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The Influence Of Hybrid Working Model On Employee Engagement Through Work-Life Balance On Millennial Generation Employees

Pengaruh Hybrid Working Model Terhadap Employee Engagement Melalui Work-Life Balance Pada Karyawan Generasi Milenial

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ABSTRACT

The transformation of the post-COVID-19 work world has encouraged the implementation of a hybrid work model that combines on-site and remote work. However, its impact on work-life balance (WLB) and Employee Engagement (EE) in the millennial generation still varies, depending on job characteristics. This study aims to analyze the effect of the hybrid working model (HWM) on EE through WLB mediation, by comparing two groups of workers: office employees and sales-marketers. This study uses a quantitative approach with the Multiple Group Analysis (MGA) method through SmartPLS. The sample consisted of 140 respondents who were evenly divided into 70 office employees and 70 sales-marketers in Surabaya, selected using a purposive-random volunteer sampling technique. Data were analyzed descriptively and inferentially to test the causal relationship between variables. The results showed that HWM had a significant positive effect on WLB for office employees, but was not significant for sales-marketers. Meanwhile, HWM had an insignificant negative effect on EE for office employees, but was significantly positive for sales-marketers. WLB was shown to increase EE in both groups. WLB mediation also strengthens the influence of HWM on EE. This finding highlights the importance of adjusting HWM policies based on job type to improve employee well-being and engagement.

Keywords: Hybrid Working Model, Work-life Balance, Employee Engagement, Millennial

ABSTRACT

Transformasi dunia kerja pasca-COVID-19 telah mendorong penerapan model kerja hybrid yang menggabungkan kerja di kantor dan kerja jarak jauh. Namun, dampaknya terhadap keseimbangan kerjakehidupan (WLB) dan keterlibatan karyawan (EE) pada generasi milenial masih bervariasi, tergantung pada karakteristik pekerjaan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh model kerja hybrid (HWM) terhadap EE melalui mediasi WLB, dengan membandingkan dua kelompok pekerja: karyawan kantor dan tenaga penjualan-pemasaran. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode Analisis Kelompok Multi (MGA) melalui SmartPLS. Sampel terdiri dari 140 responden yang dibagi rata menjadi 70 karyawan kantor dan 70 tenaga penjualan-pemasaran di Surabaya, dipilih menggunakan teknik sampling sukarela acak terarah. Data dianalisis secara deskriptif dan inferensial untuk menguji hubungan kausal antara variabel. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa HWM memiliki dampak positif yang signifikan terhadap WLB bagi karyawan kantor, tetapi tidak signifikan bagi tenaga penjualan-pemasaran. Sementara itu, HWM memiliki efek negatif yang tidak signifikan terhadap EE bagi karyawan kantor, tetapi memiliki efek positif yang signifikan bagi tenaga pemasaran. WLB terbukti meningkatkan EE di kedua kelompok. Mediasi WLB juga memperkuat pengaruh HWM terhadap EE. Temuan ini menyoroti pentingnya menyesuaikan kebijakan HWM berdasarkan jenis pekerjaan untuk meningkatkan kesejahteraan dan keterlibatan karyawan.

Kata kunci: Model Kerja Hybrid, Keseimbangan Kerja-Kehidupan, Keterlibatan Karyawan, Generasi Milenial

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how we work, leading to the rise of hybrid work models that mix on-site and remote working. This shift has different implications for various worker groups. For office workers in roles like administration, finance, or HR, this is a

significant change from the traditional requirement to be physically present. They often see hybrid work as a privilege that saves travel time and offers greater control over their schedules. In contrast, sales and marketing employees, who already need flexibility due to their roles, find hybrid arrangements less novel.

According to a Deloitte Global survey (2024), 51% of Gen Z and 57% of millennials work entirely in the office, while only 14% of Gen Z and 11% of millennials work fully from home. Meanwhile, 35% of Gen Z and 32% of millennials utilize a hybrid work model. This data highlights the growing popularity of flexible work patterns. While hybrid work addresses the needs of the modern workforce, it also brings new challenges. What was initially seen as a response to pandemic constraints now has varying effects based on job characteristics.

Therefore, it's essential to explore how hybrid work impacts two key aspects of employee well-being and productivity: work-life balance and employee engagement. Work-life balance is the equilibrium between work and personal life, which, when achieved, leads to higher satisfaction and reduced stress and turnover (Bocean *et al.*, 2023). On the other hand, employee engagement reflects how willing employees are to put forth their best effort, relying heavily on trust, transparency, respect, and collaboration with leadership (Kahle-Piasecki & Hyslop, 2022). Saks & Gruman (2020) stress that engagement includes job satisfaction, a willingness to go the extra mile, and a sense of pride in one's workplace.

After the pandemic, the boundaries between work and personal life have become increasingly blurred, leading many workers to feel "always connected" and struggling to establish work-life boundaries at home (Yarooms, 2024). This situation contributes to emotional exhaustion and burnout, with 17% of millennials quitting their jobs due to burnout, according to Deloitte Global (2024). This suggests that the hybrid work model isn't a guaranteed solution for achieving work-life balance; it needs policies that align with today's work nature and employee expectations.

Attention to work-life balance and employee engagement is essential, especially for millennials, who make up a significant portion of the workforce. They desire not only flexible workplaces but also environments that reflect their values and support their well-being (Setiadi *et al.*, 2024; Purba *et al.*, 2024). However, challenges persist. Wigert & White (2022) highlight that the main issues in a hybrid model include ensuring access to digital tools and maintaining organizational culture, which are crucial for collaboration and loyalty.

Several studies underscore this urgency. Research by Kusumawati (2024) and Dwinugraha & Lastiati (2025) shows that hybrid work positively impacts work-life balance, leading to higher job satisfaction and lower stress levels. In contrast, Sumarni's (2023) research on AXA Mandiri employees reveals a paradox: instead of improving work-life balance, hybrid work may actually weaken it. The study found that 51% of employees struggled to disconnect from work, largely due to extended virtual meetings. Additionally, 34% reported chronic stress (burnout), while 30% mentioned disrupted time for family and friends. Compounding the issue, 20% worked beyond operational hours, and 11% experienced physical fatigue and visual impairment. These findings indicate that hybrid flexibility without proper time management creates a cycle of imbalance.

Meanwhile, a survey by Hayes & Northup (2024) of over 28,000 workers showed that work engagement increases with hybrid working practices, although this varies with technological support and organizational culture. Studies by Saritha & Akthari (2024) and Angreni & Mahyuni (2024) also found positive effects of hybrid work on employee engagement. Research from Jasmine & Utomo (2024), Chaniago & Rahmawati (2024), and Lakhani *et al.* (2024) indicates that work-life balance positively influences employee engagement, reinforcing organizational commitment, although one study noted no significant effect (Septiani & Frianto, 2023).

Most research on employees overlooks job type distinctions. Specifically, sales-marketers work differently than office employees, especially in their responses to hybrid work systems. This study aims to investigate how hybrid work models impact work-life balance and employee engagement for these two groups, focusing on millennials. The goal is to offer both theoretical insights and practical guidance for developing fair and tailored hybrid work systems. Additionally, the findings will help commercial companies create better work experiences by considering the preferences and roles of today's dominant workforce generations.

Based on the research background, the following research hypothesis is proposed:

H_{1a}: Bagi karyawan, hybrid working model meningkatkan work-life balance.

H_{1b}: Bagi sales-marketer, hybrid working model meningkatkan work-life balance.

H_{2a}: Bagi karyawan, hybrid working model meningkatkan employee engagement.

H_{2b}: Bagi sales-marketer, hybrid working model meningkatkan employee engagement.

H_{3a}: Bagi karyawan, work-life balance meningkatkan employee engagement.

H_{3b}: Bagi sales-marketer, work-life balance meningkatkan employee engagement.

H_{4a}: Bagi karyawan, mediasi *work-life balance* memperkuat pengaruh *hybrid working model* terhadap *employee engagement*.

H_{4b}: Bagi *sales-marketer*, mediasi *work-life balance* memperkuat pengaruh *hybrid working model* terhadap *employee engagement*.

2. Literature Review

Hybrid Working Model

The concept of hybrid working has become an important trend in today's workplace, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Kniffin *et al.* (2021), hybrid working is a flexible approach that blends remote work and on-site work, allowing employees to divide their time based on agreements with their organization. Grant et al. (2021) also highlight that hybrid working represents a shift not only in location but also in management practices, communication, and company culture. This model requires a balance between individual freedom and team collaboration, with flexibility being crucial (Allen *et al.*, 2020).

Various studies have shown the key benefits of hybrid working. For instance, research by DeFilippis *et al.* (2020) found that productivity in knowledge-based sectors increased by an average of 5% due to less travel time and greater individual focus. Additionally, hybrid working helps reduce stress from work-family conflicts and lowers operational costs for organizations. It also provides access to a wider talent pool, improving employee retention (Bloom et al., 2022). However, these benefits can vary based on industry, job traits, and tech support (Barrero *et al.*, 2021).

Despite its advantages, hybrid working has some criticisms and challenges. Studies point out issues like decreased team cohesion, difficulties in sharing knowledge, and the risk of social isolation for remote workers (Taneja *et al.*, 2023). Barrero *et al.* (2021) caution that hybrid working might increase gender inequality since women often opt for remote work to manage family responsibilities, which can limit their visibility in decision-making. Additionally, critics note that heavy reliance on technology could lead to digital fatigue and diminish the spontaneous creativity that arises from informal office interactions (Grant *et al.*, 2021). *Work-Life Balance*

The concept of work-life balance (WLB) has gained significant attention in management and organizational psychology, especially due to the demands of modern work. Greenhaus & Kossek (2022) define WLB as the ability to manage professional and personal responsibilities without feeling overwhelmed by conflicts between the two. Clark (2020) expands on this definition, noting that WLB involves not just managing time, but also energy, priorities, and satisfaction, allowing individuals to be fully present in each role. This results in a sense of control and overall well-being (Kossek *et al.*, 2021).

Research supports the advantages of WLB. For instance, a study by Kelly *et al.* (2021) found that employees with high WLB can see productivity increases of up to 20%, thanks to lower mental fatigue and higher motivation. Organizations also benefit from reduced turnover and enhanced employer branding, as WLB is attractive to younger talent (Lapierre *et al.*, 2015).

To effectively implement WLB, a comprehensive approach is necessary. Companies like Unilever and Google have introduced flexible work policies, extended parental leave, and wellness programs to help employees manage stress (Kossek *et al.*, 2021). It's crucial to involve employees in creating these policies to address diverse needs (Derks *et al.*, 2014).

However, WLB is not without criticism. Some researchers argue that it overlooks structural issues, like gender and class inequality. Chung & Van der Lippe (2022) found that women, particularly in informal sectors, often struggle to achieve WLB due to the dual demands of home and work. Additionally, critiques from a cultural standpoint suggest that WLB is too individualistic, making it less applicable in collectivist societies that prioritize family or community obligations (Ollier-Malaterre & Rothbard, 2019). Another concern is the risk of disguised overwork, where employees feel pressured to work outside of hours to show commitment (Derks *et al.*, 2014).

Employee Engagement

The concept of employee engagement has become a key focus in management and organizational psychology, especially regarding how to improve performance and well-being at work. According to Bailey *et al.* (2015), employee engagement is the emotional and cognitive commitment employees have towards their organization, shown by their willingness to put in extra effort to achieve company goals. Macey and Schneider (2008) expand on this by distinguishing engagement from job satisfaction, stating that engagement involves a deeper psychological connection with one's job, team, and the organization's mission. Saks (2022) further adds that engagement is multidimensional, including physical, emotional, and cognitive aspects that encourage proactive and innovative behavior.

Numerous studies support the benefits of employee engagement. For instance, Jagannathan (2014) found that engagement can reduce employee turnover by 40% due to increased loyalty. Engaged employees also lead to greater customer satisfaction, as they can build stronger emotional bonds with clients (Soane *et al.*, 2012). However, the success of engagement initiatives relies on factors like leadership style, organizational culture, and fair reward systems (Shuck *et al.*, 2013).

To effectively implement employee engagement, a comprehensive approach is necessary. Companies like Google and Salesforce combine flexible work arrangements, competency-based development programs, and real-time recognition systems to enhance engagement (Harter, n.d.). Albrecht et al. (2018) note that training managers in empathetic communication and constructive feedback is essential for building trust, which underpins engagement. Technology, such as engagement survey platforms (e.g., Gallup Q12), is also vital for tracking trends and creating data-driven interventions (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). Furthermore, allowing employees to customize their tasks to their strengths—a practice known as job crafting—has been shown to boost engagement, particularly among millennials and Gen Z (Truss et al., 2013).

Despite its importance, employee engagement has faced academic criticism. Some researchers argue that the methods used to measure engagement can be simplistic, mainly relying on self-report surveys that may be biased (Guest, 2013). Others, such as Cooke *et al.* (2021), criticize the "one-size-fits-all" model in engagement programs, which overlooks cultural differences and individual values. For example, employees from collectivist cultures may prioritize team harmony over individual recognition. Critics also warn that "engagement as a control tool" can lead organizations to exploit employees' emotions for increased productivity without considering their long-term well-being (Kelliher *et al.*, 2019). Over-

engagement can result in burnout, especially if employees feel pressured to show commitment beyond their limits. Structural issues like wage inequality and lack of transparency can also hinder engagement efforts, even when well-executed programs are in place (Saks, 2022).

3. Research Methods

This quantitative research looks at how the hybrid working model affects employee engagement and work-life balance. It also analyzes the characteristics of the respondents based on the study variables. The study focuses on employees and sales-marketers in Surabaya City. Since the exact population size was uncertain, the researcher used purposive-random voluntary sampling. This method involves: (1) selecting participants who meet specific criteria (employees and sales-marketers engaged in hybrid work), (2) randomly distributing questionnaires to various companies in Surabaya to prevent bias, and (3) relying on the willingness of participants to be involved.

According to Hair et al. (2010), the minimum sample size for multivariate analysis should be at least 10 times the number of research indicators. With 14 indicators in this study, a minimum of 140 respondents was determined, with an equal number of 70 office employees and 70 sales-marketers.

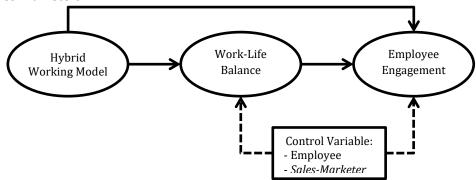


Fig. 1. Research Framework

Descriptive analysis was conducted to understand the respondents' characteristics, while inferential statistics involved Multiple Group Analysis (MGA) using SmartPLS. This method tested the differences in the impact of the hybrid working model between the two groups. SmartPLS was chosen because it effectively handles small to medium sample sizes and employs the bootstrapping resampling method (Hair *et al.*, 2017).

4. Results and Discussions

Results

The study results are presented in two ways: first, a summary of the analysis of respondents' answers to describe their characteristics; second, the results from inferential statistical analysis using SmartPLS. To interpret the hypothesis test results, we look at the Original Sample (O) value and the p-value. The O value shows the direction of the effect (a positive value means a strengthening effect, while a negative value means a weakening effect). The p-value indicates significance; a value below 0.05 suggests a strong influence, while a value above 0.05 indicates a lack of significance (O value and p-value).

Table 1. Respondents' Characteristics

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	Characteristics	Employee		Sales-Marketer	
	Characteristics -		Female	Male	Female
Sex		18	52	66	4
Age	27-31 y.o	8	25	23	0

	32-37 y.o	10	18	32	3
	38-42 y.o	0	9	11	1
HWM	Ever	18	52	0	0
	Currently	0	0	66	4

The survey results reveal that the employee group includes 18 men (25.7%) and 52 women (74.3%), while the sales-marketer group is predominantly male, with 66 men (94.3%) and only 4 women (5.7%). This suggests that the sales-marketing role is more suited for men, likely due to the physical stamina required for marketing and selling products or services.

In terms of age, most employees are in the 27-31 years range (33 people), followed by 32-37 years (28 people) and 38-42 years (9 people). For sales-marketers, the majority fall between 30-39 years (32 people), with 20-29 years (23 people) and 40-49 years (12 people) following.

Regarding the hybrid working model (HWM), there's a marked difference between the two groups. All employees (100%) used HWM during the pandemic, but none continue to do so now that it has ended. In contrast, all sales-marketers (100%) still use HWM, as their work often requires them to be outside the office. This reflects their job needs: employees typically handle internal tasks that can now be done on-site without health risks, while sales-marketers benefit from the flexibility to engage with clients directly in the field, explaining why their use of HWM remains high post-pandemic.

Table 2. Hasil Uji Hipotesis untuk Responden Karyawan

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	Hipotesis	Original Sample (O)	p-value
H _{1a}	HWM → WLB	0.035	0.014
H _{2a}	HWM → EE	-0.127	0.351
H _{3a}	WLB → EE	0.051	0.028
H _{4a}	$HWM \rightarrow WLB \rightarrow EE$	0.065	0.003

Tabel 3. Hasil Uji Hipotesis untuk Responden Sales-Marketer

	Hipotesis	Original Sample (O)	p-value
H _{1b}	HWM → WLB	0.002	0.987
H _{2b}	HWM → EE	0.523	0.008
H _{3b}	WLB → EE	0.054	0.031
H _{4b}	$HWM \rightarrow WLB \rightarrow EE$	0.072	0.005

The hypothesis testing results using SmartPLS, presented in Tables 2 and 3, can be interpreted as follows:

- 1) Regarding HWM→WLB test, the results showed the following: for employee respondents, the O value was 0.035 with a p-value of 0.014, indicating a statistically significant positive effect of HWM on WLB. In contrast, sales-marketer respondents showed an O value of 0.002 and a p-value of 0.987, suggesting a positive but statistically insignificant effect. The high but insignificant value from sales and marketing respondents indicates that the hybrid working model does not influence work-life balance. Therefore, we can conclude that it has no effect on the work-life balance of sales and marketing professionals. Thus, for salesmarketers, we can conclude that HWM does not affect WLB, leading to acceptance of hypothesis H1a and rejection of hypothesis H1b.
- 2) Regarding HWM→EE test, employee respondents displayed an O value of -0.127 and a p-value of 0.351, indicating a statistically insignificant negative effect. On the other hand, sales-marketer respondents had an O value of 0.523 and a p-value of 0.008, showing a significant positive effect on EE. Therefore, H2a is rejected, while H2b is accepted.

- 3) Regarding WLB→EE test, both groups had positive and significant results: employees had an O value of 0.051 and a p-value of 0.028, while sales-marketers had an O value of 0.054 with a p-value of 0.031. Thus, both hypotheses H3a and H3b are accepted.
- 4) Regarding HWM→WLB→EE mediation test, results showed that for employees, O = 0.065 and p = 0.003, and for sales-marketers, O = 0.072 and p = 0.005. This indicates a significant positive mediation effect for both groups, leading to acceptance of hypotheses H4a and H4b.

Pembahassan

The hybrid working model has a positive impact on employees' work-life balance. Working from home is seen as a valuable "privilege," allowing employees to manage their time better, such as preparing meals, supervising children, or handling household tasks without needing special leave. According to Border Theory (Clark, 2020), having control over where and when they work helps employees balance work and family demands, reducing role pressure and increasing life satisfaction. This aligns with findings from Krajčík (2023), Santilan *et al.* (2023), and Kusumawati (2024), but contradicts Yosunkaya (2023) and Nugroho & Desiana (2024).

However, for sales and marketing professionals, the hybrid model does not significantly impact work-life balance. Their roles involve direct client interactions and fieldwork, making hybrid options less beneficial. According to Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1958), sales-marketers have adjusted their expectations, treating location flexibility as a non-incentive, which diminishes its effect on work-life balance. This contradicts Krajčík (2023), Santilan et al. (2023), Yosunkaya (2023), Nugroho & Desiana (2024), and Kusumawati (2024).

Furthermore, while the hybrid model allows for more freedom, it negatively and insignificantly impacts employee engagement. Domestic distractions, such as children needing attention and poor work conditions at home, can weaken the connection employees feel toward their organization. Thompson (2025) suggests that having three days a week in the office is optimal for maintaining engagement; too many remote days can harm social ties and motivation. This aligns with Kuppachi (2023), but contradicts Eng *et al.* (2024) and Rajeswari & Venugopal (2024).

The hybrid working model positively impacts employee engagement for salesmarketers, enhancing their attachment to the organization. The flexibility of choosing work locations improves their overall work quality. Traditionally, required office check-ins for client visits created bureaucracy, but a hybrid system supported by a mobile app streamlines this process, increasing field time. This autonomy boosts confidence and professional recognition, which strengthens their commitment to the company's targets. This aligns with findings from Eng et al. (2024) and Rajeswari & Venugopal (2024), but opposes Kuppachi (2023).

Maintaining a good work-life balance is crucial for employee engagement, including for sales marketers. When employees harmonize work demands with personal needs, they face less stress and burnout. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model indicates that this balance minimizes burnout and enhances engagement, reflected through vigor, dedication, and absorption. Employees who perceive their organization as supportive of work-life balance are more committed and enthusiastic about their tasks, supporting findings from Pathak & Lawande (2021), Mulang (2022), and Sopian *et al.* (2022).

The research reveals that effectively maintaining a good work-life balance enhances the positive impact of the hybrid working model on employee engagement. Sales-marketers who balance work and home life experience increased attachment to their company. Initially, the hybrid working model seemed to have no direct influence on engagement. However, by improving work-life balance through flexible hour policies or digital tools for visit management,

hybrid models can strengthen engagement. According to the Job Demands-Resources Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), the flexibility of hybrid working is a job resource that needs a personal resource—work-life balance—to meet job demands. With this personal resource in place, both employees and sales-marketers experience greater vigor, dedication, and absorption, ultimately enhancing employee engagement. These insights regarding the mediating effect are novel and have not been previously studied.

5. Conclusion

Hybrid working models can greatly enhance employees' work-life balance by providing autonomy over their location and schedule. However, their positive effect on employee engagement is only fully realized when work-life balance is maintained. Without this essential resource, the flexibility of hybrid working models can actually diminish employee engagement due to distractions at home and inadequate work facilities.

In contrast to general employees, sales and marketing professionals tend to experience significantly higher levels of engagement. This is largely due to the convenience of managing their tasks through mobile applications. Nonetheless, they too require a strong work-life balance for hybrid working to effectively strengthen their connection with the organization.

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