

## Between work and life: how Generation Z perceives increasing job demands and the expectation of constant availability

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**Annotation.** The main objective of the article was to examine the relationship between work demands and their impact on the personal and family life of Generation Z employees. The research was based on the theoretical frameworks of Work Connectivity Behavior After-hours (WCBA) and the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory, which explain the “double-edged” nature of technological connectivity – as both a source of flexibility and a factor increasing psychological strain. The empirical part was conducted in 2025 on a sample of 67 Generation Z respondents through an online questionnaire evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale. Correlation analysis and multiple linear regression analysis were used to process the data. The results confirmed two out of the three proposed hypotheses. A moderately strong negative relationship was identified between the perceived impact of work on personal and family commitments and the perception of increasing work demands, suggesting that when employees already perceive work as a source of private life disruption, they tend to be less sensitive to further increases in demands. At the same time, a weak but statistically significant positive relationship was confirmed between the expectation of work availability outside working hours and the perception of increasing demands. Conversely, the relationship between the impact of work on personal commitments and the expectation of availability was not confirmed. The findings highlight the need for targeted organizational policies focused on managing boundaries between work and private life. It is recommended to strengthen the culture of the “right to disconnect,” promote psychological detachment, foster digital leadership, and implement measures to prevent burnout. Effective management of digital availability appears to be a key prerequisite for sustainable work performance, mental well-being, and long-term job satisfaction among Generation Z employees.

**Keywords:** Generation Z, job demands, work availability, work–life balance, digital connectivity.

**JEL classification:** J81, M12, M54, O15.

## Introduction

The development of digital technologies and mobile communication tools is fundamentally transforming the way employees perform their work and blurring the traditional boundaries between professional and private life. This trend has led to the emergence of new forms of work behavior, such as Work Connectivity Behavior After-hours (WCBA) – the tendency of employees to engage in work-related activities or remain available for work outside official working hours. Although this phenomenon may bring advantages such as increased flexibility and autonomy, it also has a negative side – it fosters avoidance-oriented job crafting and may reduce work performance (Fan *et al.*, 2024).

Research confirms that technologies in the workplace have a “dual nature” – they can be perceived either as a resource that enables better work organization and increases engagement, or as a demand that heightens the pressure for constant availability, leading to burnout and employee turnover (Rasulova, Tanova, 2025). Based on the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory, it appears that the subjective interpretation of technology as either a resource or a burden fundamentally influences employees’ work behavior and well-being. For this reason, WCBA emerges as a phenomenon with a “double-edged” effect – it can enhance work performance through proactive job crafting, yet simultaneously contribute to passive avoidance of work tasks and performance decline when it becomes excessive (Fan *et al.*, 2024).

From a psychological perspective, WCBA has been shown to significantly reduce job satisfaction. Excessive availability after working hours leads to feelings of privacy intrusion and mental overload, with individual factors — such as perceived organizational support or employees’ psychological entitlement — playing an important role (Cheng *et al.*, 2022). The negative relationship between WCBA and job satisfaction is mitigated by higher perceived organizational support, whereas psychological demands exacerbate it (Cheng *et al.*, 2022). At the same time, perceiving technology as a demand is associated with higher burnout and turnover intentions, while perceiving it as a resource is linked to greater work engagement and lower turnover intentions (Rasulova, Tanova, 2025).

Further research indicates that after-hours connectivity can increase psychological distress, particularly when it is associated with the intrusion of work obligations into the family environment. Empirical data suggest that work-to-family conflict mediates the relationship between WCBA and psychological strain, and this effect may be weakened among employees whose supervisors are less workaholic and who support work–life balance (Dong *et al.*, 2022). In line with this, Li *et al.* (2024) identified that long-term work connectivity leads to feelings of alienation, psychological distress, and subsequently to time banditry behavior, indicating an erosion of employees’ internal resources.

An important role in these processes is also played by telepressure—the internal urge to respond quickly to work messages. This psychological mechanism is associated with rumination, emotional exhaustion, and the blurring of boundaries between work and personal life. Cambier and Vlerick (2022) found that telepressure increases affective rumination in both boundary-crossing contexts through message-based communication. Similarly, Hong and Jex (2022) demonstrated that a high level of telepressure can neutralize the positive effects of telework on work–life balance, as constant availability eliminates the benefits of flexibility.

In the context of increasing digitalization, there is growing discussion about the phenomenon of technostress, which represents a reaction to technological overload and invasion of personal space. Alkhayyal and Bajaba (2024) demonstrated that technostress reduces employees’ mental well-being in virtual environments, and this effect can be mitigated through the development of digital leadership and

workplace learning. Excessive technological strain thus affects not only performance but also the quality of interpersonal relationships and the ability to recover outside of work.

On the other hand, Wang et al. (2022) point out that the consequences of WCBA may extend beyond the strictly work-related domain. Their research revealed that excessive connectivity leads to ego depletion, which promotes unproductive behaviors such as cyberloafing—intentional avoidance of work tasks. At the same time, employees with higher autonomous motivation or a tendency toward workaholism are less vulnerable to these negative consequences.

These empirical findings indicate that the boundaries between work and private life are becoming increasingly fragile, particularly in digitally intensive work environments. Understanding these processes is therefore crucial for organizations striving for sustainable human resource management and the prevention of negative consequences of digital overload (Fan *et al.*, 2024; Rasulovala, Tanova, 2025; Cheng *et al.*, 2022).

## 1. Literature Review

The digital work environment of recent years has fundamentally transformed the boundaries between work and private life, creating new psychosocial demands that affect work, family life, and overall employee well-being—particularly among the younger generation of workers. A key mechanism in this process is workplace telepressure—the internal pressure to respond quickly to work messages and remain available outside of working hours—which reduces psychological detachment from work, increases fatigue, and disrupts sleep, thereby directly undermining work–life balance (Santuzzi, Barber, 2018). Empirical evidence confirms that telepressure and intensive smartphone use after working hours hinder evening mental “disconnection” and may weaken work engagement on days of higher technology use, especially among individuals with high telepressure (Van Laethem *et al.*, 2018). Consistently, telepressure is associated with poorer evaluations of work–life balance, with recovery experiences (psychological detachment, relaxation, control over leisure time) playing a crucial mediating role (Barber *et al.*, 2019). More recent studies also distinguish between affective rumination and problem-solving pondering, showing that telepressure predicts both types of rumination beyond workaholism and related traits, further emphasizing its autonomous impact on recovery (Barber *et al.*, 2024).

In addition to individual mechanisms, there is also an organizational and socio-legal dimension to the regulation of availability. Mapping the implementation of the right to disconnect across EU countries shows that legislative and corporate measures can limit connection time, improve work–life balance, and enhance employees’ subjective well-being, although their effectiveness depends on the specific mode of implementation and the cultural norms of the organization (Eurofound, 2023). A scoping review on the “right to disconnect” further identified four key thematic areas—work–life balance, scope, governance, and health—that should be considered when practically implementing disconnection policies (Hopkins, 2024). Interestingly, the mere existence of formal disconnection policies does not automatically reduce telepressure; more decisive are implicit norms regarding availability and family-supportive work environments, which shape everyday expectations of after-hours communication (Barber *et al.*, 2023).

Cognitive biases may further increase the subjective pressure to remain available. Experimental evidence shows that recipients overestimate the expected response speed to non-urgent emails sent outside regular working hours, which heightens stress and reduces subjective well-being; however, a simple explicit reduction of expectations by the sender mitigates this “email urgency bias” (Giurge, Bohns, 2021). From a measurement perspective, it is important that the construct of telepressure is measurement

invariant across professions; although e-communication demands and behaviors predict its level, respondents interpret the items similarly regardless of occupation (Hu *et al.*, 2024). In specific professions such as medicine, a high level of telepressure and its association with burnout have been confirmed; validated scales on medical samples highlight the need for targeted interventions focused on boundary management and psychological detachment (Levy *et al.*, 2024).

Parallel to telepressure stands the phenomenon of work connectivity behavior after-hours (WCBA)—the actual work-related connection after working hours. Research highlights its “double-edged” nature: among managers, it enhances engagement through greater autonomy, whereas among regular employees, it increases engagement by reducing emotional exhaustion (Yang *et al.*, 2023). At the family system level, WCBA is associated with a fluctuation between work–family enrichment and conflict; family support can amplify the positives and mitigate the negatives, underscoring the importance of the family context in managing availability (Yang *et al.*, 2022). Other studies document its darker side: excessive after-hours connectivity increases emotional exhaustion, particularly among individuals with a segmentation preference, for whom work intruding into private life undermines psychological detachment (Hu *et al.*, 2024). Daily diary data further show that WCBA triggers a resource loss spiral: it heightens ego depletion and work alienation, which translate into poorer work performance the following day; higher core self-evaluations and lower job complexity act as protective factors (Quan *et al.*, 2025). Controversial practices also emerge in the sphere of family strategies: WCBA may indirectly increase ethically questionable pro-family behavior through work–family conflict, with family motivation strengthening and organizational identity weakening this relationship (Liu *et al.*, 2024).

A broader framework is provided by research on technostress, which integrates the dimensions of techno-invasion and techno-overload with their psychological, physiological, and emotional impacts, including the disruption of work–life balance; a literature review emphasizes the importance of organizational interventions and managerial strategies that can mitigate the negative effects of technostress (Pothuganti, 2024). In a time-lagged design, techno-invasion and techno-overload are negatively related to work–life balance, with the effect mediated by psychological strain; resilience moderates both the direct and indirect impact (Sadaf *et al.*, 2025). These findings are particularly relevant for the work environment of Generation Z, where mobile technologies constitute a natural part of the workday and maintaining mental resources is critical.

An important macrotrend is the rise in job demands and work intensification, which are associated with longer working hours, higher pace, and greater responsibility, thereby increasing the likelihood of work–family conflict (Andrade & Neves, 2025). Empirical findings show that illegitimate (inappropriate) tasks and disrupted psychological detachment act as sequential mediators between work intensification and work–family conflict, thereby clarifying the mechanism of how job demands translate into family tension. In a broader organizational context, work intensification reduces work engagement through illegitimate tasks and work–family conflict—both independently and sequentially (Andrade, Neves, 2024). These processes are further framed by reviews of European labor trends, which highlight structural shifts in working time and flexibility, with implications for the imbalance between work-related and family responsibilities (Eurofound, 2023).

The consequences of work–family conflict (WFC) extend beyond the individual sphere and constitute a public health issue: WFC is associated with sleep problems, cardiometabolic risk, depression, and anxiety, and its prevalence calls for urgent political and organizational attention (Chandler, 2021). A mega–meta-analytic path analysis shows that WFC and FWC are key mechanisms through which personality traits

influence mental health and even risky behavior, confirming the central role of work–family conflicts in the etiology of broader psychosocial outcomes (Miller *et al.*, 2022). At the same time, WFC and its opposite pole—work–family facilitation—also translate into employees’ innovative behavior through emotions and the moderating role of flexibility; lack of resources in conflict situations weakens the willingness to invest in innovation, whereas facilitation and positive emotions enhance innovative behavior (Wang *et al.*, 2022). These findings complement the broader picture, showing that increasing job demands and technology-induced availability shape not only privacy but also performance, creativity, and the long-term sustainability of work functioning (Quan *et al.*, 2025; Wang *et al.*, 2022).

An important line of research also concerns professional and sectoral specificities. Among educators, it has been confirmed that telepressure increases job burnout, with rumination acting as a mediator and perceived organizational support mitigating the impact of rumination on burnout; these findings highlight the importance of a supportive culture and boundary management (Qin *et al.*, 2025). In healthcare, telepressure emerges as a significant correlate of burnout indicators across career stages, with measurement scales for the phenomenon demonstrating high internal consistency (Levy *et al.*, 2024). Across professions, it has been consistently shown that e-communication demands and habits predict the level of telepressure, although the scale items themselves remain measurement invariant—i.e., comparable—facilitating cross-sectoral research syntheses (Hu *et al.*, 2024).

From the perspective of organizational interventions, it appears that disconnection policies can only be effective if they are supported by a culture and norms that realistically set expectations regarding availability; otherwise, the risk of telepressure persists despite formal rules (Barber *et al.*, 2023). A scoping synthesis of the right to disconnect recommends focusing on governance and practical aspects of implementation, including clear communication of expectations and managerial support in setting team boundaries (Hopkins, 2024). European data further suggest that, when properly implemented, connection time is reduced, health and satisfaction with working conditions improve—although the effects are heterogeneous and depend on the professional and sectoral context (Eurofound, 2023).

Finally, in summary, it can be stated that telepressure and after-hours connectivity systematically disrupt psychological detachment, thereby increasing the risk of exhaustion, rumination, and work–family conflict; these processes are reinforced by work intensification and illegitimate tasks, which deplete resources and deepen the intrusion of work into private life (Santuzzi, Barber, 2018; Barber *et al.*, 2019; Andrade, Neves, 2024; Andrade, Neves, 2025). At the same time, there are moderating and buffering factors—resilience, family support, organizational support, and low job complexity—that can mitigate these negative consequences (Sadaf *et al.*, 2025; Yang *et al.*, 2022; Qin *et al.*, 2025; Jing Quan *et al.*, 2025). Given the public health relevance of WFC and its economic costs, it is crucial for organizations to actively manage after-hours availability, promote realistic disconnection norms, and reduce redundant or inappropriate tasks—measures that can improve work–life balance while maintaining performance and innovation (Chandler, 2021; Eurofound, 2023; Wang *et al.*, 2022).

## 2. Methodology

The main objective of the article is to examine the relationship between work demands and their impact on the personal and family life of Generation Z employees.

From this objective, two research questions were derived:

- **Research question 1:** How is the perception of the impact of work on personal and family commitments and the expectation to perform work duties outside of working hours related to the

perception of increasing work demands on the personal and family life of Generation Z employees?

- **Research question 2:** Is there a relationship between the perception of the impact of work on personal and family commitments and the expectation to perform work duties outside of working hours among Generation Z employees?

To address these questions, a model was formulated consisting of the following variables:

- **Dependent variable (Y):** The impact of increasing work demands on personal or family activities
- **Independent variables:**
  - **X1:** The impact of work on personal and family commitments
  - **X2:** The expectation to perform work duties outside of working hours

Based on the defined objective, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- **H1:** There is a relationship between the perception of the impact of work on personal and family commitments and the perception of the impact of increasing work demands on personal and family life.
- **H2:** There is a relationship between the expectation to perform work duties outside of working hours and the perception of the impact of increasing work demands on personal and family life.
- **H3:** There is a relationship between the perception of the impact of work on personal and family commitments and the expectation to perform work duties outside of working hours.

The empirical part of the research focused on identifying the attitudes of Generation Z employees toward selected aspects of work demands—specifically, the perception of the impact of work on personal commitments, expected work availability, and increasing work demands on personal and family life. Data collection was conducted in 2025 in the Slovak Republic through an online questionnaire created using Microsoft Forms.

The target group consisted of respondents belonging to Generation Z. A total of 67 respondents participated in the survey, with all responses collected voluntarily and anonymously, which increases the credibility of the findings.

The questionnaire was designed in the form of statements that respondents evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale. This format made it possible to quantify the degree of agreement or disagreement with individual statements and provided a suitable basis for subsequent statistical analysis.

Two analytical methods were used to test the hypotheses:

- Correlation analysis, which enabled the identification of the direction and strength of relationships between individual variables.
- Multiple linear regression analysis, which was applied to test the predictors of the dependent variable. Statistical testing was conducted at a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

Linear regression modeling (LRM) was chosen as an appropriate tool for analyzing data obtained through the Likert scale. The assumptions for using linear regression were met—the assumption of normality was verified, linearity was ensured through the direction of statements, autocorrelation was excluded due to the one-time data collection, and multicollinearity was not identified.

Since the data used in this research are cross-sectional and were collected through a one-time questionnaire survey, stationarity tests were not required. Stationarity testing is typically applied in time-series analysis, where observations are recorded across time and the statistical properties of variables (such as mean and variance) may change over time. In contrast, the present study analyzes cross-sectional data obtained from different respondents at a single point in time using Likert-scale measurements. Therefore, the assumption of stationarity is not relevant for this type of dataset, and correlation and regression analyses can be applied without performing stationarity tests.

### 3. Research Results

This section presents the results of the empirical analysis, which focused on examining the relationships between work demands and the personal life of respondents from Generation Z. The findings are based on descriptive statistics, correlation and multiple regression analysis, as well as on the testing of the established hypotheses.

**Table 1. Descriptive statistics**

| <i>Descriptive statistics</i> | <i>X1</i>  | <i>X2</i>    | <i>Y</i>   |
|-------------------------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| Mean                          | 2,76119403 | 2,850746269  | 3,50746269 |
| Standard Error                | 0,21488014 | 0,226324666  | 0,20105234 |
| Median                        | 3          | 3            | 3          |
| Mode                          | 1          | 1            | 5          |
| Standard Deviation            | 1,75886975 | 1,852547234  | 1,64568429 |
| Kurtosis                      | -1,6825131 | -1,847312162 | -1,3372273 |
| Skewness                      | 0,23877437 | 0,151426047  | -0,5076645 |

Source: own elaboration

In the sample of 67 respondents belonging to Generation Z, the highest mean value was recorded for the dependent variable Y, with an average of 3.51. This result indicates that young employees perceive increasing work demands as a factor that relatively strongly affects their personal and family life.

The second highest mean was observed for variable X2, with an average of 2.85, suggesting that respondents have mixed experiences regarding the burden associated with expected work availability after working hours. The lowest mean value was found for variable X1, with an average of 2.76. The results show that while Generation Z employees acknowledge that their work affects their personal and family commitments, this impact is rated as weaker compared to the growing work demands, which interfere with their lives more intensively.

The greatest variability in responses was found for variable X2 (SD = 1.85), indicating diverse perceptions of expected work availability outside regular working hours. This was followed by variable X1 (SD = 1.76), which also exhibited relatively high variability in responses. The most consistent responses were recorded for variable Y (SD = 1.65), reflecting a relatively higher agreement among respondents that work demands intrude upon their personal or family life (see *Table 1*).

As for skewness, all variables fall within the acceptable range for approximate normal distribution ( $\pm 2$ ).

**Table 2. Correlation analysis**

| <b>Correlation analysis</b> |            |             |   |
|-----------------------------|------------|-------------|---|
|                             | X1         | X2          | Y |
| X1                          | 1          |             |   |
| X2                          | -0,1971045 | 1           |   |
| Y                           | -0,4809497 | 0,303529616 | 1 |

Source: own elaboration

Based on the correlation analysis among the observed variables, it can be stated that the relationships between them differ in both direction and intensity in *Table 2*. The strongest relationship was found between X1 and the dependent variable Y, where the Pearson correlation coefficient reached  $r = -0.481$ . This represents a moderately strong negative correlation, indicating that the more respondents feel that their work interferes with their personal and family commitments, the less they attribute additional impact of increasing work demands on their private life.

The second strongest relationship was identified between variable X2 and the dependent variable Y, with a correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.304$ . This result shows that respondents who more frequently experience the expectation to be available outside working hours also perceive to a greater extent that increasing work demands intrude upon their personal and family life.

The weakest relationship was observed between the independent variables X1 and X2, where the coefficient value was  $r = -0.197$ . This represents a very weak negative correlation, meaning that there is no substantial interrelation between the influence of work on personal commitments and the expectation of work availability beyond regular working hours.

Overall, it can be concluded that the relationships between the variables are methodologically consistent and support further testing of causal relationships through the regression model.

**Table 3. Regression analysis**

| <b>Regression Statistics</b> |                     |                       |               |                |                       |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Multiple R                   | 0,5259685           |                       |               |                |                       |
| R Square                     | 0,27664286          |                       |               |                |                       |
| Adjusted R Square            | 0,25403795          |                       |               |                |                       |
| Standard Error               | 1,42136262          |                       |               |                |                       |
| Observations                 | 67                  |                       |               |                |                       |
|                              | <i>df</i>           | <i>SS</i>             | <i>MS</i>     | <i>F</i>       | <i>Significance F</i> |
| Regression                   | 2                   | 49,44887959           | 24,7244398    | 12,2381756     | 3,1571E-05            |
| Residual                     | 64                  | 129,2973891           | 2,0202717     |                |                       |
| Total                        | 66                  | 178,7462687           |               |                |                       |
|                              | <i>Coefficients</i> | <i>Standard Error</i> | <i>t Stat</i> | <i>P-value</i> |                       |
| Intercept                    | 4,0894488           | 0,463016077           | 8,83219613    | 1,1112E-12     |                       |
| X1                           | -0,4099495          | 0,101462066           | -4,0404214    | 0,00014549     |                       |
| X2                           | 0,19291931          | 0,096331449           | 2,00266175    | 0,04945371     |                       |

Source: own elaboration

Based on the results (*Table 3*) of the multiple linear regression, it can be concluded that both independent variables – X1 and X2 – have a statistically significant effect on the dependent variable Y. The coefficient of

determination  $R^2 = 0.277$  indicates that the model explains approximately 27.7% of the variability in the dependent variable. In the context of social sciences, this represents an acceptable explanatory power, highlighting the relevance of the examined factors for the work and personal life of young employees from Generation Z.

The ANOVA test confirmed that the model as a whole is statistically significant ( $F = 12.24$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), which means that variables X1 and X2 jointly make a significant contribution to explaining variations in the dependent variable.

From the perspective of individual effects, variable X1 had the strongest influence ( $B = -0.410$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), with the negative direction of the coefficient indicating that the more respondents feel that their work interferes with their personal commitments, the less they attribute additional impact of increasing work demands on their personal and family life. Variable X2 ( $B = 0.193$ ;  $p \approx 0.049$ ) also showed a statistically significant, though weaker, positive effect. This result suggests that employees who more frequently feel pressure to remain available beyond official working hours are also more likely to perceive the growing work demands as negatively affecting their private life.

The resulting regression equation is as follows:

$$Y = 4,0894 - 0,4050 X1 + 0,1929 X2$$

Overall, it can be concluded that the regression model reveals important relationships between work demands and the personal life of Generation Z. The key determinant is the perceived direct interference of work with personal commitments, while a secondary yet still significant factor is the pressure to be available outside working hours. These findings emphasize the need to consider work demands and availability expectations in human resource management within the younger workforce.

**Table 4. Evaluation of the hypothesis**

| <b>Hypothesis</b> | <b>Hypothesis formulation</b>  | <b>Result</b>    |
|-------------------|--|------------------|
| <b>H1</b>         | There is a relationship between the perception of the impact of work on personal and family commitments and the perception of the impact of increasing work demands on personal and family life. | <b>Confirmed</b> |
| <b>H2</b>         | There is a relationship between the expectation to perform work duties outside of working hours and the perception of the impact of increasing work demands on personal and family life.         | <b>Confirmed</b> |
| <b>H3</b>         | There is a relationship between the perception of the impact of work on personal and family commitments and the expectation to perform work duties outside of working hours.                     | <b>Rejected</b>  |

Source: own elaboration

Within the hypothesis testing, it was found that two of the examined hypotheses (H1 and H2) were statistically supported, while hypothesis H3 was rejected.

The findings related to H1 revealed a moderately strong negative relationship between the perceived impact of work on personal and family commitments and the perceived impact of increasing work demands. This means that respondents who more strongly experience the intrusion of work into their personal and family life no longer perceive further increases in work demands as having such a pronounced effect on their private life.

Hypothesis H2 was also confirmed – the results indicated a weak but statistically significant positive relationship between the expectation of availability outside working hours and the perceived impact of increasing work demands. In other words, employees who more frequently feel pressure to remain available beyond official working hours also more often report that growing work demands negatively affect their personal and family life.

Overall, the results suggest that for Generation Z, two aspects are particularly important – the direct interference of work with personal life and the pressure to be available outside working hours. Both of these dimensions independently shape the perception that increasing work demands intrude upon their personal and family activities. Conversely, these two factors are not directly related, which indicates that employees perceive them as distinct dimensions of work strain.

#### 4. Discussion

The findings of this research provide important insights into how young employees from Generation Z perceive the relationship between work demands and their personal and family life. The results confirm that the examined variables are interrelated, though their relationships differ in direction and intensity.

The answer to RQ1 showed that there is a significant negative relationship between the perception of work interference in personal and family life and the perception of growing work demands. This result indicates that the more young employees feel that their work already substantially interferes with their personal commitments, the less they perceive additional increases in work demands as further affecting their private lives. This can be interpreted as a manifestation of adaptation or reduced sensitivity – when the balance between work and personal life is already disrupted, additional increases in work demands are perceived as less dramatic. This conclusion aligns with existing literature suggesting that prolonged work pressure on private life leads to weakened psychological detachment and fatigue, resulting in a reduced ability to perceive new demands as additional strain (Santuzzi, Barber, 2018; Barber *et al.*, 2019).

The second hypothesis was also confirmed, indicating that the expectation of work availability outside working hours is associated with the perception of growing work demands. The weak but statistically significant positive relationship shows that young employees who more frequently experience pressure to be available after working hours also perceive that increasing work demands intrude more deeply into their personal lives. This conclusion aligns with international research trends showing that “work connectivity behavior after hours” contributes to the deepening of work-related stress and disruption of recovery processes (Quan *et al.*, 2025), with the link to work–family conflict arising through mechanisms described elsewhere (Yang *et al.*, 2022). For Generation Z, which has grown up in an environment of constant digital connectivity, maintaining a clear boundary between work and private life may be particularly challenging.

The answer to RQ2 revealed that no statistically significant relationship exists between these two variables. This means that the perception of work interfering with personal commitments is not automatically associated with the feeling of pressure to be available after hours. These two dimensions represent distinct aspects of work experience – the former relates to direct work intrusion into private life, while the latter reflects norms of availability and technology-mediated communication. Generation Z thus perceives them as separate phenomena, suggesting that personal life interference and digital expectations have different psychological meanings in their experience.

The regression analysis confirmed that both independent variables have a statistically significant effect on the perception of increasing work demands, although their effects operate in opposite directions. Variable X1 has a negative effect, while X2 has a positive effect. This result reveals an interesting paradox: while

direct interference of work with personal obligations may lead to a form of desensitization to further strain, the pressure for constant availability amplifies this feeling. The model therefore demonstrates that work–life balance is shaped not by a single factor but by a combination of psychological, behavioral, and organizational influences.

These findings are consistent with previous research showing that telepressure and expectations of availability reduce the ability for psychological detachment and promote feelings of exhaustion and tension between work and personal life (Santuzzi, Barber, 2018; Barber *et al.*, 2019; Yang *et al.*, 2022). They also align with findings that increasing work demands and work intensification deepen work–family conflict and negatively affect mental well-being (Andrade, Neves, 2025; Chandler, 2021).

In the context of Generation Z, these results can be interpreted as evidence of generational specificity: young employees accustomed to flexible, technologically interconnected work environments may perceive pressure for availability but attempt to adapt through individual coping strategies. Their attitudes reflect a broader shift toward a “permanently connected” work mode, in which the boundaries between work and private time are increasingly blurred.

From a practical perspective, these findings have several implications. Organizations should actively promote a culture of genuine disconnection from work and clearly communicate expectations regarding availability outside working hours. Managers should consider individual differences in preferences between work and private life, provide flexibility, and support balance through measures such as scheduling work tasks in ways that do not interfere with personal time. Equally important is raising awareness of the importance of psychological detachment, which is essential for restoring mental resources and preventing burnout.

At the policy level, initiatives similar to the “right to disconnect” should be developed, with an emphasis not only on formal regulations but also on changing organizational norms that implicitly reinforce constant availability. For HR practice, this means promoting managerial training in well-being, mental health, and the management of digital boundaries.

In conclusion, the research findings confirm that generational experiences with increasing work demands and expectations of constant availability are shaping new patterns of how work and personal life are experienced. Generation Z perceives these aspects as significant but distinct dimensions of work strain. Effective management of the boundaries between work and private life thus represents one of the key prerequisites for sustaining long-term work performance and overall satisfaction among young employees.

## Conclusions

The research examined how Generation Z employees in Slovakia perceive the relationship between work demands and their personal and family life. The results confirmed that increasing work demands and expectations of availability outside working hours significantly influence the perception of work–life balance. At the same time, these factors represent distinct dimensions of work strain for young employees.

The findings confirmed a moderately strong negative relationship between the perceived impact of work on personal and family commitments and the perception of increasing work demands, suggesting that individuals who already experience strong work interference may become less sensitive to additional demands. A weak but statistically significant positive relationship was also identified between the expectation of work availability outside working hours and the perception of increasing work demands.

Conversely, no significant relationship was found between the perceived impact of work on personal commitments and the expectation of after-hours availability.

These results highlight the importance of managing boundaries between work and private life in organizations, particularly in digitally connected work environments. Promoting clear availability norms and supporting psychological detachment from work may help reduce work-related strain among Generation Z employees. Future research could extend the sample and explore additional mediating factors such as psychological detachment, resilience, or organizational support.

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## TARP DARBO IR GYVENIMO: KAIP Z KARTA SUVOKIA DIDĖJANČIUS DARBO REIKALAVIMUS IR NUOLATINIO PASIEKIAMUMO LŪKESTĮ

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**Santrauka.** Straipsnio tikslas – išnagrinėti ryšį tarp darbo reikalavimų ir jų poveikio Z kartos darbuotojų asmeniniam ir šeimos gyvenimui. Tyrimas grindžiamas teoriniais Work Connectivity Behavior After-hours (WCBA) ir Darbo reikalavimų–išteklių (JD-R) modelio pagrindais, kurie paaiškina „dvipusį“ technologinio pasiekiamumo pobūdį – tiek kaip lankstumo šaltinį, tiek kaip psichologinės įtampos veiksnį. Empirinė tyrimo dalis atlikta 2025 m. – internetu apklausti 67 Z kartos respondentai, pasitelktas 5 balų Likerto skalės klausimynas. Duomenų analizei taikyta koreliacinė analizė ir daugialypė tiesinė regresija. Rezultatai patvirtino dvi hipotezes iš trijų iškeltų. Nustatytas vidutinio stiprumo neigiamas ryšys tarp suvokiamo darbo poveikio asmeniniams ir šeimos įsipareigojimams bei didėjančių darbo reikalavimų suvokimo. Tai reiškia, kad darbuotojai, kurie jaučia didesnę darbo poveikį jų privačiam gyvenimui, yra mažiau jautrūs tolesniam darbo reikalavimų augimui. Taip pat nustatytas silpnas, tačiau statistiškai reikšmingas teigiamas ryšys tarp lūkesčio būti pasiekiamam po darbo valandų ir didėjančių darbo reikalavimų suvokimo. O ryšys tarp suvokiamo darbo poveikio asmeniniams įsipareigojimams ir pasiekiamumo lūkesčio nebuvo statistiškai patvirtintas. Tyrimo rezultatai pabrėžia tikslingos organizacinės politikos poreikį, orientuotą į ribų tarp darbo ir asmeninio gyvenimo stiprinimą. Rekomenduojama stiprinti „teisės atsijungti“ kultūrą, skatinti psichologinį atsiribojimą, plėtoti skaitmeninę lyderystę ir diegti perdegimo prevencijos priemones. Efektyvus skaitmeninio pasiekiamumo valdymas yra svarbi tvaraus darbo našumo, psichologinės gerovės ir ilgalaikio Z kartos darbuotojų pasitenkinimo darbu prielaida.

*Reikšminiai žodžiai:* Z karta; darbo reikalavimai; pasiekiamumas; darbo ir gyvenimo balansas; skaitmeninis ryšys.