability to choose working hours and remote work. Almost 55% expect the ability to choose working hours. public sector and business employees and as many as 65% employees of non-governmental organizations. The situation is similar with regard to remote work. Respondents also had the opportunity to indicate other ideas that would help them achieve WLB. The most frequently mentioned ones include: flexible working hours (also on Saturdays and Sundays when the organization is not working); individual working time; flexible working hours; task work; partially remote work mode, providing childcare at

work – employee nurseries and kindergartens, or children’s playrooms with an animator; increased number of paid childcare days; the ability to leave work for important family matters and return again during the day; providing meals for children in schools and paying for them by the employer; subsidies for caregivers; greater tolerance and understanding of the employer in matters of absenteeism. Increased financial resources were identified as an important factor that would help in achieving WLB.

Table 19. Changes that would significantly help employees reconcile work and private life by employment sector (n=7,610)

Employment sector	Possibility to choose working hours	Employment flexibility/division of responsibilities included in the regulations	Informal working time arrangements	A gradual process of adaptation after a long break, e.g. maternity leave	Surcharges for nursery and kindergarten	Organization of child care	Working in a remote system
Public institutions	1704	1293	1454	883	961	1190	1677
	54.72%	41.52%	46.69%	28.36%	30.86%	38.21%	53.85%
Business (private entities)	1771	1276	1556	986	1071	1253	1840
	53.41%	38.48%	46.92%	29.73%	32.30%	37.79%	55.49%
Third sector organizations	93	62	68	46	46	50	75
	65.49%	43.66%	47.89%	32.39%	32.39%	35.21%	52.82%
Other	530	374	410	268	343	382	392
	51.06%	36.03%	39.50%	25.82%	33.04%	36.80%	37.76%

Source: Own study. The list does not include people who declared having an employment relationship simultaneously in different sectors.

Summary

Reconciling work and private life is a key challenge not only for public authorities implementing statutory solutions in this area, but also for organizations that implement the Work-Life Balance concept within their own resources, competences and capabilities. Changes taking place in the socio-economic, political, technological and cultural environment mean that organizations operating in all sectors of the economy face

newer challenges that they must cope with. Organizations that can adapt to these challenges and offer attractive working and pay conditions are more competitive and prepared to achieve their goals. Improper management in the area of WLB in an organization may lead, among other things, to employee fatigue, low satisfaction with their duties, or increased staff turnover, which may ultimately translate into a decrease in the productivity and efficiency of employees and a reduction in the effectiveness of their activities and, therefore, of entire institutions.

Although WLB is a concept that employees of various organizations expect to be implemented, employers operating in different economic sectors have different goals and reasons for developing this idea in their organizations. They also face different challenges. Employees, however, perfectly understand the specific nature of the organization's functioning, and also have different expectations towards their employers.

Pressure to achieve business goals and competition in the labor market are the main challenges faced by private companies whose main goal is to maximize profits. Companies compete not only for customers, but also for the best employees. Therefore, organizations must offer attractive working conditions that take into account the needs and expectations of employees. Employees, especially the younger generation, increasingly expect flexible working hours, remote and task-oriented work, and opportunities for professional and personal development. The research carried out, the results of which are presented in this article, show that women, mainly between 30 and 50 years of age, expect solutions that help them combine professional and private life more often than men. Companies that can adapt to changing expectations are more competitive on the labor market. The research clearly shows that private companies are trying to meet newer expectations and often invest in programs aimed at improving work-life balance, offering flexible solutions such as remote or semi-remote work, flexible working hours or support programs. child care. At this point, it is worth paying attention to the growing role of technology in shaping the challenges related to reconciling work and private life. Remote work and communication tools allow employees greater flexibility, but at the same time they can lead to the loss of a clear boundary between work and private life. Organizations must ensure that technology does not become a source of constant stress and time pressure for employees.

The public sector is in a different situation in the area of WLB implementation. In the public sector, an important challenge is still the current and complicated bureaucracy and administrative procedures, which may make time management difficult and thus affect work efficiency. Moreover, financial issues are an extremely important factor, often even preventing the implementation of specific solutions in the WLB area. Limited and rigid budgets that leave no room for specific solutions block the development of concepts in public organizations. Particular difficulties arise when implementing the WLB concept in uniformed services, including: army, police, fire brigade or prison service. The specificity of the service means that the implementation of WLB is often not particularly difficult or even impossible for many reasons. Firstly, law enforcement officers often work shifts, which means their work schedule is irregular and often includes night shifts, mid-week days off and holidays. The sudden need to respond to crises can lead to stressful situations, making work-life balance difficult. Secondly, in uniformed services, officers are expected to be ready to act at any time, which may result in long working hours and the inability to plan free time. Officers often experience the pressure of having to make life decisions at short notice, such as transfers or business trips, which affects family life. Moreover, in the case of military personnel, long periods of separation from family are often unavoidable, resulting from the need to participate in training grounds, foreign missions, and exercises outside the garrison. Such separations can significantly impact private life, including family relationships, raising children and contacts with friends. Despite many difficulties, uniformed services are making efforts to implement Work-Life Balance and are trying to increasingly take into account the needs of their officers by introducing at least minimally flexible work schedules, the possibility for employees to request a slight (usually up to an hour) shift of regular working hours, especially in units, that are not related to emergencies. Supervisors in the uniformed services are aware of the exceptional levels of stress and trauma their employees may face. They introduce psychological support programs, which are theoretically intended to help officers deal with stress and trauma, and financial support, which is intended to compensate for separation. In some uniformed services, there is the possibility of rotation between positions or units, which on the one hand allows for a more predictable work and life style, but on the other hand, this rotation may bring opposite effects and in

practice this most often happens. Implementing Work-Life Balance in the uniformed services remains a huge challenge, definitely the biggest one, taking into account organizations in other sectors, but it is necessary to maintain the ability of officers to work effectively and take care of their mental well-being and personal life. Law enforcement agencies continue to develop strategies and programs to improve work-life balance in these unique work environments, but there is still much work to be done. Unfortunately, the implementation of many WLB solutions in uniformed services, such as remote work or flexible working hours and duties, will still be impossible in the vast majority of cases in the coming years.

In order to assess the challenges faced by non-governmental organizations in the area of WLB, first of all, attention should be paid to the instability of financing of projects and programs, which affects working conditions and employment. NGOs must raise funds to continue their activities, which can be difficult in a changing economic environment. However, striving to implement social missions and help others is often the main motivation of non-governmental sector employees, and support in the area of WLB is extremely important.

To sum up, the above analyzes prove that organizations, depending on the sector in which they operate, and depending on legal, financial and organizational culture possibilities, use different WLB instruments. Private companies offer remote work or flexible working time much more often than public organizations. Employees working in the private sector rate their employers better in terms of WLB, declaring that they definitely make it easier (26%) or easier (33%) for them to reconcile private and professional life. 14% public sector employees answered that the employer definitely facilitates the reconciliation of private and professional life, or rather facilitates it (29%). Interestingly, in the private sector it definitely does not make it difficult – 32%. employers or rather does not make it difficult – 35% employers in achieving a balance between both spheres of employees' lives. In the case of public sector employers, it is respectively: 22% and 37%. Regardless of the sector, employees believe that remote work, flexible working hours and informal arrangements regarding working hours would help to achieve harmony between personal life and work. Bonuses provided for children, including subsidies for child care, are lower in their expectations. In the coming years, it is necessary to further develop the WLB concept and improve its tools.

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