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Exploration Of Employee Experience in Maintaining Work-Life Balance In The Company

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Abstract

This study aims to explore employees' experiences in maintaining a balance between work and personal life (work-life balance) within corporate environments. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with ten employees from various industrial sectors in Bandung. The results show that flexible working hours, managerial support, and a supportive organizational culture are key factors in achieving work-life balance. However, challenges such as high workloads and a lack of management's understanding of employees' personal needs remain significant obstacles. These findings imply that companies should design policies that are more responsive to employees' needs for balancing work and personal life.



Keywords: Work-Life Balance, Employee Experience, Work-Life Equilibrium, Organizational Culture, Managerial Support

Introduction

The balance between work and personal life (work-life balance) has become a critical issue in the modern industrial world. Changes in work dynamics, such as increasing job demands and technological advancements, have affected how employees manage their time and energy between work and personal life. This phenomenon is reflected in the rising levels of stress and fatigue among workers, which impact their productivity and overall well-being. In this dynamic era, the world of work is increasingly facing complex and evolving demands, creating new challenges for employees in achieving a balance between their professional and personal lives. Effective management of Work-Life Balance (WLB) is essential in maintaining employee well-being and has a positive impact on organizational performance.

Previous studies have extensively discussed the factors influencing work-life balance; however, there remains a gap in understanding how employees directly experience and manage this balance within different organizational culture contexts. Therefore, this study aims to explore employees' subjective experiences in maintaining work-life balance, with a focus on the factors that support and hinder these efforts within the corporate environment.

Robbins (2015) emphasized that job satisfaction is a key factor in nurturing dedicated, disciplined, engaged, and highly productive individuals. According to Luthans

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(2011), job satisfaction is the result of employees' perceptions of how their work is considered meaningful. Job satisfaction refers to the subjective evaluation by employees regarding the positive or negative aspects of their jobs, as experienced by each individual. Sinambela (2016) defines job satisfaction as an individual's emotional response to their job, influenced by internal factors (such as personal effort) and external factors (such as work conditions, job outcomes, and the nature of the work itself).

Luthans (2011) outlines six dimensions that can be used to assess the level of employee job satisfaction. These dimensions include the nature of the work itself, referring to how much the job provides interesting tasks, learning opportunities, and chances to take on responsibility. The second dimension is compensation, referring to the amount received and the perceived fairness compared to other employees in the same company. The next dimension focuses on promotion opportunities within the organization. Another dimension relates to supervision, including the ability of supervisors to provide technical guidance and behavioral support. The next dimension, the work group, involves the support, comfort, advice, and assistance provided by team members. The final dimension covers working conditions, which contribute to effective work outcomes, including facilities, equipment, organizational climate, and management practices.

The importance of paying attention to employee job satisfaction lies in how it reflects the sense of fulfillment employees feel about their work and organization (Aliya & Saragih, 2020). Job satisfaction is achieved when evaluations align with individual expectations (Asepta, 2018). One of the drivers of good employee performance is job satisfaction, and low job satisfaction negatively affects work results. Inadequate salaries can reduce job satisfaction. Job satisfaction can be assessed through factors such as the nature of the work, coworkers, promotion opportunities, supervision, and compensation in relation to workload (Prayogi et al., 2019, in Robbins & Judge, 2013:50).

Work-life balance refers to a condition in which employees are able to satisfactorily manage their job responsibilities alongside their personal and family needs (Prayogi et al., 2019). From the employee's perspective, WLB is a matter of prioritizing personal work or family obligations. From the employer's perspective, it involves fostering a company culture that emphasizes employee dedication to their work (Asepta, 2017). Individuals are expected to demonstrate equal commitment to multiple life roles and to maintain a balanced orientation toward these roles (Greenhaus et al., 2003). A lack of involvement in one of the roles can lead to conflict, commonly in the form of reduced time spent with family, less time at home, and minimal personal time (Aliya & Saragih, 2020; Amalia & Sari, 2021).

The work environment includes both physical and non-physical characteristics in the workplace that influence how employees perform their assigned tasks (Marta & Budi, 2019). It is a crucial factor in fulfilling employee satisfaction and achieving organizational goals (Sitinjak, 2018). A comfortable work environment can increase employee satisfaction (Ganesha&Saragih, 2019). Such a conducive environment fosters engagement and serves as a reciprocal tool benefiting the organization, in line with the social exchange theory which posits that inputs affect outputs and ultimately impact work results (Blau, 1963, in Setyarsih, 2017). One example of a manufacturing company facing job satisfaction challenges is the

F&B industry. The work-from-home setting significantly differs from the office environment, often creating discomfort and reducing productivity, which is further worsened by lower income due to reduced working hours (Aliya & Saragih, 2020; Amalia & Sari, 2021).

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using an exploratory case study method. This approach was chosen to capture the nuances of employees' subjective experiences in natural contexts. Participants were selected purposively based on the following criteria: having worked for at least two years, coming from the manufacturing, service, or technology sectors, and being willing to share their experiences in depth. A total of ten informants were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted both online and offline over a two-week period, with each session lasting between 45 to 60 minutes. The questions focused on work routines, activities outside of work, perceptions of organizational support, and how they maintain life balance. Data were analyzed using a thematic approach through the steps of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The validity of the data was ensured through source triangulation and member checking.

Result and Discussion

Based on data and interview results from ten selected participants, a frequency overview of participant characteristics was obtained, including gender, age, educational level, and length of service. Participant identities were defined to provide an overview of their relevance and to facilitate the analysis of participant data, which was carried out to answer the objectives of this study. The survey identified several respondents based on the data obtained by the researchers. All shared data were processed and used as valid information for this research. To emphasize the importance of the participants in this study, researchers selected them based on criteria such as gender, age, work experience, and position. The data from the distribution tables are explained individually as follows:

Tabel 1. Characteristics of Research Informants

No.	Initials	Age	Gender	Position	Years of Service	Industrial Sector	Work System
1	IN1	29	Female	HR Staff	4 years	Financial Services	Hybrid
2	IN2	35	Male	Production Supervisor	7 years	Manufacturing	Shift
3	IN3	26	Female	Marketing Staff	3 years	Information Technology	Remote
4	IN4	31	Male	Engineer	6 years	Automotive	On-site
5	IN5	40	Male	Operations Manager	12 years	Transportation Services	On-site

6	IN6	28	Female	Data Analyst	5 years	Information Technology	Hybrid
7	IN7	33	Male	Purchasing Staff	8 years	Manufacturing	On-site
8	IN8	30	Female	Customer Support	6 years	E-commerce	Remote
9	IN9	37	Male	QA Supervisor	10 years	Manufacturing	Shift
10	IN10	25	Female	Production	2 years	Garment	On-site

Tabel 2. Frequency of Work Systems and Perceptions of Work-Life Balance


Work System	Number of Informants	Positive Perception	Negative Perception
Remote	2	2	0
Hybrid	2	2	0
On-site	4	2	2
Shift	2	0	2
Total	10	6	4

Based on data gathered from ten informants working in various industries and roles, it was found that employees' experiences in maintaining work-life balance were significantly influenced by their work system, organizational support, and the type of job performed. Table 1 presents a general overview of the participants' characteristics. The informants were aged between 25 to 40 years and had work experience ranging from two to twelve years. This shows that the majority were in their productive years and faced complex responsibilities in both personal and professional domains, such as raising a family or pursuing career advancement.

Work systems emerged as a crucial variable in shaping perceptions of work-life balance. As shown in Table 2, all employees with remote or hybrid systems expressed a positive perception of their work-life balance. They reported greater control over their time, workspace, and workload. For example, IN3 and IN6 stated that flexible work policies allowed them to complete their tasks without compromising family responsibilities such as taking children to school or caring for elderly parents. Managerial trust and autonomy in scheduling work hours were also cited as significant supporting factors.

Conversely, employees working full-time on-site or on shift schedules faced greater challenges. All participants with shift schedules IN2 and IN9 reported irregular rotating hours that disrupted their rest patterns and social interactions. They found it difficult to maintain sleep routines and often missed important family moments. Prior research by Brough et al. (2016) also indicated that shift workers are at higher risk of psychological and social imbalances.

Regarding the on-site work system, perceptions varied. Among the four on-site

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workers, two reported difficulty maintaining balance, while the other two found it manageable. This indicates that work systems alone do not determine outcomes contextual factors such as organizational culture and managerial support also play a critical role. For instance, IN4, an engineer, described pressure from deadlines and unwritten expectations for overtime that blurred boundaries between work and personal time. In contrast, IN7, working in purchasing, stated that despite being required to work on-site, his supervisor respected after-hours boundaries, allowing him to feel balanced.

Managerial support and organizational culture were also key contributors. These findings align with Shockley and Allen (2018), who emphasized that *supportive leadership* and employee-centered values can mitigate the negative impacts of rigid work structures. Several informants highlighted the importance of open communication with supervisors and flexible company policies, such as emergency leave or work-from-home options, as concrete examples of organizational support.

The analysis further suggests that *work-life balance* is not determined by a single factor but is instead a result of interactions among work systems, managerial support, organizational culture, and personal strategies. For example, IN1 mentioned deliberately scheduling “no-work time” each evening despite being in a hybrid system. This supports Braun and Clarke (2021), who found that personal *boundary-setting* strategies are vital to sustaining a healthy *work-life balance*.

Overall, the discussion reinforces that employees with greater time control and work flexibility tend to experience better work-life balance. However, such flexibility must be accompanied by systemic support and a healthy work culture; otherwise, it risks turning into a form of covert exploitation, as warned by Chung (2022) in *The Flexibility Paradox*.

Conclusion

Based on the data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that *work-life balance* is a crucial aspect that significantly affects employees' well-being and productivity. The majority of respondents in this study reported experiencing challenges in maintaining a balance between work and personal life, particularly related to high workloads and a lack of work schedule flexibility. Demographic characteristics indicate that women and married employees are more vulnerable to imbalance due to the dual roles they must fulfill. Additionally, younger employees (aged 20–30) tend to have a more open perspective on work-life balance and are more aware of the importance of maintaining boundaries between work and personal life. The most influential factors affecting work-life balance are excessive workloads, inflexible working hours, and lack of organizational support. On the other hand, employees who receive organizational support, have access to flexible work arrangements, and possess good time management skills tend to maintain work-life balance more effectively. This study highlights the need for companies to proactively establish policies and organizational cultures that support work-life balance, such as implementing flexible working hours, employee wellness programs, and stress management training. Through these approaches, it is expected that job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee performance will significantly improve.

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