

Exploring the Impact of Work-Life Balance on Employees: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to provide a comprehensive understanding of work-life balance outcomes toward employees. The research adopts the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. The researcher conducts a literature review encompassing the search and analysis of initial data collected from databases such as Scopus, PsycInfo, Emerald, Sciencedirect, Sage and Springerlink. The systematic literature review follows the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. The systematic literature review retrieved a total of 38 articles. After undergoing several stages, 25 articles met the criteria and were subsequently subjected to a more in-depth analysis. The findings of this systematic literature review have been categorized into two main outcomes: individual and organizational outcome. By knowing the outcome of work-life balance, the organization can identify the positive and negative impact of work-life balance for both individual and organization. Moreover, it also can be used to gain deeper insight into the importance of balancing work and personal life, as well as its implications in both individual and organization context.

Keywords: work-life balance, employee work-life balance, antecedents

1. Introduction

Work-life balance is a crucial concept in modern life where individuals strive to achieve the balance between their personal and professional lives. The term work-life balance denotes a sophisticated and refined strategy for managing work-life issues, indicating a higher level of engagement which leads to stronger and more meaningful connection with positive results such as improved performance, heightened dedication to work, and increased overall satisfaction and contentment in life (Pasamar, 2020). However, in the era of digitalization, rapid changes, and high work demands, most workers find it challenging to attain a satisfactory balance between personal and professional aspects. It is due to the use of technology that shapes an individual's perception of flexibility, type of work-life balance, and it also affects the individual resulting experience (Nam, 2014). Consequently, work-life balance has become a career aspiration for many employees (Barhate & Dirani, 2022).

Work-life balance refers to an individual's ability to meet the demands of both work and personal life (Fisher et al., 2009). Greenhouse et al (2013) further emphasize that work-life balance involves time management and psychological energy to maintain the balance, aiming to derive satisfaction from both domains. In other words, the balance between these two areas reflects the extent to which an individual engages harmoniously and achieves equal satisfaction in their role in both domains.

Research on work-life balance has experienced significant growth in recent decades, propelled by shifting trends concerning gender roles, family dynamics, workplace dynamics, and career aspirations (Powell et al, 2019). This research is important as work-life balance emerges as a crucial concern in modern life, catalyzed by rapid changes in the digitalization era. Particularly for young professionals, the balance concept becomes a highly deliberated factor in job pursuit and retention (Media Indonesia, 2019).

The concept of work-life has been extensively researched and elucidated by scholars. It is currently understood that there are several factors affecting the balance between work and personal life such as mental and health and well-being (Lunau et al., 2014) However, a comprehensive and focused summary regarding the outcomes of work-life balance among employees remains scarce. The significance of maintaining a balance between

professional responsibilities and personal life cannot be overstated, as it directly impacts job satisfaction, well-being (Hasan et al., 2020), and employee productivity (Jackson & Fransman, 2018). However, identifying the impact of work-life balance not only provides data but also provides organizations with evidence to develop retention strategies and enhance productivity. To date, there has not been a comprehensive review of the outcomes of work-life balance among employees in general. This review aims to address this gap by exploring the outcomes/consequences of maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Providing an in-depth understanding of work-life balance outcomes among workers. This involves understanding the impacts resulting from achieving a balance between work and personal life.

2. Method

This research refers to the Systematic Literature Review (SLR). The researcher conducted a literature review that encompassed the search and analysis of initial data collected from databases such as Scopus, PsycInfo, Emerald, Sciencedirect, Sage and Springerlink. A systematic review of the literature as conducted following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines.

2.1 Search Strategy and Data Source

The researcher utilized electronic databases such as Scopus, PsycInfo, Emerald, Sciencedirect, Sage and Springerlink to search for recent articles within the publication range of 2013-2023. Terms such as “work-life balance”, “the outcomes of work-life balance”, “work-life balance outcomes”, “work-family conflict”, “work life interference” and other terms related to work-life balance were employed to search for relevant articles.

2.2 Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria for Studies

The criteria are derived from research topics that are aimed at obtaining more comprehensive articles on work-life balance. To be further reviewed, articles must fit several criteria. There are two criteria: inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria are 1) Data obtained falls within the time range between 2013-2023. 2) The content of the article discusses the concept of work-life balance for employees. While the exclusion criteria are 1) The content is irrelevant or not in the context of employees. 2) The language used is other than English and Indonesian.

2.3 Data Extraction

First, a total of 38 manuscripts collected were stored in a file. Thirteen articles were excluded due to the content of the articles. Subsequently, the researcher proceeds with article selection based on inclusion criteria, as determined by the article title, abstract, and keywords. The selection process began by reading the title and abstract of each article. Data from relevant articles were then further analyzed using Microsoft Excel, where the researcher recorded them in the form of descriptive data as follows: (1) Authors, (2) Year of publication, (3) Tools, (4) Outcomes of work-life balance. Twenty-five articles that met the criteria were then selected for synthesis.

2.4 Synthesis and Analysis of Results

The research analysis employs a thematic analysis method which is utilized to classify and summarize the articles obtained. Thematic analysis begins with comprehending the content of articles relevant to the research question. After gaining an understanding of these articles, the researcher codes them based on general themes and focuses on key elements within the articles such as author, country, year of publication, measurement tools, sample size, research methods, result, conclusions, and extracts recurring subject terms. Subsequently, the author integrates and defines these themes, grouping them under the main theme of work-life balance. This series of themes is presented in a table format which is then analyzed further to generate identification of the overall concept and consequences of work-life balance within the scope of employment.

3. Results

Work-life balance has been extensively discussed in academic literature, and a systematic review highlights significant variations in the ways this concept is understood and defined. Work-life balance can be observed from the perspective of different definitions. Some studies define WLB as the achievement of temporal equilibrium between professional and personal life ((Forces et al., 2022; Rachmadini & Riyanto, 2020; Syrek et al., 2013). However, there are also more holistic approaches that emphasize the integration and harmonization of work and personal aspects (Hasan et al., 2020; Russo et al., 2016).

The literature reviewed in this systematic analysis spans the years 2013 through 2023, encompassing a total of 25 articles. Notably, two studies addressing work-life balance were published annually from 2014-2016, with one study in 2017, four studies in 2018, one study in 2019, six studies in 2020, one study in 2021, four studies in

2022, and two studies in 2023. These investigations were conducted across diverse geographical locations, including Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Israel, Australia, Saudi Arabia, New Zealand, Iran, Afrika Selatan, Malaysia, South Korean, Germany, Hongkong, UK and Romania.

3.1 Consequence Factors of Work-life Balance

The results of the studies are shown in table 1. The author grouped the various consequences into two consequences. Based on the analysis process of various literature studies, the author has found that work-life balance has a significant impact on both individual and organizational aspects. Balancing work and personal life can affect various aspects of life, ranging from psychological well-being to individual performance in the workplace.

In the individual context, work-life balance tends to correlate with psychological well-being including level of stress, anxiety, depression, happiness, and overall satisfaction. However, the impact is not limited to the individual, it also extends to the organization where the individual is employed. Organizations that implement policies supporting work-life balance typically experience higher levels of employee satisfaction and motivation to work. Employees who feel supported in achieving balance between work and personal lives tend to be more productive, have lower rates of absenteeism, and are more likely to stay with the company long term. Additionally, organizational support for work-life balance can also enhance the company's reputation as a friendly and sustainable workplace, which can influence brand image and appeal to potential employees. Thus, the findings highlight the importance of work-life balance for both individuals and organizations, as well as its implication in creating a healthy, productive, and sustainable work environment.

3.2 Individual Consequences

There are 19 studies discussed and yield the consequences of work-life balance on individual context. Work-life balance significantly impacts individual well-being. Other factors affected by work-life balance within individual scope include family and life satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, anxiety & depression, mental & physical health, stress & anxiety symptoms, employee health, burnout & motivation, and quality & quantity of personal life time.

Individual well-being encompasses psychological well-being (Forces et al., 2022; Haider et al., 2018; Norizan Baba Rahim et al., 2020), subjective well-being (Hasan et al., 2020), eudaimonic well-being (Soni & Bakhru, 2019), employee well-being (Zheng et al., 2015) and psychosocial well-being (Yang et al., 2018) are influenced by work-life balance. The positive relation between work-life balance and well-being has been found in these studies. Those indicate that individuals who have the ability to balance work and personal life tend to have higher well-being and vice versa.

In relation to well-being, two studies indicate that work-life balance significantly influences individual satisfaction. Tavassoli & Sune, (2018) asserted a positive correlation between work-life balance and life satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the other study which reported a significant impact of work-life balance on family satisfaction (Chan et al., 2016).

Another finding indicates that work-life balance not only affects someone's well-being and satisfaction but also their mental and physical health (Borowiec & Drygas, 2023; Zheng et al., 2015). The statement asserts that there is a positive correlation between work-life balance and both mental and physical health. On the contrary, other studies have identified a negative correlation between work-life balance and emotional exhaustion, stress, anxiety, and depression. An imbalance between work and life has significant implications for emotional exhaustion (Hendriana et al., 2023), stress and anxiety symptoms (Adedeji et al., 2023), as well as anxiety and depression (J. M. Haar et al., 2014), burnout and decreased motivation (Care et al., 2022), and the quality & quantity of personal life time (Wong et al., 2021). These are distributed to the challenges in integrating work and private life (Adedeji et al., 2023), higher job responsibilities, task, work pressure (J. M. Haar et al., 2014; Hendriana et al., 2023), overtime work, long shift (Care et al., 2022).

3.3 Organizational Consequences

In the realm of research, there are 16 studies that delve into consequences of work-life balance on organizational factors. Eight of the research found that work-life balance significantly influences employee job satisfaction. This assertion is corroborated by prior research, which indicates a robust correlation between work-life balance and job satisfaction (Chan et al., 2016; Gragnano et al., 2020; J. Haar & Brougham, 2020; J. M. Haar et al., 2014; Hasan et al., 2020; Jackson & Fransman, 2018; Susanto et al., 2022; Tavassoli & Sune, 2018). Accompanying the statement that supports the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction, the research conducted by Rahim et al, 2020 also discovered that career satisfaction is one of the consequences influenced by work-life balance.

The second significant consequences of work-life balance pertain to job performance and turnover intention. Previous research has consistently indicated that work-life balance significantly influences employee performance (Haider et al., 2018; Johari et al., 2017; Susanto et al., 2022). Turnover intention is also a component of the organizational consequences affected by work-life balance (Ferdous et al., 2021; J. Haar & Brougham, 2020; Tavassoli & Sune, 2018).

The other characteristics affected by work-life balance are employee involvement (Rachmadini & Riyanto, 2020), affective commitment, organizational citizenship behavior (J. Haar & Brougham, 2020), job stress & employee retention (Hendriana et al., 2023) and employee productivity (Jackson & Fransman, 2018).

4. Discussion

The primary aim of this review is to undertake a thorough examination of the consequences of work-life balance concerning employees in general. Using the PRISMA method, researchers analyzed a total of 25 articles that underwent several stages including identification, screening, and synthesis. The analysis focuses on the consequences of work-life balance on employees. The outcomes closely examined by the researcher include the individual and organizational factors. Individual factors comprise well-being, satisfaction both life and family, mental & physical health, anxiety, depression, motivation, and quantity & quality of personal life time. While the organizational factors include job satisfaction, job performance, turnover intention, job stress, affective commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, and employee involvement.

Work-life balance is a crucial aspect within an organization that needs to be considered by companies. This is due to the fact that WLB can impact several important aspects, both at the individual and organizational levels. One of the aspects that is highly influenced by WLB is well-being (Forces et al., 2022; Haider et al., 2018; Hasan et al., 2020; Norizan Baba Rahim et al., 2020; Soni & Bakhru, 2019; Yang et al., 2018; Zheng et al., 2015). Individuals with a good balance between work and personal life tend to have good well-being, while those who don't have a good balance will encounter difficulties in achieving well-being (Hasan et al., 2020). It will harm both family, personal and social aspects. Employees experience various work pressures, such as long working hours, numerous job responsibilities, and heavy workloads. These factors often force them to compromise their social or familial obligations, and their inability to meet these obligations leads to dissatisfaction and the experience of negative emotions, ultimately resulting in lower subjective well-being (Hasan et al., 2020). Additionally, when experiencing WLB, people prioritize their physical, emotional, and mental health. Moreover, when individuals dedicate more time and effort to work, they often have less time available for their personal lives. Consequently, the imbalance fosters conflict between work and family responsibilities and diminishes well-being (Forces et al., 2022).

An imbalance between work and personal life also influences the social aspect of the individuals, when the individuals have conflict in the work domain, it has the potential to foster negative social relationships with others due to poor communication and limited understanding, it causes harm to well-being (Soni & Bakhru, 2019). The relationship between WLB and well-being has found to be a strong and positive relationship (Hasan et al., 2020). It indicates that as WLB increases, so does wellbeing. Those statements are consistent with other research which indicates that when individuals succeed in balancing their roles between work and personal things, it will become a strong predictor of what the individuals feel about their life, in other words their well-being (Gropel, 2009). It also stated that perceived work-life balance predicts someone's well-being (Fisher, 2001; Greenhaus et al., 2003).

Individual's satisfactions are also affected by an individual's ability to balance their work and life. Satisfaction is defined as a function of satisfaction with life area (Erdogan, 2012). People can be satisfied with various aspects of their life such as life, family, or even work. Life satisfaction, family, and job satisfaction are the outcomes of work-life balance. This is demonstrated by several studies that have found a positive correlation among WLB and life, family, & job satisfaction (Chan et al., 2016; Forces et al., 2022; Gragnano et al., 2020; J. Haar & Brougham, 2020; J. M. Haar et al., 2014; Hasan et al., 2020; Jackson & Fransman, 2018; Susanto et al., 2022; Tavassoli & Sune, 2018).

Tavassoli & Sune, (2018) found that WLB promotes life satisfaction. Achieving a healthy balance between work and personal life allows people to devote adequate time and energy to their non-work-related activities, including spending quality time with family and friends, pursuing hobbies and engaging in leisure activities. The finding is consistent with other research, (W.Casper., 2008) stated that people who are balanced in work and life tend to stay on the job and are more satisfied with their life. The individuals who are able to effectively manage their work demands while also prioritizing their personal responsibilities are more likely to experience satisfaction and fulfillment in their lives. It is due to the fact that they have the opportunity to maintain meaningful

connection with their own lives, friends, or family members. Thus, it brings them joy and allows them to pursue personal interests outside the work.

Job satisfaction is the manifestation of an individual's life traits in the workplace. In essence, it can be described as the level of satisfaction or sense of achievement experienced by a worker in their role. It is an outcome that enables individuals to fulfill their job-related values or meet their fundamental needs through assessment. When people have a good balance between work and life, they are less likely to experience stress, burnout, or feeling overwhelmed by work demands. This, in turn, can contribute to a higher level of job satisfaction as employees feel more in control of their work lives (Hasan et al., 2020). Additionally, Haar & Brougham, (2020) stated that the link to job satisfaction is due to employees having more self-esteem from the ability to manage many roles successfully. When employees have greater self-esteem via superior WLB, it provides additional resources for the employees. People who feel satisfied with their work are more likely to experience a sense of fulfillment and accomplishment in their professional lives. This satisfaction can be translated into a better ability to manage their work demands while also having time and energy to devote to their personal lives.

An interesting finding has been found regarding the outcomes of work-life balance. Research on WLB is often conducted on employees in general but has never been specified to particular generations. In this systematic literature review, the outcomes of WLB on employees born in generation Z were identified. The research findings indicate that WLB significantly affects job stress (Hendriana et al., 2023), stress, and anxiety symptoms among the generation Z (Adedeji et al., 2023). WLB is a significant predictor of stress and anxiety symptoms. Individuals who are unable to balance their work and personal lives tend to experience high levels of stress and anxiety (Adedeji et al., 2023). For generation Z, achieving work-life balance is particularly challenging. It is primarily because many of generation Z are still in the stage of professional and personal development, navigating role changes and various transitions (Adedeji et al., 2023). For generation Z, the work environment is a new experience where they have to adapt. Furthermore, according to Hendriana et al., (2023) an imbalance between work and personal life may stimulate job stress in employees, leading to physical vulnerabilities, such as disease susceptibility and cynical behavior towards co-workers or customers. It is due to multiple roles, work pressure, and job responsibilities and tasks. This finding is also in line with the previous similar research conducted by (Irfan, 2021) which stated that there is a correlation between WLB and job stress.

Furthermore, future research could delve deeper into the impact of work-life balance by providing a more comprehensive explanation of its various facets. It would be beneficial to explore how different aspects of work-life balance, such as time management, boundary setting, and the influence of workplace culture, affect individuals' overall well-being and job performance. Additionally, this study should examine the role of technology in shaping the dynamics of work-life balance. With the increasing prevalence of remote work, digital communication tools, and flexible work arrangements, technology has become a significant factor in how individuals manage their professional and personal lives. Future research could investigate how these technological advancements facilitate or hinder work-life balance, and identify strategies for leveraging technology to support a healthier and more sustainable integration of work and personal life. By addressing these areas, future studies can provide valuable insights into the complex interplay between work and personal life and offer practical recommendations for individuals and organizations seeking to improve work-life balance.

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Appendix A

Table 1.

| No | Authors (Year) Country | Tools | Outcomes of WLB | |
|----|---|---|--|---|
| | | | Individual Outcomes | Organizational Outcome |
| 1 | Rachamdini & Riyanto (2020) Indonesia | Work-Life Balance Scale (Hayman, 2005) | | 1. Employee Involvement |
| 2 | Zameer et al (2020) Pakistan | Employee's satisfaction of Work-life balance (Valcour, 2007). | 1. Subjective Well-being | 1. Job satisfaction |
| 3 | Asima et al (2022) Pakistan | Employee's satisfaction of Work-life balance (Valcour, 2007). | 1. Psychological well-being | 1. Job satisfaction |
| 4 | Chen at al (2016) Australia | WLBS Brough (2014) | 1. Family Satisfaction | 1. Job Satisfaction |
| 5 | Haar et al (2020) New Zealand | WLBS Haar (2013) | | 1. Job satisfaction 2. affective commitment 3. organizational citizenship behavior 4. turnover intention. |
| 6 | Tavassoli & Sune (2018) Iran | WLBS Haar (2013) | 1. Life Satisfaction | 1. Job satisfaction 2. Turnover intention |
| 7 | Hendriana at al (2023) Indonesia | WLBS by Smeltzer et al, 2016 | 1. Emotional exhaustion | 1. Job stress 2. Employee retention. |
| 8 | Soni & Bakhru (2019) India | WLBS Hayman (2005) | 1. Eudaimonic Well-being | |
| 9 | Haar et al (2014) New Zealand, Spain, France etc | WLBS by Haar (2013) | 1. Life satisfaction 2. Anxiety & Depression | 1. Job Satisfaction |
| 10 | Rahim et al (2020) Malaysia | Greenhouse at al (2014) | 1. Psychological Well-being | 1. Career satisfaction |
| 11 | Susanto et al (2022) Indonesia | Talukder et al (2018) | | 1. Job performance 2. Job satisfaction |
| 12 | Borowic & Drygas (2022) Poland | Borowic & Drygas | 1. Mental & Physical Health | |
| 13 | Adedeji et al (Hamburg) 2023 | Haar (2013) | 1. Stress and Anxiety Symptoms | |
| 14 | Gagnano et al (2020) Italy | Matthew & Farrel (2010) | | 1. Job Satisfaction |
| 15 | Fotiadis et al (2019) Arab | Fotiadis et al (2019) | 1. Psychological well being | |
| 16 | Jakson & Fransman (2018) South Africa | Fransman (2015) | | 1. Employee productivity 2. Job 1. 1. Satisfaction |
| 17 | Johari et al (2017) Malaysia | Fisher-McAuley et al. (2003) | | 1. Job Performance |
| 18 | Zheng et al (2015) Australia | Zheng et al (2015) | 1. Employee health and well being | |

| | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------|
| 19 | Haider et al (2018) Pakistan | Wu, Rusyidi, Claiborne, and McCarthy's (2013). | 1. Psychological Well-Being | 1. Job Performance |
| 20 | Haar et al (2014) New Zealand | Haar (2013) | 1. Life Satisfaction 2. Anxiety & Depression | 1. Job Satisfaction |
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