Grit, Work-Life Balance, and Fulfilment of Workplace Needs as Key Aspects of Employee Well-Being: A Study of Employees in Warsaw-Based Corporations

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Abstract

Objective: This study examines the relationships between work-life balance (WLB), grit, and the fulfilment of autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs at work. It also explores selected aspects of employee well-being in Polish corporations in the post-COVID-19 period. The research aims to identify factors associated with employees' mental well-being in the evolving professional environment.

Method: The study involved 77 women and 44 men aged 19–68 who were employed in Warsaw-based branches of corporate firms. The data collection utilized the Work-Life Balance Questionnaire (assessing the balance between professional and private life), the Short Grit Scale (measuring grit), the 'When I Am at Work' Questionnaire (evaluating the fulfilment of autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs), and the Psychological Well-Being Scales (measuring psychological well-being). The data analysis included multivariate regression and Spearman's rho correlation analysis.

Results: The multivariate regression analysis revealed that significant predictors of employee well-being include grit ($\beta = .41$, $p < .001$), the fulfilment of relatedness needs ($\beta = .25$, $p < .001$), work-life balance ($\beta = .21$, $p < .001$), and the fulfilment of autonomy needs ($\beta = .16$,

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$p < .05$). We also identified relationships between the analysed variables and six dimensions of well-being measured using Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scales.

Conclusion: The study results confirm that work-life balance, grit, and the fulfilment of autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs are significant predictors of the psychological well-being of employees in Polish corporations. In particular, grit and work-life balance may have a substantial impact on employees' sense of fulfilment and job satisfaction. These findings emphasize the importance of creating a work environment that fosters a balance between professional and personal life while supporting employees' individual needs.

Keywords: well-being, grit, work-life balance, fulfilment of workplace needs, employees

Given the challenges of the global labour market, it has become increasingly important to understand the factors that determine employees' psychological well-being. Numerous studies provide evidence of the benefits of fostering psychological well-being in the workplace for employees and employers alike. This study examines the relationships between work-life balance (WLB), grit (understood as perseverance and commitment to goals despite obstacles and difficulties), and the fulfilment of autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs at work in relation to the well-being of employees in Polish corporations.

WLB has gained particular importance for well-being during the lockdowns triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. On the one hand, remote work, performed from home, has reduced commute times and increased flexibility for many employees. On the other hand, it has blurred the boundaries between personal and professional life. Previous studies highlight significant associations between WLB and life satisfaction, quality of life, and job satisfaction (Askari et al., 2021; Greenhaus et al., 2003; Haar et al., 2014; Skrok et al., 2023), as well as psychological well-being (Gröpel & Kuhl, 2009; Hoffmann-Burdzińska & Rutkowska, 2015; Yang & Jo, 2022). There is also empirical evidence demonstrating that grit and the fulfilment of workplace needs are important predictors of well-being and are factors that mitigate the risk of burnout (Arya & Lal, 2018; Jin & Kim, 2017; Kolemba & Bajkowski, 2022; Salles et al., 2014). Therefore, we seek to determine the extent to which these factors act as predictors of well-being among employees of Polish corporations who have experienced changes in the professional landscape initiated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Role of Work-Life Balance in Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Model

Work-life balance (WLB) – the equilibrium between professional and personal life – has gained increasing importance in the context of current labour market challenges. Contemporary research on WLB has led to the formulation of a comprehensive, integrated theory encompassing the following key assumptions (Allen et al., 2020; Haar et al., 2014; Kalliath & Brough, 2008):
– WLB is a multidimensional construct, encompassing the balance between professional, familial, and other life roles (Greenhaus et al., 2003).

- WLB is a dynamic process that evolves over time and is influenced by contextual factors, with individuals continuously adapting strategies to manage conflicts and synergies between various roles (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Rantanen et al., 2011).
- WLB is shaped by individual, family, and organizational factors; it requires an understanding of the complex interactions between these levels to achieve balance (Casper et al., 2018; Rofcanin et al., 2017).

According to Rofcanin et al. (2017), WLB is a dynamic, multidimensional process wherein individuals achieve a satisfactory level of engagement by integrating and compromising between professional and personal/family roles. This balance supports well-being and enables the pursuit of key life goals across these domains. Recent research also underscores that a high level of WLB is associated with greater life satisfaction, job satisfaction, and family life satisfaction (Allen et al., 2020).

WLB aligns closely with the six dimensions identified by Ryff (2014, 2017) as being central to psychological well-being:

1. *Self-acceptance* – this dimension refers to a positive attitude toward oneself and the acceptance of one's strengths and weaknesses. In the context of WLB, self-acceptance helps employees maintain self-esteem and a positive self-concept despite challenges in balancing professional and personal demands.
2. *Positive relations with others* – this dimension concerns the ability to build and maintain deep, satisfying relationships. WLB fosters harmonious relationships both at home and at work, contributing to a sense of belonging and social support.
3. *Autonomy* – this dimension involves the capacity to remain independent and regulate one's behaviour according to personal convictions, even under pressure. Regarding WLB, autonomy reflects the ability to manage time and tasks independently, which is vital for maintaining balance.
4. *Environmental mastery* – this dimension refers to competence in managing complex environments. Effective WLB requires the ability to handle both professional and personal responsibilities, contributing to a sense of control over one's life.
5. *Purpose in life* – this dimension relates to having life goals and direction. Well-managed WLB enables individuals to align their professional and personal aspirations, facilitating the achievement of long-term goals.
6. *Personal growth* – this dimension concerns continuous development and the realization of one's potential. A balanced approach to work and life should support opportunities for learning, skill development, and self-fulfilment across all life domains.

Research indicates that WLB significantly influences employee psychological well-being and organizational efficiency. For instance, studies of IT professionals show that workplace flexibility, career development, and family/social support are integral to improving psychological well-being and job satisfaction. Workplace flexibility may enhance WLB, leading to increased performance within flexible work patterns (Panda & Sahoo, 2021). Research conducted among

Warsaw professionals, managers, and entrepreneurs indicates that low WLB adversely affects both mental and physical health (Żemigała, 2022). Poland, one of the European countries with the lowest WLB indices, shows a strong association between poor WLB and deteriorating health (Borowiec & Drygas, 2022). Notably, the relationship between WLB and health was stronger in 2013 than in 2003, reflecting changes in lifestyle and mindset. Meanwhile, in South Korea, studies have demonstrated that good WLB correlates with higher psychosocial well-being. Factors such as reduced working hours, high autonomy, job security, and workplace support are associated with improved well-being. Conversely, poor WLB – characterized by longer working hours, lower autonomy, and reduced workplace support – negatively affects psychosocial well-being (Yang et al., 2018).

Numerous studies also highlight that employees experiencing better WLB are less prone to burnout, report higher job satisfaction, and exhibit greater engagement (Bodnar, 2022). Moreover, research on the relationship between autonomy and psychological well-being among young employees reveals that autonomy correlates with various dimensions of psychological well-being, suggesting that fostering autonomy among younger workers may enhance their psychological health (De-Juanas et al., 2020). Global studies further emphasize the significance of organizational support, individual coping strategies, and social structures in shaping WLB. These findings suggest that the determinants of WLB and its impact on individual well-being transcend cultural and geographical boundaries, underscoring its universal relevance in contemporary workplaces.

Satisfaction of Needs at Work and Selected Aspects of Well-Being

Work is a significant determinant of the meaning and quality of life. It is deeply ingrained in human nature, serving as both a fundamental need and a means of shaping personal identity. Work fulfils not only a societal and individual necessity but also enables self-expression and the development of personal attributes (Wysocka, 2011). Therefore, it is unsurprising that links between the satisfaction of work-related needs and selected aspects of well-being are increasingly recognized. This discussion focuses on three essential psychological needs – autonomy, competence, and relationships with others – and their connections to the dimensions of psychological well-being outlined in Ryff's model.

Autonomy reflects independence, self-regulation, and the ability to resist external pressures. In the workplace, satisfying the need for autonomy entails granting employees more freedom in decision making, flexibility in work methods, and opportunities to complete tasks in alignment with their values and beliefs. Autonomy directly supports psychological well-being by fostering a sense of control and self-determination.

The need for *competence* aligns with the dimension of personal growth in Ryff's model, which involves continuous development and the realization of potential. In the workplace, this need is fulfilled through opportunities for learning, skill development, and career advancement, as well as by taking on challenges

that enhance competencies. Meeting this need contributes to employee motivation, satisfaction, and a sense of accomplishment.

Relationships with others at work emphasize respect, collaboration, communication, and social support within teams. Satisfying this need directly correlates with the well-being dimension concerning positive relations with others, as outlined in Ryff's model. Strong interpersonal relationships at work enhance employees' sense of belonging, satisfaction, and emotional resilience.

The level of satisfaction for employees' psychological needs significantly impacts their overall well-being. Organizations that prioritize meeting these needs are likely to experience enhanced employee engagement, loyalty, performance, and satisfaction. Evidence from various studies supports these assertions, showing that organizations investing in meeting diverse employee needs see improvements in well-being, job satisfaction, engagement, and overall performance. Employees who feel that their needs are met often experience fulfilment, motivation, and increased commitment to their work and organization (Bella, 2023; Stankevičienė et al., 2021; Supardi et al., 2023). For example, Gil-Flórez et al. (2022) found that the satisfaction of basic psychological needs at work – particularly autonomy and competence – was positively associated with psychological well-being, including happiness and work engagement. These needs were linked to greater motivation, better mental health, and enhanced overall well-being. Thus, the satisfaction of work-related needs – spanning aspects such as work-life balance, development opportunities, supportive management, and well-being initiatives – has a direct and positive effect on workplace well-being. Organizations that effectively address these needs can cultivate a workforce that is more satisfied, engaged, and productive.

Grit and Psychological Well-Being

Grit is defined as the ability to pursue long-term goals despite obstacles and difficulties. Popularized by Angela Duckworth, the concept emphasizes two key components: *perseverance of effort* (PE) and *consistency of interest* (CI). Duckworth (2007, 2016) argued that grit is more critical for achieving long-term success than innate intellectual abilities.

Recent studies highlight grit as a robust predictor of success in both educational and professional domains. Its significance extends beyond performance, impacting personal and professional satisfaction. Individuals with high levels of grit are more likely to embrace challenges, engage in continuous learning, and invest in self-improvement. This contributes to an increased sense of self-worth and overall life satisfaction (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009; Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2014). Research demonstrates that grit predicts not only academic success in youth but also job satisfaction and a generalized sense of self-efficacy in adults. Employees with high levels of grit are more inclined to tackle demanding tasks and are less deterred by setbacks (Credé et al., 2017). For example, Dugan et al. (2019) revealed that sales professionals with higher levels of grit outperformed their peers in sales results and reported greater job satisfaction. These individuals

also exhibited greater independence in their work, which positively influenced their performance evaluations and career advancement opportunities.

Furthermore, grit is closely associated with psychological well-being, including life satisfaction and positive emotions. Empirical evidence underscores its protective role, particularly for young individuals, by serving as a buffer against depressive symptoms (Weisskirch, 2019). Additionally, research highlights the relationship between grit and psychological well-being in broader terms, encompassing life satisfaction, a sense of harmony, and emotional stability. These associations have been confirmed across genders, emphasizing the universal importance of grit in fostering well-being (Disabato et al., 2019; Vainio & Daukantaitė, 2016).

Methodology

Research Aim and Hypotheses

The study aims to examine the relationships between work-life balance, grit, and the fulfilment of three key workplace needs – autonomy, competence, and relatedness – as well as selected aspects of employee well-being in Polish corporations during the post-COVID-19 period. The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated significant changes in how work was structured, with many companies adopting remote work models and flexible hours. This study evaluates how these changes affected the importance of the identified factors as predictors of employee well-being and its specific aspects (self-acceptance, positive relationships, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth). We thus propose the following research hypotheses:

H1: Employee well-being will be positively associated with grit.
H2: Employee well-being will be positively associated with the perception of work-life balance.
H3a: Employee well-being will be positively associated with workplace need fulfilment of the need for autonomy.
H3b: Employee well-being will be positively associated with workplace need fulfilment of the need for competence.
H3c: Employee well-being will be positively associated with workplace need fulfilment of the need for relatedness.

Procedure and Participants

The study involved 121 participants (77 women and 44 men) aged 19 to 68 years (mean age $M = 38.65$, $SD = 11.78$). The participants were employees of Warsaw-based corporations operating in the financial, medical, and pharmaceutical

sectors. They held positions such as assistant, specialist, coordinator, manager, and director. The research was conducted between 2023 and 2024 using a survey method, with participants recruited through internal corporate communication channels. Interested individuals could collect paper questionnaires from their company's secretariat. After completing the surveys, participants returned them in sealed envelopes to designated collection points. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, with no financial incentives provided. This ensured that the respondents could freely express their opinions without any concern about confidentiality or external pressures.

Data Analysis Method

The statistical data analysis was conducted using JASP 0.18.3.0. We employed multivariable regression analysis using the stepwise regression method to examine the relationships between the predictor variables and well-being outcomes. We used Spearman's rho correlation analysis to explore the associations between continuous variables.

Measurement Tools

Work-Life Balance Questionnaire

To measure work-life balance, we used the Work-Life Balance Questionnaire (Hill et al., 2001), adapted into Polish by Skrok et al. (2023). The tool consists of five items rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating a greater balance between personal and professional life. The internal consistency, assessed using Cronbach's alpha, was .82.

Short Grit Scale (SGS)

To measure grit, we used the Short Grit Scale (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009), adapted into Polish by Wyszyńska et al. (2017). This tool includes eight items divided into two subscales: Perseverance of Effort and Consistency of Interest. The responses are rated on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = *does not describe me at all* and 5 = *describes me very well*. The internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) for this scale was .72.

'When I'm at Work' Questionnaire

We assessed the level of need fulfilment (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) in the workplace using the Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction Scale – Work Domain (Deci et al., 2001; Ilardi et al., 1993; Kasser et al., 1992), adapted into Polish by Skrok et al. (2023). The questionnaire consists of 21 items rated on a 7-point Likert scale and includes three subscales: *Autonomy* (α = .66),

Competence (α = .77), and *Relatedness* (α = .67). Higher scores indicate a greater level of fulfilment of the corresponding need.

Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWBS)

We measured well-being using the Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWBS) (Ryff, 1989), adapted into Polish by Karaś and Cieciuch (2017). We used the 18-item short version, measuring overall well-being and six eudaimonic dimensions: *Self-Acceptance*, *Positive Relations with Others*, *Autonomy*, *Environmental Mastery*, *Purpose in Life*, and *Personal Growth*. The responses are rated on a 6-point Likert scale. The reliability of the overall well-being scale, assessed using Cronbach's alpha, was .80.

Results

To determine the influence of specific variables on the general psychological well-being of employees, we conducted a multivariable regression analysis with work-life balance, grit, and the fulfilment of the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness as the predictors. The analysis was performed using the stepwise regression method. The regression coefficients indicate that the following variables were significant predictors of well-being in the studied group: fulfilment of the need for autonomy (ß = .16, $p < .05$), work-life balance (ß = .21, $p < .01$), fulfilment of the need for relatedness (ß = .25, $p < .01$), and grit (ß = .41, $p < .001$). Thus, H1, H2, H3a, and H3c were confirmed. H3b, which assumed a relationship between psychological well-being and the fulfilment of the need for competence at work, was rejected. The regression model demonstrated a good fit to the data, with the following statistics: $F (4,116) = 20.64$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .40$. This indicates that the model explained 40% of the variance in the dependent variable of psychological well-being.

Table 1

Beta Coefficients for Work-Life Balance, Grit, and the Fulfilment of Work Needs as Predictors of Psychological Well-Being

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	**Standard Error**	**Beta**	*t*	*p*
WLB	0.491	0.170	.212	2.891	.005
Grit	0.954	0.168	.409	5.665	< .001
Autonomy Need	0.446	0.204	.162	2.191	.030
Relatedness Need	0.357	0.107	.251	3.338	.001

Dependent variable: Psychological well-being

To examine the relationships between the dimensions of psychological well-being (self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, control over the environment, life purpose, and personal growth), grit, work-life balance, and the fulfilment of work-related needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness), we conducted Spearman's rho correlation analysis (see Table 2). We chose this method due to the non-parametric distribution of the variables. As the table below shows, we found a positive correlation between autonomy and work-life balance (WLB). The results also indicate positive relationships between the following: control over the environment and grit, WLB, autonomy, and relatedness; personal growth and grit, WLB, autonomy, and relatedness; positive relationships with others and grit, WLB, and relatedness; life purpose and grit, competence, and relatedness; and self-acceptance and grit, WLB, autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Table 2

Correlation of Various Aspects of Well-Being With Grit, Work-Life Balance, and the Fulfilment of Work-Related Needs (n = 121)

	Grit	Work-Life Balance	Autonomy Need	Competence Need	Relatedness Need
Autonomy	.13	.24*	.17	−.03	.12
Environmental Mastery	.41***	.26**	.24**	.09	.23*
Personal Growth	.33***	.19*	.24**	.15	.35***
Positive Relationships with Others	.29**	.33***	.18	.06	.39***
Life Purpose	.31***	.02	.01	.31***	.24**
Self-Acceptance	.35***	.27**	.39***	.27**	.42***

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

To verify which of the analysed variables (work-life balance, grit, and the fulfilment of autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs at work) are the most significant predictors of specific aspects of employees' psychological well-being, we conducted a stepwise multiple regression analysis for each of the six dimensions. The results for autonomy confirmed the importance of work-life balance as the only significant predictor of this aspect (beta = .24, $p < 0.01$). The model was well-fitted to the data, $F (1,119) = 7.01$, $p < .01$, and explained 5% of the variance in the dependent variable ($R^2 = .05$). For control over the environment, the significant predictors were grit (beta = .42, $p < .001$), the relatedness need (beta = .19, $p < .05$), and work-life balance (beta = .18, $p < .05$). The model was well-fitted to the data, $F (3,117) = 16.7$, $p < .001$, and explained 28% of the variance in the dependent variable ($R^2 = .28$). After conducting the regression analysis, the significant predictors of personal growth were grit (beta = .33, $p < .001$) and the relatedness need (beta = .27, $p < .01$). The model was well-fitted to the data, $F (2,118) = 15.33$, $p < .001$, and explained 19% of the variance in the

dependent variable (R^2 = .19). Regarding positive relationships with others, significant factors were the fulfilment of the relatedness need at work (beta = .28, p < .01), work-life balance (beta = .23, p < .01), and grit (beta = .19, p < .05). The model was well-fitted to the data, F (3,117) = 10.75, p < .001. After accounting for these variables, the model explained 20% of the variance in the dependent variable (R^2 = .20). For life purpose, the significant predictors were the fulfilment of the competence need at work (beta = .25, p < .01) and grit (beta = .23, p < .05). The model was well-fitted to the data, F (2,118) = 9.01, p < .001, and explained 12% of the variance in the dependent variable (R^2 = .12). Finally, we analysed self-acceptance and confirmed the importance of predictors such as grit (beta = .35, p < .001), fulfilment of the autonomy need at work (beta = .27, p < .01), fulfilment of the relatedness need (beta = .25, p < .01), and work-life balance (beta = .18, p < .05). The model was well-fitted to the data, F (4,116) = 18.24, p < .001, and explained 37% of the variance in the dependent variable (R^2 = .37).

Discussion

The results of the study show that the key predictors of employee well-being include grit, work-life balance, and the fulfilment of autonomy and relatedness needs in the workplace. The finding that grit is a factor supporting well-being at work is consistent with the results of other studies (Credé et al., 2017; Datu et al., 2016; Datu et al., 2019), as well as the assumption that a higher level of grit leads to greater success in professional achievements and, consequently, should be linked to a higher sense of fulfilment and self-realization at work. Individuals with higher levels of grit pursue professional goals despite facing difficulties and failures, exerting effort to overcome barriers. Overcoming adversity and dealing with challenges, even during moments of doubt, will positively affect self-satisfaction and self-confidence, and thus impact overall well-being.

WLB is another factor whose impact on well-being has received empirical support. Previous studies conducted among specialists and managers have shown that low levels of WLB and an imbalance favouring the private sphere are detrimental to both physical and psychological health (Żemigała, 2022). In the post-COVID-19 world, where remote work has become significantly more prominent, maintaining harmony between one's private life and effective task completion at work is of particular importance.

The finding that the fulfilment of the relatedness need and the fulfilment of the autonomy need are significant factors influencing well-being is fully aligned with the importance of these aspects in contemporary well-being models, such as PERMA (Seligman, 2013). The PERMA model of well-being presents five key pillars of development and flourishing both at work and outside of it: positive emotions, engagement, relationships with others, meaning, and achievement. Valuable relationships with others increase positive emotions during work interactions and provide greater access to both material and non-material resources (e.g., time, experience, knowledge, tools), making it easier to cope with

daily challenges. Meanwhile, the fulfilment of autonomy needs is related to a sense of accomplishment and personal achievements.

Each of these factors is associated with the specific aspects of well-being defined in Ryff's model (self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, life purpose, and personal growth). It appears that the only factor influencing the autonomy aspect of well-being is WLB. Achieving balance between personal and professional life can play a particularly important role, as autonomy involves maintaining independence and regulating one's behaviour according to one's own beliefs, even in the presence of additional factors that exert pressure – as is often the case in professional situations. For the other aspects, multiple factors were significant, with the key predictors being grit for environmental mastery, personal growth, and self-acceptance; the relatedness need for positive relationships with others; and the competence need for life purpose.

These results suggest that, in the current corporate work environment, grit, WLB, and the fulfilment of autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs at work play important roles in achieving comprehensive psychological well-being across different dimensions. These findings highlight the value of self-determination in the corporate context and the role of control over one's life and work in fostering a positive work experience. In addition to promoting autonomy and control over the work environment, it is crucial that organizations also create conditions that facilitate the development of strong, positive interpersonal relationships at work, as these can significantly contribute to improving employee well-being and increasing engagement with and loyalty to the company. Our results demonstrate that employees who manage to align their professional goals with their personal aspirations experience greater satisfaction and a sense of fulfilment.

Summary and Limitations of the Study

Analysing employee well-being through the lens of Ryff's theory allows for a more nuanced approach to workplace well-being. Supporting individual aspects of employee well-being can emphasize certain factors, while also highlighting that work is not isolated from other areas of life; a harmonious balance between the two can bring benefits to employees and organizations alike. With the right balance, employees can experience higher levels of well-being, which may translate into greater productivity, lower absenteeism, and better work outcomes. Therefore, it is important for employers to be aware of the impact of the above factors on each dimension of psychological well-being and to strive to create corporate policies and work environments that support their employees' work-life balance. Our results ultimately suggest that the effective implementation of policies supporting work-life balance, the development of interpersonal skills, and the shaping of a work environment conducive to achieving life goals are crucial for improving employee well-being in Polish corporations. Implementing such changes may bring long-term benefits for both employees and the organization as a whole.

While these results can enrich the psychopedagogical approach within organizations by providing insights into how to influence employees' individual sense of fulfilment and well-being in the corporate environment, it is also important to note the limitations of our study. The research was limited to employees of corporations in Warsaw, and the sample contained nearly twice as many women as men. Future research should aim to include more male participants and explore potential gender differences in the well-being determinants in the work environment.

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