

The Evolution Of Work-Life Balance: The Workplace Hopes And Challenges For Generation Z

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Abstrak

Literature review ini meneliti berbagai aspek tentang *work-life balance* melalui penelusuran evolusi konsep ini dari waktu ke waktu dan maknanya di tempat kerja Generasi Z. Merujuk pada berbagai artikel ilmiah, *review* ini memaparkan dasar teori, definisi, faktor anteseden dan konsekuen, dan temuan empiris untuk menawarkan pemahaman ringkas tentang *work-life balance*. Dari dampak teknologi hingga perubahan ekspektasi masyarakat, *review* ini menggali sifat dinamis *work-life balance* dan implikasinya untuk Generasi Z, organisasi, dan kemaslahatan masyarakat. Melalui analisis kritis atas literatur yang tersedia, *review* ini bertujuan menyumbangkan wawasan untuk riset masa depan dan aplikasi praktis dalam mendorong lingkungan kerja yang lebih sehat dan berkelanjutan.

Kata kunci: konflik, peran, keseimbangan, Gen Z, persepsi

Abstract

This literature review delves into the multifaceted realm of work-life balance, exploring the evolution of this concept over time and its significance in Generation Z' workplace. Drawing from a diverse range of scholarly articles, this review synthesizes key theories, definitions, antecedents-consequences, and empirical findings to provide a brief understanding of work-life balance. From the impact of technology to shifting societal expectations, the review examines the dynamic nature of work-life balance and its implications for Gen Z, organizations, and societal well-being. By critically analysing existing literature, this review aims to contribute valuable insights to the future research and practical applications in fostering healthier and more sustainable work environments.

Keywords: conflict, role, balance, Gen Z, perception

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INTRODUCTION

The difficulty of balancing two roles—personal and professional—faces every person who enters the employment. The responsibilities of work frequently take up the majority of our time, causing us to disregard activities that contribute to our pleasure and personal growth, such as hobbies, community involvement, further education, or simply spending time with our families at home (Delecta, 2011). When we are forced to perform monotonous tasks, we eventually grow bored at work. The majority of Generation Z is currently employed, thus they are not an exception. Businesses need to understand that different generations behave differently from one another and that the needs of the workplace need to change with the times in response to these generational shifts (Nurheni, Sukmawati, & Dirdjosuparto, 2019). A

solution to the role conflict must be found. Work-life balance is the state in which the two poles of personal and professional life are balanced.

Generation Z is searching for work experiences that align with their interests and, most importantly, provide opportunities for skill growth outside of the workplace. However, time constraints are a major issue and often prevent Generation Z from enriching themselves with other skills outside of work. Generation Z is predicted to bring drastic changes to the world of work in the future. Organizations around the world need to examine the preferences and know what Generation Z expects from an organization regarding work to absorb the diversity and leverage the different advantages this generation will bring to productivity levels and challenges faced (Agarwal & Vaghela, 2018). Generation Z will present enormous challenges to leaders, managers, supervisors, HR leaders, and educators in every sector of the workforce. It will be increasingly important to understand where they are coming from and key strategies to bring out the best in this recently emerged young workforce (Tulgan, 2013). They will look for workplaces that can stimulate their entrepreneurial spirit, balancing short-term face-to-face collaboration opportunities with personal space for independent and quiet work (Bridges, 2015).

Generation Z will continue to straddle the line between work-life balance as they want to have fun at work and stay digitally connected 24/7. A workplace that encourages entrepreneurship, a friendly work environment, and a flexible schedule are characteristics that Generation Z is looking for (Agarwal & Vaghela, 2018). Many studies have been conducted to examine the work-life balance, for example, Tavassoli & Sunyer (2020), state that there is a positive relationship between work-life balance and work and life satisfaction. In line with Tavassoli & Sunyer's research, the results of Puti & Frianto's research (2023) show that work-life balance has a positive and significant influence on employee performance. A significant contribution to job satisfaction comes from work-life balance in both IT and ITES industries (Kanwar, Singh, & Kodwani, 2009).

This research was conducted to summarize the opinions of previous researchers and the debate on work-life balance centered on assumptions and perceptions that triggered the question that work is perceived as something negative with long working hours and this becomes a particular problem for personal life (Eikhof, Warhurst, & Haunschild, 2007). Therefore, it is important to set boundaries between work and personal life. It is not uncommon for problems at work to affect one's personal life and vice versa when they should be kept separate. For this reason, this article will describe the basic theory, definitions, dimensions, and various variables that affect and are affected by work-life balance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Basic Theories

The following are some of the theories that have emerged in the development of thinking about work-life balance:

a. **Segmentation and Integration Theory**

The Segmentation and Integration Theory is the earliest basic theory of work-life balance. This theory states that personal life and work do not affect each other because the two roles are segmented in each situation (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). According to this theory, each domain works on its own and this theory is the opposite of the spillover theory. With this separation of time, space, and function, people can divide their lives into parts (Rincy & Panchanatham, 2014). We can categorize individuals based on the way they set boundaries to explore the whole between segmentation and integrity (Bulger, Matthews, & Hoffman, 2007). According to Rothbard, Phillips & Dumas (2005), people who desire more segmentation will feel less satisfied and have lower commitment to the organization when they have greater access to integration

policies, and vice versa. A good work-life balance can increase satisfaction at work and individuals become more committed to work.

Generation Z is predicted to bring drastic changes in the future workforce. By the end of the decade, workplaces will have absorbed a variety of differences to capitalize on the distinctive advantages of this generation that will bring productivity levels and faces to organizations around the world.

b. Enrichment Theory

Powell & Greenhaus (2006) developed the Enrichment Theory which is used to analyze the phenomenon of the Enrichment process between work life and personal or family life and then connect the two. Enrichment can be defined as a process that occurs when experiences in one job can improve the quality of life on the other side of the role (Khateeb, 2021). When a person has achieved a balance between their personal life and work, the individual will feel able to accumulate positive results or roles for both, this is seen from the perspective of role accumulation over the individual's ability to organize and control time and energy overwork and activities outside of work.

c. Facilitation Theory

Research conducted by Barnett (1998) found the idea of Facilitation Theory. where this theory is used to describe work that is by work-life balance. Facilitation Theory itself consists of three components, namely engagement, acquisition, and function enhancement. The involvement component shows the extent to which individuals invest in the domain activities of each role and gain benefits that can help other domains (Wayne et al., 2007).

d. Spill-over Theory

Family and work have a relationship and function that cannot be separated and become one unit in Spillover Theory. This theory states that everything experienced in the family can affect activities at work and vice versa. There are two interpretations of Spillover, according to Edwards & Rothbard (2000), there is a positive relationship between life and work ethic and satisfaction in life and work, while the second is that there is an overall transfer between abilities and actions in life and work. According to Rincy & Panchanatham (2014), Spill-over Theory is most commonly used to examine the balance between work and family life.

e. Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory has not been used explicitly in explaining work-life balance issues, but this theory is relevant to explain some phenomena of individual behavior in terms of work-life balance (Rincy & Panchanatham, 2014).

f. Compensation Theory

Khateeb (2021) argues that Compensation Theory is described as a negative relationship between work and family. This is because negative experiences in one activity can lead to positive perceptions in other domains or activities. This means that employees who are not satisfied will prioritize life outside of work more than life in the work environment, and vice versa (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). This mindset is what makes one role feel satisfied and makes another role recognise that something is wrong. According to Compensation Theory, when one function is not fulfilling, one becomes more focused on another while looking for affirmation, and when one's values and talents are being enhanced, one gains more experience in a different area (Roy, 2016).

g. Congruence Theory

This theory argues that variables that are not specifically related to family or work roles can impact the stability of different roles. This is done through variables such as genetic strengths and behavioral styles (Bello & Tanko, 2020). According to Rincy & Panchanatham (2014), Congruence Theory is a third variable that includes genetic

factors or community cohesion (level of education or intelligence) positively affecting work and family domains.

a. Inter-role Conflict Theory

Greenhaus & Allen (2011) argue that work-life balance can be achieved when roles in personal life and work can achieve harmony characterized by the absence of conflict between the two. Role conflict occurs in almost all aspects of life which will hurt life satisfaction (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). In explaining conflict theory, Greenhaus & Beutell (1985) distinguish three types of conflict namely; time-based conflict, stress-based conflict, and behavior-based conflict.

b. Human Capital Theory

Workers have access to limited basic forms of personal resources, namely time and energy. The former is behavioral and the latter is psychological and physical (Shaffer et al., 2001). When energy and time are used up in one role, there will not be enough energy and time to perform activities in another role. Therefore, there needs to be a strong effort in building and maintaining the development of life and work.

c. Resource Drain Theory

This theory assumes that resource drain refers to the exchange or shifting of a limited amount of available resources (e.g., time, energy, attention) from one space (e.g., family) to another space (i.e., work) thereby reducing the availability of the same resources for use in the space that originally had the resources (Morris & Madsen, 2007). When resources such as time, energy, and money cannot fulfill a desired role, this can lead to stress and burnout in other roles (Frone, 2023).

d. Resources Conservation Theory

From a work-life balance perspective, this theory asserts that energy and time expended, meaning resources used to perform activities in other areas may be affected by work activities (Bello & Tanko, 2020).

e. Ecology Systems Theory

Grzywacz & Marks (2000) emphasize the idea that family and work are a combination of tasks, methods, attitudes, and personal characteristics, emphasizing the fact that each characteristic creates different consequences that contribute to the understanding of professional life.

h. Border Theory and Boundary Theory

Boundary Theory examines various approaches or styles of boundary management through which individuals establish, maintain, or change boundaries around a field, such as through roles as a means of creating order (Ashforth, 2000). Kossek & Lautsch (2012) mentioned that a major challenge facing many workers today is how to manage the relationship between family responsibilities and roles. The relationship between work and family roles can be shaped through boundary management. The result of interest in border theory is about the balance between work and family with minimal role conflict (Clark, 2000).

Border Theory is a new approach to the problem of work-life balance and according to this theory, each person's role occurs in a certain area of life and these areas are separated by boundaries that can be physical, temporal, or psychological (Rincy & Panchanatham, 2014). This theory addresses the issue of "boundary crossing" between spheres of life, particularly the family and career spheres.

i. Overall Appraisal Theory

Overall Appraisal Theory reflects a person's general assessment of their overall life situation. This theory describes the concept as satisfaction and adequate performance at home and work with little conflict between roles, thus maintaining balance and harmony in life (Clark, Koch, & Hill, 2004).

j. Structural Functionalism Theory

Bello & Tanko (2020) argued that Structural Functionalism Theory emerged when the Industrial Revolution marked the separation between personal life and work. There are two different aspects to consider in a person's life: emotional life and productive life. The latter refers to the part of work that helps a person produce services or goods, while the former refers to time spent with family and oneself. This theory also comes hand in hand with technology that makes it easier to do work. Thus, there is a sense of desire for workers to divide time in a balanced manner between their personal lives and the work they do.

k. Ladder Theory

Ladder theory was proposed by Bird (2006) who argues that work-life balance has two legs of the ladder, left and right. The right leg relates to one's duties to the company and oneself. The left leg relates to matters related to the company's view such as responsibilities and gifts of the company to its employees (Bello & Tanko, 2020).

Definitions of Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance does not mean that one has to divide time equally between work and personal life. This is because everyone has different needs, situations, and preferences. Therefore, work-life balance is a dynamic and flexible process that requires constant adjustment according to changing conditions. According to Kalliath & Brough (2008), work-life balance is an individual's perception that work activities and activities outside of work can go hand in hand and support growth according to the individual's current life priorities. Work-life balance is defined here as the ability of individuals to fulfill their work and family commitments, as well as other responsibilities and activities outside of work (Delecta, 2011).

To achieve work-life balance, one needs to set priorities, boundaries, and goals that are in line with their values and desires. One also needs to adjust the mindset, behavior, and work environment that supports the balance. In addition, one needs to develop effective time management, communication, negotiation, and problem-solving skills. The nineteenth-century movement for a 40-hour workweek recognized the human right to have a life that includes work, recreation, family, and recovery, and effectively took the first step and shaped the modern concept of work-life balance (Brough et al., 2020). Figueroa (2016) stated that there are three factors to maintain success in achieving work-life balance. First, having a set time to organize the schedule; second, providing frequent verbal support to the family; and third, joint decision-making.

Dimensions of Work-Life Balance

Fisher, Bulger & Smith (2009) say that four dimensions can be used in measuring work-life balance, including:

- a. Work Interference with Personal Life: refers to the extent to which work can interfere with an individual's personal life. For example, work can make it difficult for someone to manage time for their personal life.
- b. Personal Life Interference with Work: refers to the extent to which an individual's personal life interferes with their work life. For example, if individuals have problems in their personal lives, this can interfere with individual performance at work.
- c. Personal Life Enhancement of Work: refers to the extent to which an individual's personal life can improve individual performance in the world of work. For example, if individuals feel happy because their personal life is pleasant, then this can make the individual's mood at work pleasant.
- d. Work Enhancement of Personal Life: refers to the extent to which work can improve the quality of an individual's personal life. For example, the skills that individuals acquire at work allow individuals to utilize these skills in their daily lives.

Bhende et al. (2020) assert that work-life balance can be divided into three dimensions as follows.

- a. Productivity Dimension. It is known that when an employee is satisfied and maintains a work- life balance, this will result in increased employee productivity, low employee turnover rates, and increased satisfaction with their current work schedule.
- b. The Skill Deployment Dimension articulates that employees in the organization use their skills efficiently to the maximum extent possible, according to the requirements of the job profile. It also indicates that the organization has been successful in hiring the right people for the right jobs.
- c. While the Efficiency Dimension expresses the organization's expectations from its employees to complete work quickly and on time, this can only be achieved if employees are free from distractions in their home life, conflicts within the organization, and other things that act as obstacles to the work efficiency of employees.

According to McDonald et al. (2005), the indicators for measuring work-life balance are divided into three, categories:

- a. Time Balance refers to the amount of time given by individuals, both for their work and things outside of work, such as time for their families. The time balance achieved by employees shows that the demands of the family on employees do not reduce professional time in completing work, and vice versa.
- b. Involvement Balance refers to the amount or level of psychological involvement and commitment of an individual in their work and things outside of work. Well-allocated time is not necessarily sufficient as a basis for measuring the level of work-life balance of employees but must be supported by the amount or capacity of quality involvement in every activity that the employee undertakes.
- e. Satisfaction Balance refers to the amount of satisfaction an individual has with their work activities and things outside of work. Satisfaction will arise by itself if employees consider what they have done so far to be good enough to accommodate the needs of work and family. if individuals feel happy because their personal life is pleasant, then this can make the individual's mood at work pleasant.
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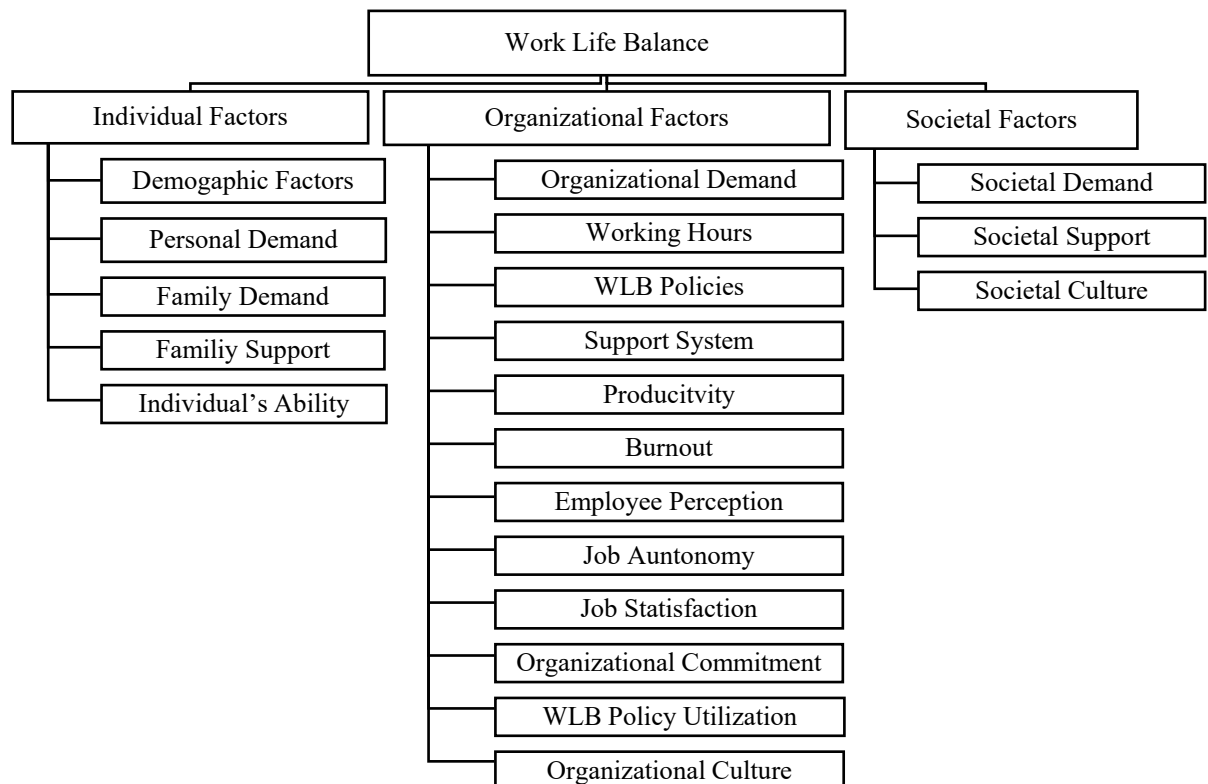
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Satisfaction Balance refers to the amount of satisfaction an individual has with their work activities and things outside of work. Satisfaction will arise by itself if employees consider what they have done so far to be good enough to accommodate the needs of work and family.

- a. Organizational factors relate to organizational design in terms of managing employees and developing policies, rules, and regulations to address various activities related to work-life balance.

Social factors, social changes that occur globally and locally affect individual lifestyles. As members of society, employees are expected to participate in social activities. However, this is diminishing in the current scenario. The employees are often faced with the problem of not fulfilling the expectations of friends, relatives, and society due to increased work pressure.

Figure 1. A literature review framework



Source: Thilagavathy & Geetha 2021

Antecedents and Consequences of Work-Life Balance

Antecedents

According to research by Shirmohammadi, Au, & Beigi 2022), the causes of work-life balance can be categorized into two factors, namely stressors and resources. Stressors are experiences that are perceived to burden or exceed resources, while resources are valuable assets that can be used to meet demands and reduce stressors. Work demands reduce perceptions of work-life balance mainly due to the efforts made to meet these work demands, which then hinder individual efforts to fulfill their responsibilities in non-work areas (Brough

et al., 2020). Similarly, Green & Skinner (2005) found that at the same time, some employees have learned to work "smarter" with experience and time management training to maintain balance in their work-life amidst increasing workloads, longer working hours, and increased time pressure. Syrek, Apostel, & Antoni's (2020) research results show that transformational leadership under high time pressure is an important way for employees to compensate for their work-life and burnout, and shows that time pressure reduces work-life balance. Both suggest that employees who have self-efficacy can achieve work-life balance and work engagement even though they have family and work obligations. These findings emphasize the importance of self-efficacy as a personal resource that influences how employees perceive role demands (Chan et al., 2017).

Consequences

Work-life balance has a positive impact on job and family satisfaction (Chan et al., 2016). Research results show that the level of employee desire to move tends to be lower if there is a balance between personal life and work life (Syara & Syah, 2022).

Empirical studies show that employee work-life balance indirectly affects performance such as job performance in the role through affective commitment. This finding suggests that affective commitment serves as a mediating factor that amplifies the effect of work-life balance on performance generated by employees (Kim 2014). Taken together, these results suggest that the implementation of corporate policies can reduce conflict and increase experiential enrichment by providing resource constraints such as schedule flexibility, which in turn can be positively correlated with satisfaction and productivity at work and home. Furthermore, Sirgy & Lee (2018) summarized the antecedent and consequent factors of work-life balance in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Antecedents and Consequences of Work-Life Balance

Antecedents	Consequences
Personal Predictors:	Work-related outcomes:
• job involvement	• high job performance
• job importance	• high job satisfaction
• family involvement	• high organizational commitment
• conscientiousness	• high career development and success
• neuroticism	• low job malfunction
• coping style	• low job burnout
• individualism	• low job alienation
• power distance	• low absenteeism
• masculinity	• low turnover intention
• uncertainty avoidance	
Organizational Predictors:	Nonwork-related outcomes:
• job demand	• high life satisfaction
• time pressure at work	• high marital satisfaction
• job autonomy	• high family performance
• role ambiguity	• high family satisfaction
• scheduling flexibility	• high parental satisfaction
• flexible work arrangement	• high leisure satisfaction
• part-time work	• high poor health condition
• assistance with childcare	• low conflicts with family members

• parenting resources/lactation support	
• elder care resources	Stress-related outcomes:
• employee health and wellness programs	• low emotional exhaustion
• family-leave policies	• low psychological distress
• social support at work	• low anxiety
• other services designed to assist employees manage their multiple roles	• low irritability
	• low hostility
	• low hypertension
	• low depression
	• low affective parental distress
	• low marital distress
	• low illness symptoms
	• low somatic complaints
	• low blood pressure and cholesterol
	• low alcohol abuse
	• low cigarette consumption

Source: Sirgy & Lee, 2018

CONCLUSION: MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Work-life balance has a significant impact on employee engagement, performance, and self-satisfaction. It forms a positive and mutually reinforcing relationship. Employees who successfully achieve work-life balance are generally more committed to their jobs. Successfully achieving work-life balance increases employee productivity and confidence. From a management perspective, it is crucial to understand employees' work-life balance. Managers should realize that employees who have a good balance between their work and personal lives tend to be more productive and motivated in completing their work. Therefore, managers need to provide the support and flexibility needed to achieve this work-life balance.

Planning work goals and tasks with work-life balance in mind can also be an effective management strategy. Managers who set goals that include achieving work-life balance will show that they understand and appreciate employees' need for work-life balance. For example, managers can create an environment that supports work-life balance by providing flexibility in working hours or implementing remote work policies. Managers can design specific training programs to manage differences in employees' work-life balance. Such programs can address time management strategies, stress management, and how to effectively integrate work and personal life. Such training can help employees improve their ability to achieve work-life balance, which can increase their satisfaction and well-being. Overall, managers who understand and support work-life balance not only increase employee productivity but also improve overall employee satisfaction and well-being. Creating a work environment that prioritizes work-life balance is not only an ethical imperative but also an investment in improving employee productivity and retention.

There is a saying that if you work in the right place and work in a job that you like, the level of satisfaction felt by employees will increase and the resulting performance will certainly increase as well.

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