



## A Systematic Literature Review Examining the Relationship Between Work–Life Balance and Employee Performance, With A Focus on Psychological Mediators and Organizational and Digital Contextual Moderators in Contemporary Work Environments

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### | ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the relationship between work–life balance (WLB) and employee performance through a systematic literature review approach. The review was conducted by examining scholarly publications from various reputable databases using the PRISMA protocol and was analyzed through content analysis and thematic synthesis. The synthesis results indicate that WLB positively influences employee performance both directly and indirectly through psychological mechanisms, particularly employee well-being, work engagement, and burnout. In addition, organizational support and work flexibility were found to strengthen this relationship, while digital-era risk factors such as telepressure and hyper-connectivity have the potential to weaken it. This study contributes to the development of a multidimensional conceptual framework of WLB by highlighting the role of mediating and moderating variables, as well as enriching the understanding of digital well-being in the context of modern work. Practical implications emphasize the importance of structured flexibility policies, employee well-being interventions, and enhanced supervisor support in improving productivity and performance sustainability. Recommendations are provided for further empirical research and the development of HR policies that are adaptive to changes in digital and hybrid work patterns.

### | KEYWORDS

Work–life balance, Employee performance, Work engagement

## I. INTRODUCTION

Work–life balance (WLB) has become a salient topic in contemporary human resource management due to fundamental shifts in work structures driven by digitalization and automation, which simultaneously enhance efficiency and intensify work demands [1]; [2]. The increased capacity to perform work from any location has generated new flexibility but has also blurred temporal and psychological boundaries between professional and personal domains [3]. Empirical evidence indicates that individuals' ability to sustain such balance is associated with elevated job satisfaction, motivation, and performance outcomes [4]; [5], whereas its absence is linked to burnout, work stress, and diminished productivity [5].

These trends were accentuated during the COVID-19 pandemic, wherein remote and hybrid work systems created flexibility but also magnified irregular workloads, extended working hours, and escalated overworking [6]; [7]. In the Indonesian context, dual work–family roles often exacerbate conflict, leading to deteriorating individual and organizational performance [8]. Prior research in Indonesia has demonstrated that WLB enhances employee productivity by fostering job satisfaction and organizational commitment [9]; [10].

Despite a general consensus that WLB positively influences performance, empirical findings remain heterogeneous. Some studies report a strong direct effect, while others identify indirect effects mediated by variables such as job satisfaction, burnout, or work engagement [11]; [12]. These discrepancies may stem from differences in industry characteristics, organizational settings, work configurations, and cultural norms [13]. Organizational resources, including workplace flexibility and supervisor support, have also been shown to strengthen or weaken the WLB-performance relationship [14] ; [15]. Recent scholarship highlights additional complexity in digital work environments, where hyper-connectivity elevates emotional exhaustion and disrupts performance [16]. Digital workload, responsiveness pressure, and sustained connectivity similarly undermine employees' ability to maintain balance [17]. Collectively, these findings suggest a research gap concerning the mechanisms and contextual contingencies through which WLB translates into performance, particularly in evolving digital work ecologies.

Given ongoing shifts in work patterns, accelerated technological adoption, and rising performance expectations, research that systematically examines WLB within modern organizational contexts is increasingly critical. Organizations face growing pressure to design adaptive policies that mitigate emerging risks, such as digital overload, while simultaneously fostering psychological well-being and sustained performance. Understanding how WLB interacts with mediating and moderating factors is therefore vital to promoting performance, preventing burnout, and enhancing organizational competitiveness in dynamic work environments.

Accordingly, this study aims to: (1) provide a comprehensive examination of the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance in modern organizational settings; (2) identify inconsistencies in previous empirical findings and the factors that contribute to such variation; (3) analyze the roles of mediating and moderating variables such as job satisfaction, burnout, work engagement, and organizational support; and (4) offer theoretical insights and practical recommendations for the development of adaptive human resource policies that enhance work-life balance and sustainable employee performance.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) to identify, evaluate, and synthesize empirical evidence concerning the relationship between work-life balance (WLB) and employee performance. The SLR approach was selected to provide transparent, rigorous, and replicable procedures for aggregating heterogeneous findings across studies, consistent with established methodological recommendations [18]. Following this approach, the review was designed not only to summarize existing knowledge, but also to identify conceptual mechanisms, contextual contingencies, and emerging research trends within the domain of WLB and performance.

### **Sampling and Literature Selection Procedures**

The data for this study consisted of secondary sources derived from scholarly publications obtained from reputable academic databases, including Scopus, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect. Relevant literature was identified using a combination of core keywords such as "work-life balance," "employee performance," "well-being," and "organizational behavior." The selection process followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) protocol [19], which included four distinct stages:

1. Identification, in which all potentially relevant articles were retrieved using keyword searches.
2. Screening, where duplicate records and publications with insufficient topical relevance were removed.
3. Eligibility assessment, involving the evaluation of abstracts and full texts to ensure alignment with research objectives.
4. Inclusion, in which the final set of empirical studies meeting established inclusion and exclusion criteria were retained for analysis.

This multi-stage sampling procedure ensured that only literature with substantive contributions to the phenomena under study was incorporated into the review. The process also followed guidelines on systematic scholarly retrieval to ensure traceability and conceptual integration [20].

### **Operationalization of Variables**

The review operationalized WLB as a multidimensional construct, typically encompassing work interference with personal life, personal life interference with work, and work-personal enhancement, as well as boundary management practices in hybrid or digital work settings [1]; [21]; [14]; [22]. Employee performance was

conceptualized as a multidimensional outcome encompassing task performance, contextual performance, and indicators of negative or innovative behaviors, influenced by psychological, motivational, and contextual factors [23]; [24]; [22]; [25].

In addition, several constructs were treated as mediating or moderating variables in explaining the WLB-performance relationship, including job satisfaction, work engagement, burnout or emotional exhaustion, organizational support, and digital pressures such as telepressure or hyper-connectivity [26]; [27]; [14]; [28]; [29]; [16]; [17].

### 1. Operationalization of Variables

Construct	Dimensions/Indicators
Work-Life Balance	WIPL, PLIW, Enhancement, Boundary Management
Employee Performance	Task, Contextual, Innovative, CWB(-)
Mediators	Job satisfaction, Engagement, Burnout, Well-being
Moderators	Supervisor support, Flexibility, Telepressure, Hyper-connectivity

### Data Analysis Procedures

Data were analyzed using a combination of content analysis and thematic synthesis, facilitated through iterative coding and cross-study comparison. Content analysis was applied to identify recurrent patterns, conceptual categories, and relational structures across the selected literature [30]. Thematic synthesis [31] was subsequently employed to integrate and interpret emergent themes, enabling the development of higher-order conceptual insights regarding the mechanisms linking WLB and performance.

To enhance analytical depth, the review adopted a hermeneutic approach to literature analysis, facilitating reflexive interrogation of theories, methods, and contexts to ensure that the synthesis was interpretive rather than merely descriptive [32]. This methodological stance enabled the evaluation of theoretical complementarities and contradictions as well as the identification of emerging perspectives relevant to digital and hybrid work environments.

### Methodological Rigor

The combined use of structured selection procedures (PRISMA), multidimensional construct operationalization, and integrated analytical techniques provided methodological rigor and relevance. This approach enabled the review to produce evidence-informed insights on the WLB-performance relationship, while accounting for the diverse contextual, psychological, and technological dynamics reported across studies.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Descriptive Characteristics of the Literature

The systematic literature review identified a diverse set of empirical studies examining the relationship between work-life balance (WLB) and employee performance across multiple organizational contexts. The selected studies varied in methodological approach, with the majority adopting quantitative cross-sectional designs, while several employed mediational or moderational models to examine psychological mechanisms. Most studies were conducted in post-industrial and service-oriented environments, with notable concentrations in education, healthcare, and technology sectors, reflecting the salience of WLB in labor-intensive or cognitively demanding work settings. Cross-cultural studies were also evident, highlighting variations in outcomes attributable to differing cultural norms and work-family expectations [4]; [8].

A descriptive synthesis of findings revealed that the majority of studies reported a positive association between WLB and employee performance, although the direction and magnitude of effects varied. Several studies demonstrated direct positive effects, while others indicated that WLB influenced performance indirectly through psychological mediators such as well-being, job satisfaction, and engagement [11]; [12]. In addition, a subset of studies identified contextual moderators such as supervisor support, organizational flexibility, and digital work demands as central determinants of effect strength [14]; [15].

### Results of Data Analysis and Thematic Synthesis

## Direct Effects of WLB on Employee Performance

Findings across the literature consistently support the proposition that WLB contributes to higher task and contextual performance, improved work quality, and enhanced productivity. For instance, studies in Indonesian organizations indicated that WLB strengthened employee productivity through improvements in satisfaction and commitment [9]; [10]. These results corroborate theoretical assumptions that WLB functions as a personal resource enabling individuals to allocate cognitive and emotional resources more efficiently toward performance-relevant activities [5].

## Mediating Mechanisms

Across the body of evidence, psychological mechanisms emerged as consistent mediators. High levels of WLB were associated with greater job satisfaction, higher engagement, and reduced burnout, which subsequently predicted higher performance outcomes. These findings align with JD-R theory, in which personal and job resources enhance motivation and mitigate strain [16]; [27]. Studies also demonstrated that recovery experiences enabled employees to sustain performance over time by restoring depleted psychological resources [33].

## Moderating Conditions and Contextual Factors

The literature highlighted several moderating variables that condition the effect of WLB on performance. Specifically, organizational flexibility and supervisor support strengthened the positive association between WLB and well-being, while reducing role conflict and emotional strain [14]. Conversely, the digitalization of work environments introduced telepressure and hyper-connectivity, which increased emotional exhaustion and eroded the benefits of flexible work arrangements [29]; [17]; [16]. These insights reflect the growing relevance of digital well-being as an emerging domain of inquiry.

### 2. Mediating and Moderating Variables

Variable Type	Key Constructs	Expected Influence
Mediators	Job satisfaction, Engagement, Burnout, Well-being	Strengthen link between WLB and Performance
Moderators	Supervisor support, Flexibility, Telepressure, Hyper-connectivity	Amplify or weaken WLB outcomes depending on context

## Discussion of Findings

### Alignment with Theoretical Perspectives

The overall pattern of results provides strong support for foundational theories explaining the WLB-performance relationship.

- JD-R Theory elucidates how WLB functions as a personal and environmental resource that enhances motivation, engagement, and performance.
- COR Theory explains how disruptions to balance increase resource depletion, resulting in burnout and reduced performance.
- Boundary Theory accounts for the role of boundary management in shaping work-family conflict and attentional allocation.
- Social Exchange Theory highlights reciprocity-based mechanisms, whereby supportive organizational policies elicit higher commitment and work effort.

### Consistency with Previous Research

The synthesis aligns with prior meta-analytic and cross-cultural research suggesting that WLB positively influences employee performance, but that the effects are not uniform across contexts [34]; [4]. The current evidence expands the literature by incorporating post-pandemic dynamics and digital work pressures, which further complicate the mechanisms linking WLB and performance.

### Emerging Patterns and Research Implications

Three major patterns emerge from the evidence:

1. Direct positive effects exist but are often weak unless mediated by psychological mechanisms.
2. Organizational and digital contexts substantially shape the strength of the relationship.
3. New risk factors associated with digital work environments threaten psychological detachment and performance sustainability.

These findings indicate a need for future research to examine longitudinal processes, multi-level effects, and context-specific variations, particularly in hybrid work environments.

## **IV. CONCLUSION**

### **Descriptive Characteristics of the Literature**

This study provides a comprehensive synthesis of empirical evidence concerning the relationship between work-life balance (WLB) and employee performance. The findings indicate that WLB plays a central role in promoting performance by enhancing psychological well-being, fostering work engagement, and mitigating burnout. The evidence further demonstrates that WLB is not merely a temporal distribution of work and personal demands, but a multidimensional construct that functions as a psychological resource necessary to sustain task performance, contextual performance, and innovative outcomes. These findings underscore the strategic importance of WLB in contemporary organizations operating in increasingly dynamic and digitally intensive environments.

### **Implications and Contributions**

The study offers several theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it integrates key frameworks such as Job Demands-Resources, Conservation of Resources, Boundary Theory, and Social Exchange Theory to elucidate the mechanisms through which WLB influences performance. This integrative perspective advances understanding of how personal resources, recovery processes, and role boundaries interact to shape employee outcomes. The review also contributes methodologically by applying a systematic literature review approach with structured analytical procedures, generating a rigorous and transparent synthesis of a fragmented body of research.

From a practical standpoint, the findings highlight the importance of designing organizational systems that enable employees to maintain equilibrium between work and personal domains. Policies that encourage autonomy, flexibility, supervisor support, and structured boundaries around digital communication may contribute to enhanced performance, reduced strain, and improved well-being. The results also point to emerging challenges associated with telepressure and hyper-connectivity in digital work settings, suggesting that interventions focused on digital well-being may be necessary to sustain performance in hybrid or remote work environments.

### **Limitations**

This study is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, it relies exclusively on secondary data, which makes the conclusions dependent on the quality, scope, and methodological rigor of prior research. Second, variations across cultural contexts, industries, and institutional environments limit the generalizability of the findings, particularly to settings where work-family norms differ substantially. Third, as a literature-based synthesis, the study cannot establish causal relationships or examine dynamic processes over time, especially in relation to emerging post-pandemic work arrangements. Finally, the reviewed literature does not uniformly address the long-term implications of digital work environments, limiting the capacity to draw definitive conclusions about evolving work dynamics.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

Future studies should empirically test the conceptual mechanisms identified in this review, particularly mediational and moderational processes linking WLB to performance outcomes. Longitudinal designs are recommended to capture temporal dynamics, recovery processes, and fluctuations in digital workload. Comparative studies across sectors and cultural contexts would also help clarify boundary conditions and cross-national variability in WLB practices. Moreover, as organizations increasingly adopt hybrid work models, research should investigate digital well-being, telepressure, and organizational interventions that support healthy boundary management. Finally, future inquiry may benefit from integrating technological, behavioral, and organizational perspectives to develop holistic frameworks that reflect the realities of modern work systems.

In sum, the findings affirm that WLB remains a critical determinant of employee performance, but one whose effects are contingent upon psychological mechanisms, organizational resources, and digital work conditions. Addressing these factors through evidence-based policies and interventions may contribute to sustainable employee performance and organizational effectiveness in an evolving work landscape.

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