

Unlocking Employee Performance: Work-Life Balance, Quality of Work Life, Job Satisfaction, and Workload in the Public Sector

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effects of work-life balance and quality of work life on employee performance, with job satisfaction as a mediating variable and workload as a moderating variable. The research was conducted at the National Road Implementation Agency of South Kalimantan, involving 158 civil servants. A quantitative explanatory approach was applied using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The results show that work-life balance, quality of work life, and job satisfaction are positively associated with employee performance. Work-life balance and quality of work life also positively affect job satisfaction, confirming its mediating role. However, workload does not have a significant direct effect on employee performance, but significantly weakens the relationship between quality of work life and performance. These findings highlight that improving employee well-being must be accompanied by proper workload management to achieve optimal performance outcomes.

Keywords: *Work-Life Balance, Quality of Work Life, Job Satisfaction, Workload, Employee Performance.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Employee performance plays a critical role in determining the effectiveness of public service delivery, particularly in infrastructure-related government agencies. In Indonesia, civil servants are expected to maintain high performance standards to support national development goals. However, recent evidence indicates that performance outcomes are not solely determined by formal targets or administrative systems, but also by employees' psychological and work environment conditions (Fatimah et al., 2025; Susanto et al., 2023).

At the National Road Implementation Agency of South Kalimantan, performance data in 2024 showed a decline in employees rated "very good," accompanied by an increase in lower performance categories. This condition coincided with the implementation of budget efficiency policies, which limited operational resources and increased work pressure. Preliminary observations also indicated that employees experienced work-life imbalance and dissatisfaction due to workload demands.

From a theoretical perspective, the Effort-Recovery Model explains that continuous job demands without adequate recovery may reduce employees' energy and performance capacity (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). Similarly, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) framework suggests that job resources, such as supportive work conditions, can enhance performance, while job demands, such as workload, may weaken the effectiveness of these resources by increasing strain and reducing employees' capacity to utilize available support (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Demerouti et al., 2001).

Work-life balance enables employees to maintain equilibrium between work and personal life, reducing strain and supporting productivity (Haar & Brougham, 2022). Quality of work life reflects the extent to which organizations provide fair, safe, and supportive work conditions (Nanjundeswaraswamy et al., 2024). Both variables are expected to enhance job satisfaction, which in turn improves performance.

However, previous studies show inconsistent findings regarding the mediating role of job satisfaction (Faustina & Julianti, 2024; Putri & Ardiana, 2024). In addition, workload may act as a boundary condition that limits the

effectiveness of work-related resources (Turgut et al., 2019). Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of work-life balance and quality of work life on employee performance through job satisfaction, while also testing workload as a moderating variable.

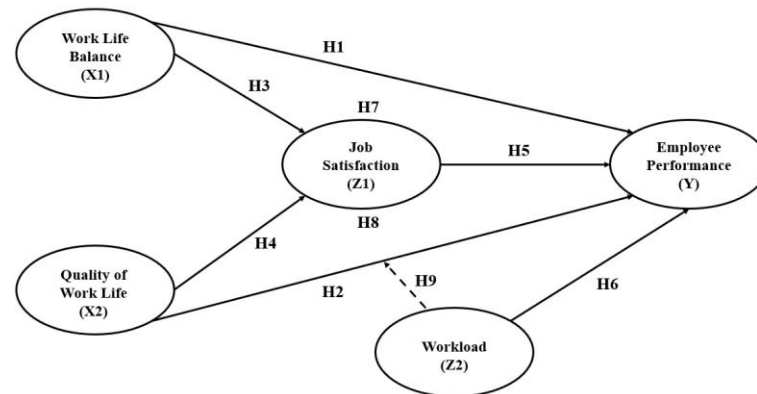


Figure 1. Research Conceptual Framework

Based on the theoretical framework, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: Work-life balance positively affects employee performance.
- H2: Quality of work life positively affects employee performance.
- H3: Work-life balance positively affects job satisfaction.
- H4: Quality of work life positively affects job satisfaction.
- H5: Job satisfaction positively affects employee performance.
- H6: Workload negatively affects employee performance.
- H7: Job satisfaction mediates the effect of work-life balance on performance.
- H8: Job satisfaction mediates the effect of quality of work life on performance.
- H9: Workload weakens the relationship between quality of work life and performance.

This study contributes to the JD-R and Effort-Recovery literature by showing that work-life balance and quality of work life operate as performance-enhancing resources through job satisfaction, while workload functions as a boundary condition that weakens the resource–performance link under resource-constrained public sector conditions.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a quantitative explanatory approach with a causal-verify design. The research was conducted at the National Road Implementation Agency of South Kalimantan. The population consisted of all civil servants in the agency. A census sampling technique was used, resulting in 158 respondents involved in operational activities.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. The measurement instruments were adapted from established sources: work-life balance from Hayman (2005), quality of work life from Nanjundeswaraswamy et al. (2024), job satisfaction from Spector (2022), workload from Spector & Jex (1998), and employee performance from Fatimah et al. (2025). The sample size of 158 respondents was considered adequate for PLS-SEM because it exceeded the minimum requirement based on the 10-times rule and was appropriate for estimating the proposed model with multiple structural paths.

Data analysis was performed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS. This method was selected because it is suitable for analyzing complex models involving mediation and moderation

relationships (Hair et al., 2022). To minimize common method bias, respondents were assured of anonymity, item wording was kept clear, and the questionnaire order was arranged to reduce response-pattern bias. Statistically, common method bias was assessed using full collinearity VIF. The results were below the recommended threshold of 3.3, indicating that common method bias was not a serious concern.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The respondents were mostly male, aged between 31–50 years, and had more than five years of work experience. This profile indicates that the majority of respondents were experienced civil servants who had sufficient familiarity with the agency's work system, organizational demands, and performance expectations. Therefore, their responses can be considered relevant for assessing work-life balance, quality of work life, job satisfaction, workload, and employee performance in the studied agency.

Descriptive analysis showed that work-life balance, quality of work life, job satisfaction, and employee performance were perceived at relatively high levels, while workload was at a moderate level. This indicates that employees generally viewed their work conditions positively, although job demands were still present. The moderate workload score suggests that workload was not perceived as extremely excessive, but it remained strong enough to influence how employees experienced workplace quality and performance.

Table 1. Convergent Validity and Reliability

Variable	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Work-Life Balance (X1)	0.617	0.938	0.947
Quality of Work Life (X2)	0.612	0.976	0.977
Job Satisfaction (Z)	0.636	0.885	0.913
Workload (M)	0.755	0.924	0.939
Employee Performance (Y)	0.628	0.958	0.962

Source: Primary Data, 2026

The measurement model evaluation showed that all constructs met the required validity and reliability criteria. The AVE values were above 0.50, indicating that each construct was able to explain more than half of the variance of its indicators. This confirms adequate convergent validity. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values were also above 0.70, showing strong internal consistency. In practical terms, the indicators used in this study consistently measured their respective constructs, so the model was appropriate for further structural testing.

Table 2. R² and Q² of the Structural Model

Endogenous Variable	R ²	Q ²	Interpretation
Employee Performance (Y)	0.573	0.431	Moderate
Job Satisfaction (Z)	0.461	0.465	Moderate

Source: Primary Data, 2026

The R² value for employee performance was 0.573, meaning that work-life balance, quality of work life, job satisfaction, and workload explained 57.3% of the variance in employee performance. This indicates moderate explanatory power. The remaining 42.7% may be explained by other factors not included in the model, such as leadership style, organizational support, motivation, competence, organizational culture, or compensation.

The R² value for job satisfaction was 0.461, meaning that work-life balance and quality of work life explained 46.1% of the variance in job satisfaction. This result indicates that both variables are important antecedents of job satisfaction, although other factors may also contribute to employees' satisfaction.

The Q² values for employee performance and job satisfaction were 0.431 and 0.465, respectively. Since both values are above zero, the model demonstrates acceptable predictive relevance for both endogenous constructs. These results suggest that the model has sufficient predictive capability in explaining employee performance and job satisfaction.

Table 3. SRMR Result of Model Fit Assessment

Data Set	SRMR Result for Composite Models
Full set (n=158)	0.054

Source: Primary Data, 2026

This study also used the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) as a model fit measure for PLS-SEM. SRMR reflects the difference between the observed correlation matrix and the model-implied correlation matrix. Therefore, it can be used to assess the average magnitude of discrepancies between observed and expected correlations.

The SRMR result showed a value of 0.054 for both the saturated model and the estimated model. Since this value is below the recommended threshold of 0.08, the model can be considered to have a good fit (Hair et al., 2022). This indicates that the proposed structural model adequately represents the empirical data.

Table 4. Results of Direct, Mediation, and Moderation Effects

Hyp.	Structural Path	Coefficient	t-Statistic	p-Value	Decision
<i>Direct Effects</i>					
H1	Work-Life Balance → Employee Performance	0.145	5.341	<0.001	Supported
H2	Quality of Work Life → Employee Performance	0.445	9.397	<0.001	Supported
H3	Work-Life Balance → Job Satisfaction	0.537	7.124	<0.001	Supported
H4	Quality of Work Life → Job Satisfaction	0.404	5.231	<0.001	Supported
H5	Job Satisfaction → Employee Performance	0.360	4.207	<0.001	Supported
H6	Workload → Employee Performance	0.071	1.168	0.121	Rejected
<i>Mediation Effects</i>					
H7	Work-Life Balance → Job Satisfaction → Employee Performance	0.196	3.548	<0.001	Supported
H8	Quality of Work Life → Job Satisfaction → Employee Performance	0.147	3.392	<0.001	Supported
<i>Moderation Effects</i>					
H9	Workload × Quality of Work Life → Employee Performance	-0.128	2.124	0.017	Supported

Source: Primary Data, 2026

The hypothesis testing results indicate that eight of the nine proposed hypotheses were empirically supported, while one hypothesis was rejected. Work-life balance had a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.145$, $t = 5.341$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that employees who maintain better balance between work and personal life tend to demonstrate higher performance. This finding is consistent with prior studies showing that work-life balance supports employee performance by reducing strain and preserving employees' psychological energy (Haar & Brougham, 2022; Prasetyo & Wardoyo, 2023). Quality of work life also showed a positive and significant effect on employee performance and produced the strongest direct effect in the model ($\beta = 0.445$, $t = 9.397$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that fair, safe, supportive, and meaningful work conditions are central to strengthening employee performance. This result aligns with (Nanjundeswaraswamy et al., 2024), who emphasized that quality of work life functions as an important organizational condition for improving employee outcomes.

Work-life balance had the strongest effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.537$, $t = 7.124$, $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that employees' ability to manage work and personal responsibilities is a major factor in shaping their satisfaction with work. Previous studies similarly found that employees with better work-life balance tend to report higher job satisfaction (Haar & Brougham, 2022; Irawanto et al., 2021). Quality of work life also significantly improved job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.404$, $t = 5.231$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that employees are more likely to feel satisfied when they perceive their work environment as supportive and development-oriented (Nanjundeswaraswamy et al., 2024; Putri & Ardiana, 2024).

Job satisfaction had a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.360$, $t = 4.207$, $p < 0.001$). This result confirms that satisfaction functions as an important psychological resource that encourages employees to maintain commitment, effort, and responsibility in carrying out their work. The mediation results further show that job satisfaction significantly mediated the effects of work-life balance on employee performance ($\beta = 0.196$, $t = 3.548$, $p < 0.001$) and quality of work life on employee performance ($\beta = 0.147$, $t = 3.392$, $p < 0.001$). The stronger indirect effect of work-life balance indicates that work-life balance contributes to employee performance primarily by strengthening employees' satisfaction with their work. This supports prior findings that job satisfaction acts as a psychological pathway linking favorable work conditions with performance outcomes (Fadhlika & Darmastuti, 2024; Prasetyo & Wardoyo, 2023).

However, workload did not have a significant direct effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.071$, $t = 1.168$, $p = 0.121$). Therefore, H6 was rejected. This result suggests that workload may not operate as an isolated predictor of performance in this context. Instead, its role appears more conditional. Although workload did not directly affect performance, it significantly moderated the relationship between quality of work life and employee performance ($\beta = -0.128$, $t = 2.124$, $p = 0.017$). The negative moderation coefficient indicates that higher workload weakens the positive influence of quality of work life on performance. This finding supports the JD-R framework, which argues that job demands may reduce the motivational benefits of job resources when employees' energy and coping capacity are depleted (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Demerouti et al., 2001). In line with this perspective, prior studies have shown that stress-related mechanisms, particularly burnout, can restrict the positive influence of quality of work life on productivity (Leitao et al., 2021). Similarly, excessive workload has been found to reduce employees' well-being and

diminish the effectiveness of work-related resources (Saleem & Malik, 2023). Thus, workload operates more as a boundary condition than as a direct predictor in this model.

Table 5. F-Square

	<i>f-square</i>
Job Satisfaction -> Employee Performance	0.162
Quality of Work Life -> Employee Performance	0.324
Quality of Work Life -> Job Satisfaction	0.29
Workload -> Employee Performance	0.011
Workload x Quality of Work Life -> Employee Performance	0.038
WLB -> EP	0.037
WLB -> JS	0.549

Source: Primary Data, 2026

The f-square test results show that each exogenous variable has a different effect size on the endogenous variables. Based on (Sarstedt et al., 2022), f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large effects, respectively. The largest effect was found in the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction, with an f^2 value of 0.549. This indicates a large effect, meaning that work-life balance is a highly important predictor of job satisfaction. Quality of work life also showed a relatively strong effect on employee performance, with an f^2 value of 0.324, approaching the large category. In addition, quality of work life had a medium effect on job satisfaction, with an f^2 value of 0.290, while job satisfaction had a medium effect on employee performance, with an f^2 value of 0.162.

Meanwhile, the effects of work-life balance on employee performance, workload on employee performance, and the interaction between workload and quality of work life on employee performance were relatively small, with f^2 values of 0.037, 0.011, and 0.038, respectively. These findings indicate that work-life balance contributes more strongly to employee performance through job satisfaction rather than through a direct pathway. Workload also appears to have limited direct explanatory power, but its interaction with quality of work life still provides a small moderating contribution.

Overall, the f-square results confirm that job satisfaction, quality of work life, and work-life balance are the main explanatory components in the model. The strongest practical effect lies in the role of work-life balance in shaping job satisfaction, while quality of work life is the most influential direct predictor of employee performance.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that work-life balance and quality of work life are positively associated with employee performance, both directly and through job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the Effort-Recovery Model, which emphasizes the importance of recovery in maintaining employees' work capacity, and the JD-R framework, which explains how job resources support motivation and performance (Demerouti et al., 2001; Mulder et al., 2000). Job satisfaction plays a crucial mediating role in translating favorable work conditions into performance outcomes, supporting prior evidence that satisfaction is an important psychological mechanism linking workplace conditions and performance (Haar & Brougham, 2022; Spector, 2022). Workload does not directly influence performance but acts as a limiting factor that weakens the positive effect of quality of work life, which aligns with the JD-R argument that job demands may reduce the effectiveness of job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Turgut et al., 2019). Therefore, organizations must manage workload effectively to ensure that employee well-being initiatives produce optimal results. This study contributes to the extension of the Effort-Recovery Model and JD-R framework in the public sector context. Practically, the findings suggest that public organizations should integrate work-life balance, workplace quality, and workload management into their performance strategies. Future research is recommended to use longitudinal designs, include multiple organizations, and incorporate additional variables such as employee engagement and psychological well-being.

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