

## Between Home and Office: Exploring Generational Differences in Work Life Balance and Employee Performance in Hybrid Organizations

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### ABSTRACT

*Self-efficacy Work life balance (WLB) has become a major challenge in the era of flexible working, especially when the boundaries between work and personal life are becoming increasingly blurred. This study aims to explore employees' experiences in balancing work and family roles and their implications for performance, using a phenomenological qualitative approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with five employees from different generations at a financial services company in Indonesia that implements a hybrid work system, with the number of participants determined until data saturation was reached. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring patterns of experience. The results show that work flexibility provides significant benefits for employees with family responsibilities, although it is prone to role conflict when domestic and organizational support is limited. Generational differences also emerged: Generation Z was more assertive in setting work-life boundaries, while Millennials were more prone to burnout due to role overlap. Supervisor support, task-based hybrid policies, and time management training proved to be key factors in maintaining employee productivity and engagement. This research contributes to the development of WLB theory by highlighting the dimensions of life stage and policy implementation fidelity, and practically provides recommendations for organizations to design adaptive, supportive, and sustainable HRM policies in the context of developing countries.*

**Keywords:** Work life Balance, Employee Performance, Hybrid Work, Organizational Support

### 1. Introduction

The post-pandemic transformation of work has accelerated the adoption of flexible working including hybrid models, which are changing the way organizations manage the rhythm, workload, and boundaries between work and non-work roles. Randomized controlled trial (RCT) studies show that implementing hybrid models can increase job satisfaction and employee retention without reducing productivity, while reducing commuting fatigue and improving well-being (Bloom et al., 2023). International reports confirm that workers with flexible work arrangements report lower stress levels and higher well-being compared to those who work entirely in the office (Eurofound & ILO, 2017; Wang et al., 2020). This confirms that work-life balance (WLB) is an urgent global issue in human resource management (HRM), especially in the era of digitalization and globalization of the workforce (Allen et al., 2020).

Conceptually, WLB is understood as a condition in which individuals can fulfill the demands of work and non-work roles in a balanced manner without sacrificing well-being or performance (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). Two main theoretical frameworks explain this dynamic. First, spillover theory argues that experiences in one domain will influence another domain, either in the form of positive or negative transfer (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). Second, work-family enrichment theory emphasizes that positive experiences in one role can improve

quality of life and performance in another role through instrumental resources (e.g., skills) and affective resources (e.g., positive mood) (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Recent studies also highlight the role of boundary theory, which states that the effectiveness of WLB depends on how individuals manage physical, temporal, and psychological boundaries between work and non-work domains (Kossek et al., 2023).

In Indonesia, the implementation of hybrid work models presents a unique dilemma. On the one hand, flexibility allows employees to organize their time more autonomously; on the other hand, the boundaries between work and personal life become increasingly blurred, increasing the risk of role conflict, domestic disruption, and burnout (Pane, 2022). A quantitative study in the manufacturing sector found that work-life balance (WLB) significantly influences employee performance through the mediation of affective commitment and job satisfaction (Udin, 2023). Similar results were also seen at PLN Aceh, where job satisfaction and work stress were determining factors in bridging the relationship between WLB and performance (Pane, 2022). In addition, research on Indonesian millennials indicates that work time flexibility and leave policies contribute to retention and performance perceptions (Amelia et al., 2023). This phenomenon shows that even though Indonesia has a relatively low level of employee engagement compared to the global average (Gallup, 2023), WLB issues remain an important determinant in maintaining the sustainability of labor productivity.

Various previous studies have also proposed and tested alternative solutions to address work life imbalance. Flexibility policies, such as flexitime and remote work, have been shown to improve well-being and reduce role conflict, although their effectiveness is highly dependent on the organizational implementation context (Kossek et al., 2023). Family-oriented supervisor support has been shown to strengthen the positive impact of WLB on employee satisfaction and performance (Zhang, 2022). Initiatives such as paid leave, work breaks, and adaptive scheduling also improve performance perceptions by minimizing excessive stress (Hagi, 2024). In Indonesia, time flexibility, leave policies, and wellness programs have contributed to the retention and job satisfaction of millennial employees (Amelia et al., 2023). These findings confirm that organization-based policy solutions have tangible benefits, although their impact is often partial because they do not fully account for contextual factors and individual dynamics.

However, most of the literature on WLB and performance is still dominated by quantitative approaches based on surveys and causal modeling (e.g., SEM and PLS-SEM). A study in the Spanish banking sector found that WLB does not directly improve performance, but rather through the mediation of employee well-being (Medina-Garrido et al., 2023), while research in Indonesia also shows that WLB has an impact through affective commitment and job satisfaction as mediators (Udin, 2023; Pane, 2022). Other research confirms the role of job satisfaction as an important mediating mechanism in the WLB–organizational commitment relationship (Lazar et al., 2024). Although providing valuable insights, the dominance of quantitative approaches limits understanding to inter-variable relationships, without sufficiently exploring employees' subjective experiences in managing role boundaries. Recent reviews emphasize the need for dual-level exploration and qualitative approaches to capture the complexity of WLB,

particularly in the context of developing countries (Kosseck et al., 2023; Vaziri et al., 2023).

This study responds to this gap by using a qualitative phenomenological approach at PT Aksara Business Group, a financial services company in Indonesia that implements hybrid work. By exploring the narratives of employees across generations, this study aims to examine the internal mechanisms that link boundary crafting practices (supervisor support, schedule autonomy) with perceptions and performance behaviors. The novelty of this research lies in (a) in-depth qualitative exploration across generations in the context of hybrid work in Indonesia as an emerging economy, (b) mapping of WLB-performance mechanisms with a focus on daily implementation practices, and (c) contribution to the boundary control & implementation framework, which is currently at the forefront of global WLB discourse.

Practically, the findings are expected to provide a basis for adaptive and inclusive HRM policy design, for example, through task-based work arrangements, family-supportive supervisor behavior, and working hour regulations that protect digital boundaries. Theoretically, this research enriches the WLB literature with qualitative evidence from a developing country context, expands cross-cultural theory generalizations, and contributes to the global discussion on how flexibility policies can function as performance-enabling practices rather than merely family-friendly policies.

## **2. Methodology**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design chosen to explore in depth the subjective experiences of employees in balancing their work and personal lives. The phenomenological approach allows researchers to understand the meaning that individuals attach to their daily experiences, making it suitable for exploring the complex and contextual dynamics of work-life balance (Creswell, 2014; Moleong, 2016). The research was conducted in the form of a field study at PT Aksara Business Group Surabaya, a financial services company that implements a hybrid work system. This location was chosen because of the characteristics of the organization, which demands regulatory compliance as well as work flexibility, thus providing a rich context for exploring the phenomenon.

The research subjects consisted of employees and management who were selected purposively based on the relevance of their experiences to the issues of work-life balance and performance. The number of participants followed the principle of data sufficiency in phenomenological studies, which is between five and twenty-five informants, taking into account variations in age, family status, and position in order to obtain diverse views (Creswell, 2014). The data used is qualitative data sourced from in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were conducted face-to-face and online to accommodate the availability of informants, while observations were conducted to understand the social context and real situations in the field. Documentation in the form of internal company archives, performance reports, and other administrative records were used to complement the interpretation process.

To ensure data credibility, this study used source and method triangulation techniques (Sugiyono, 2013). Source triangulation was carried out by comparing

information from various informants at different job levels, while method triangulation was achieved through a combination of interviews, observations, and documentation studies. This step was carried out continuously throughout the research process to ensure the consistency and reliability of the findings.

Data analysis was performed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1992), which included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction was carried out through a process of selection, organization, and simplification of field data to make it more focused. The reduced data is then presented in the form of descriptive narratives, tables, and direct quotes from informants to support transparency of interpretation. The final stage of drawing conclusions is carried out iteratively by linking the findings to the theoretical framework and research objectives. Ethical aspects are maintained by obtaining informant consent prior to interviews, maintaining participant confidentiality, and using data solely for academic purposes. With this approach, the research is expected to produce a deep understanding of the internal mechanisms of work-life balance and its implications for employee performance in Indonesian financial services companies that implement a hybrid work system.

### **3. Results And Discussion**

#### **Work life Balance and Its Impact on Performance**

Data analysis shows that work flexibility (WFH/hybrid) plays an important role in facilitating the management of work and family roles, especially for employees with dependents. Several informants described the benefits of time efficiency and ease of prioritizing when working from home. One participant (I2) stated: "I think it's productive because I don't need to spend time commuting to the office after waking up. I can turn on my laptop and do other work at the same time, making my time more efficient. It also saves on expenses."

On the other hand, operational disruptions and incomplete client data hinder work effectiveness. One informant (I1) said: "The support is definitely there. The proof is that as a housewife, I can balance taking care of my husband and children. Alhamdulillah, it's good. Sometimes I often talk to other consultants about clients." Empirical patterns show that WFH/hybrid increases effectiveness for those who have supporting resources (family support, dedicated workspace), while employees without such support more often experience a decline in effectiveness when external disruptions occur.

#### **Personal Life and Role Conflict**

A clear difference in experience is seen between employees with families and those without. Employees with families report strong role conflict when the boundaries between work and home become blurred. One participant (I3) described: "It's difficult to separate work and personal time. I often bring work home mentally while taking care of my children."

Coping strategies also vary. Another participant (I4) emphasized the importance of domestic facilities: "I have a helper and a dedicated workspace. I can still cook for my family while working." Conversely, another informant (I2) admitted to being distracted by their large family environment: "There are many young

children and mothers at home. I often have to help take care of them, which makes it difficult to focus on work. The solution is to scroll through TikTok or take a quick nap."

Employees without family responsibilities reported different experiences. One (I5) said: "Sometimes I want to find a new atmosphere by returning to the office." This shows that even without childcare responsibilities, the need for variety remains an important factor in maintaining satisfaction and productivity.

### **The Role of Work in Shaping Work-Life Balance**

In addition to family factors, organizational policies and job characteristics also influence work-life balance. Most participants considered the hybrid work model to be the most effective format. One informant (I3) emphasized: "Often, because I tend to be professional about my work. It's quite difficult to see from me that I have a family, so sometimes the division of time tends to be gray."

Another participant (I2) suggested better physical facilities: "I want to work in a comfortable office, so I want there to be a good meeting space. Because I feel more comfortable working in a cafe than in an office." Another participant (I3) added the dimension of motivation: "I work not only for the salary, but because I believe in the goals of this organization."

### **Productivity, Satisfaction, and Adaptation Strategies**

The final theme highlights productivity and adaptation strategies. Informants identified various ways to maintain balance, such as creating timeline mapping, utilizing dedicated workspaces, or seeking alternative work environments. One informant (I2) explained: "Small things like this make me feel at home working here."

Several practical recommendations came directly from the participants. Informant (I2) suggested additional assistance during peak season, while informant (I4) recommended more structured time management training. All of these suggestions reflect the direct relationship between company operational policies and employee outcomes.

### **Discussion**

These findings confirm that work life balance (WLB) affects employee performance differently depending on domestic conditions and organizational resources. In summary, employees with family responsibilities receive functional benefits from work flexibility (e.g., hybrid/WFH) because such policies allow for role management; however, they are also more vulnerable to domestic distractions and double burdens when supporting resources (family support, home facilities) or organizational resources (complete data, supportive supervisors) are unavailable. Conversely, employees without family responsibilities tend to maintain more stable work focus, but remain exposed to the risk of non-domestic distractions. Generational differences where Generation Z tends to enforce stricter boundaries while Millennials more often experience role overlap confirm the heterogeneity of WLB effects on the working population.

Several large quantitative studies show mediation patterns consistent with these findings. Medina-Garrido et al. (2023) and Udin (2023) found that the effect of

WLB on employee performance is often mediated through well-being or job satisfaction that is, WLB improves well-being, which in turn improves performance. Our qualitative results reinforce and condense this mediation pathway with details of daily processes: flexible policies are only effective when accompanied by tangible access (e.g., the ability to utilize WFH, availability of workspace, domestic support). Zhang (2022) emphasizes the role of supportive supervisor behaviour, our results support this with evidence that supervisors who provide flexibility but still demand targets without operational adjustments tend to trigger perceptions of unfairness and stress. On the other hand, a cross-national experimental study (Bloom et al., 2023) reports net benefits of hybrid work on satisfaction and retention; our findings complement this evidence by explaining for whom and how these benefits are realized in practice. Thus, this study enriches quantitative evidence with mechanistic insights that explain the variability of effects across individuals and contexts.

Three complementary theoretical frameworks explain the findings: conservation of resources (COR), spillover/enrichment, and boundary theory supported by the job demands resources (JDR) framework. First, according to COR, individuals strive to maintain and increase resources (time, energy, support); work flexibility can be a resource gain that reduces role conflict and facilitates recovery, thereby increasing performance capacity (Hobfoll, 1989). However, when domestic or organizational support is minimal, workers with family responsibilities experience resource loss spirals (e.g., fragmented time, distractions), which explains why they are more vulnerable to performance decline. Second, work-family enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) explains cases where family roles support work roles, e.g., domestic help or dedicated workspaces that allow parents to maintain focus, so that family experiences serve as a source of skill enhancement or positive affect that contributes to job effectiveness. Third, boundary theory and policy implementation studies show that individuals' ability to set and enforce temporal and psychological boundaries between domains (e.g., "turning off" work communications after a certain hour) determines whether work flexibility becomes a source of recovery or a source of exhaustion (Kossek et al., 2023). JD-R integration adds an organizational dimension: supervisor support and job resources (tools, complete data, time management training) function as job resources that moderate the relationship between demands (task overload, sudden calls) and performance outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Overall, the combination of these theories explains why WLB is not a single variable that is always "good" or "bad," but rather its effects depend on the balance between resource gains and losses and the ability to set individual boundaries.

The methodological strength of this research lies in its use of a phenomenological design that captures rich subjective experiences, triangulation of techniques (interviews, observation, documentation), and variation in informants across generations and family status, which enhances the transferability of findings to similar contexts. However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations that affect the inferences: this study is a case study of a single financial services company, so its transferability to other industries needs to be tested; saturation criteria are reported, but more transparency is needed on the process of achieving saturation; and reflexivity practices (researcher notes, possible interviewer bias) need to be

presented explicitly to increase confirmability. Furthermore, although triangulation enriches internal validity, the absence of quantified inter-coder reliability procedures (if the analysis was coded by more than one researcher) limits the reader's ability to assess dependability. Suggestions for improvement in future studies include reporting detailed sampling procedures, theme codebooks, and member checking steps, as well as combining longitudinal or mixed-methods designs, where possible, to examine the temporal dynamics of WLB and performance.

Theoretically, this study contributes by recommending the integration of life-stage factors (family status, generation) into the WLB model, as well as expanding boundary theory with the dimension of implementation fidelity to explain the effectiveness of flexibility policies. Practically, these findings emphasize that organizations need to design task-based hybrid policies, not just hours, and train supervisors to consistently display supportive behavior. At the policy level, the urgency of labor regulations that establish digital guardrails, such as the right not to respond to work communications outside of operating hours, needs to be considered as a minimum standard in maintaining boundaries between work and personal life.

The results of this study indicate that organizations need to treat work-life balance (WLB) not merely as a formal policy, but as a practice that is truly felt by employees. First, companies are advised to implement a task-based hybrid work system, rather than simply setting hours, so that workers with family responsibilities can still adjust their work location and time without losing productivity. Second, organizations need to invest in training programs on family-supportive supervisor behaviors so that line managers are able to show empathy, flexibility, and fairness in managing workloads. Third, companies can strengthen digital guardrails such as quiet hours (no email hours) or clear response expectations to help employees maintain boundaries between work and personal life. Fourth, providing additional domestic support, such as childcare subsidies, lactation rooms, or adequate remote working facilities, will strengthen engagement while reducing the risk of burnout.

#### **4. Conclusions**

This study confirms that WLB has a significant effect on employee performance, with effects varying according to family status, generation, and organizational support. Employees with family responsibilities benefit greatly from work flexibility, but are more vulnerable to double burdens when domestic and organizational resources are limited. Generational differences also show that Gen Z is more assertive in enforcing work–personal boundaries than Millennials, who experience burnout more frequently. The main contribution of this study is to expand WLB theory by integrating life-stage and implementation fidelity perspectives into the boundary theory and job demands–resources model frameworks. Practically, this research provides guidance for organizations to design more adaptive hybrid policies, educate supervisors to be supportive, and implement digital regulations that protect employee well-being. Thus, this study not only enriches global literature with a qualitative perspective from Indonesia but also

provides a concrete foundation for sustainable HRM policies in the era of flexible work.

This study is phenomenologically based on a single financial services company in Indonesia, so cross-industry and cross-cultural generalizations are still limited. Future research needs to expand the context to other sectors such as manufacturing, healthcare, and education, which have different work characteristics. Longitudinal studies are also recommended to explore how WLB dynamics change over the course of life cycles, generations, or organizational conditions. Additionally, a mixed-methods approach could be used to test these qualitative findings with broader quantitative models, for example, measuring the moderating role of domestic support or generation on the WLB, performance relationship. Experimental research or organizational interventions, such as supportive supervisor training or the implementation of digital guardrails, would also be valuable for testing the causal effectiveness of policies.

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