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Work-Life Balance, Job Demands, and Burnout

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Abstract:
Work-life balance refers to the equilibrium between work and personal life, characterized by company support in resolving family issues, opportunities to pursue hobbies outside of work, and availability of time for family. Job demand is an individual's perception of work-related demands, such as heavy workloads, tight deadlines, and requirements to display specific emotional states (calm, friendly, etc.). Burnout is a condition of stress marked by feelings of emotional exhaustion (easily irritated/angry), depersonalization (indifference toward others' conditions), and a sense of incompetence in completing tasks/work. High job demand tends to increase the likelihood of burnout. This study aims to test the work-life balance model as a resource that can anticipate and prevent job demands from leading to burnout. The participants in this study consisted of 114 employees. The instruments used in the research include the Maslach Burnout Inventory, the Job Demands-Resources Questionnaire, and the Quality of Work-Life Scale. Based on the analysis using Spearman Correlation, the results indicate that work-life balance can predict lower perceptions of job demands. Lower perceptions of job demands can, in turn, predict lower levels of burnout. The findings of this study provide a theoretical model that explains work-life balance as an antecedent that should be promoted to prevent stress, whether in the form of stimulus-based stress (job demand) or response-based stress (burnout).

***Keywords**:* Burnout, Job Demand, Work-Life Balance

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INTRODUCTION

Workers in the modern era are faced with an increasingly high workload (Aulia, 2021). In a 2023 Gallup survey, nearly 60% of workers worldwide reported feeling depressed due to ever-increasing expectations at work. Based on an interview with A. Gita S. (November 15, 2024), an employee working at company X, Bandung, reported having a high workload/*demands* with very varied tasks. Almost every day, he comes home after working hours, which is at five o'clock in the *afternoon*. This overtime has been going on since he started working, almost a year ago, at the company. In addition, there is also content on the TikTok application with the username @nindahaf, who states that she is tired of working and feels nauseous when looking at the monitor (*Ninda*, personal communication, 15 February 2024).

The above explanation is an illustration of the phenomenon of high workload/*demands* (*job demand*). According to Bakker and Demerouti (2007), *job demand* includes everything that requires sustainable energy, both physical and mental, from

an individual. These demands can be heavy workloads, tight deadlines, and challenging emotional situations. Workers often face the increasing complexity of tasks, so they must adapt mentally and emotionally to various changes in the demands of work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Workload/*demands* are various aspects including: (a) cognitive demand, which is work that requires high concentration and precision; (b) work pressure, which is the demand to complete tasks in a limited time; (c) role conflict, which is a mismatch between job expectations and individual roles; (d) emotional demand, such as dealing with customer complaints or interpersonal problems at work; and I administrative hassle, which includes bureaucracy and other administrative work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014).

Job demand includes high workload, time pressure, and emotional demands that often exceed the capacity of individuals (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). When the workload/*demands* (*job demand*) are continuous, individuals have the potential to experience burnout (Bunjak et al., 2023). Burnout is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of accomplishment (Maslach et al., 2001). A survey from McKinsey (2021) shows that 40% of workers experience burnout due to excessive workload/*pressure/*demands*. A survey conducted by Gallup (2020) showed 76% of employees experienced burnout at least occasionally, and 28% said they "very often" or "always" experienced burnout at work. The survey also analyzed the consequences of burnout; employees who experience frequent burnout are 63% more likely to take sick leave and 23% more likely to visit the emergency room. In Indonesia, there is a survey of the symptoms of generation Z burnout in 2023 by Data Indonesia.id (2023); the results of the survey show that the most common symptom of burnout experienced by generation Z in Indonesia is always feeling tired, as revealed by 27% of 1,190 respondents.

Without proper anticipation, increased *job demand* can lead to burnout, which will eventually result in a loss of motivation, decreased productivity, and even increased employee turnover (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). *Job demand* and burnout are essentially stressful situations or conditions. *Job demand* is a stressor that is perceived by individuals as a situational stimulus, while burnout is a response to *job demand*. Individuals will experience burnout (emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment, and depersonalization) if they continue to face stressors (*job demand*).

According to the Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 2007), individuals will feel stress if they lose resources. The resources in question can include primary resources such as food, shelter, and others, which are classified as physical resources; secondary resources, including optimism, self-confidence, sense of mastery, and others, which are classified as psychological resources; and tertiary resources, including workplaces, social environments, and other activities that can improve primary and secondary resources.

Among these types of resources, it appears that tertiary resources are important or strategic resources because they are a source of improvement for other resources (primary and secondary resources). Related to the concept of tertiary resources—which include the

workplace, social environment, and other activities—these can be identified as a balance of personal and work life. According to Binnewies (2016), work-life balance is the most useful resource in the context of organizations that promote work-life balance and personal life. Work-life balance has also been a concern in recent years (Leslie et al., 2021).

Related to efforts to anticipate stress in the work environment, as well as concerns about work-life balance, there is research that states work-life balance has a negative correlation with the intention to leave the workplace (Nasya et al., 2024). This can happen if individuals with low work-life balance result in burnout, which then increases the intention to leave the workplace (Esthi & Panjaitan, 2023). It seems that research is needed that can explain the role of work-life balance as an antecedent of *job demand* and burnout. This study aims to examine the relationship between work-life balance, *job demand*, and burnout. It is hoped that with this research, there will be an initial understanding of the interaction between the concepts of work-life balance, *job demand*, and burnout.

The Relationship Between Work-Life Balance and Burnout

According to Greenhaus and Allen (2011), work-life balance (*WLB*) is an ideal condition where individuals successfully manage the demands of work and personal life in harmony, so that they can maintain well-being in various aspects of life, both physical, psychological, and social. Furthermore, Greenhaus and Allen (2011) define *WLB* as an attempt to create a balance between time spent on work and time allocated for personal, family, and recreational activities.

When individuals have a strong *WLB*, they tend to be more able to adjust, as they have more psychological and physical resources to deal with stress. These resources can come from time to rest, exercise, or interacting with family, all of which are resources that can impact physical and mental well-being.

Research by Allen et al. (2000) proposes that *WLB* can reduce the conflict between the demands of work and personal life. When individuals have a balance between personal and work life (*WLB*), they can plan enough time for personal activities and minimize conflicts. This leads to a reduction in work stress, which in turn can prevent burnout. Conflicts between work and personal life are often one of the biggest stressors that eventually lead to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, two major components of burnout.

H1: Work-life Balance (*WLB*) has a negative relationship with Burnout (*BO*).

The Relationship Between Work-Life Balance and Job Demand

The imbalance between life and work leads to an increased desire to change jobs and the perceived workload (Rainayee, 2012 in Sen & Hooja, 2018). This can be seen through the Conservation of Resources Theory, where a depressed or stressful condition occurs when an individual experiences a loss of resources (Hobfoll, 2007). Work-life balance is one of the resources that individuals need in the context of work and personal life. If an individual's work-life balance is low, then the individual will lack resources, which can result in stress (in this case, the perception of workload [*job demand*] and burnout is more likely to occur when

the individual experiences a loss of resources, specifically the work-life balance that the individual has) (Hobfoll, 2007).

H2: Work-Life Balance (*WLB*) has a negative relationship with Job Demand (*JD*).

The Relationship Between Job Demand and Burnout

Burnout is directly related to *job demand*, where high *job demand* can cause burnout (Khan et al., 2014). When an incomplete recovery occurs, the impact of high workload demands can gradually accumulate, continuing from one day to the next and eventually leading to burnout (Bakker et al., 2004).

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) explain how individuals respond to stress based on the interaction between themselves and their environment. This model emphasizes the importance of cognitive appraisal and coping mechanisms in determining whether a situation will be considered a stressor and how individuals deal with it. It can be seen that having an adaptive coping strategy is important to overcome demands or stressors—in this case, the *job demand* experienced. Based on research (Martínez et al., 2020), burnout correlates with maladaptive coping strategies such as avoidance, negative self-targeting, and overt emotional expression.

H3: Job Demand (*JD*) has a positive relationship with Burnout (*BO*).

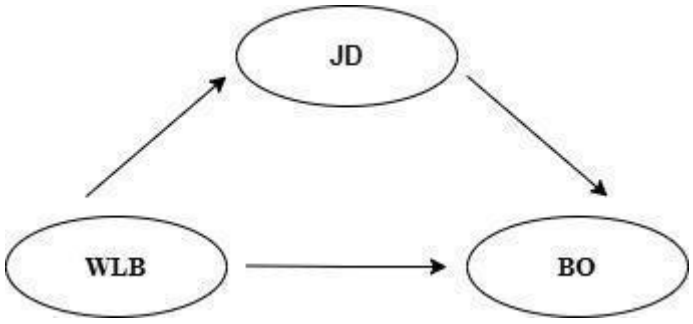


Figure 1. Research Model Design

Note: WLB = Work-life Balance, JD = Job Demand, BO = Burnout

METHOD

This study uses a non-experimental design with a quantitative correlational approach. This approach was chosen to answer research questions that focus on testing the relationship between work-life balance and *job demand* and burnout.

Participants

Participants in this study were selected using purposive sampling techniques. Participant criteria include: active *employer*/*employee* status, a minimum of high school/*vocational*/*equivalent* education, and willingness to provide informed consent to participate in the research. Participant selection with a purposive sampling approach was carried out to ensure that participants were relevant and in accordance with the research objectives. Variations in the characteristics of participants also provide a representative picture of the phenomenon being studied. This research was conducted online through

Google Form. There were 114 participants in this study, with 38 male participants (33.3%) and 76 female (66.6%) participants. The average age of the participants was 30.6 years, with the largest age group in the range of 20-25 years, totaling 42 participants (36.8%). The highest level of education among the participants was at the undergraduate level, comprising 75 people (65.8%). The employment status of the participants consisted of 51 *contract employees* (44.7%) and 63 *permanent employees* (55.3%). The marital status of the participants was 71 (62.3%) unmarried and 43 (37.7%) married.

Measurement

This study uses three main instruments to measure research variables: work-life balance, *job demand*, and burnout.

Work-Life Balance. The measurement of work-life balance variables uses items from the Quality of Work Life Scale measuring tool, which consists of eight Walton dimensions and five sub-dimensions based on Hackman and Oldham (Rostiana, Zamralita, & Suyasa, 2015). The dimensions of the Quality of Work Life Scale measurement tool are: job characteristics, social relevance of employer, coworker, pay and benefit, personal development, balance of work and family, promotion, working conditions, supervisory, and work culture. However, in this study, only the dimension of *balance of work and family* was used, which consisted of 4 positive items to measure the work-life balance variable. An example of a statement from this dimension is, “My opportunity to complete household affairs/tasks outside of work has qualities that ...”, with statements in this aspect rated with a score of 1 (*Poor*), 2 (*Less*), 3 (*Sufficient*), 4 (*Good*), and 5 (*Special*). The higher the score, the higher the level of work-life balance. The internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach’s Alpha) for the 4 items of balance of work and family in this measuring tool is 0.996.

Job Demand. The *job demand* variable was measured using the Job Demands-Resources (*JD-R*) Questionnaire developed by Bakker (2014). This instrument consists of 21 positive items and five dimensions: (a) cognitive demand, (b) work pressure, (c) role conflict, (d) emotional demand, and I hassle. An example of a cognitive demand statement is, “In work, I need full concentration.” Statements on the aspect of cognitive demand are assessed with a score of 1 (*Rare*) to 5 (*Frequent*). An example of a statement from work pressure is, “I ... have a lot of work to do." S”atements on the aspect of work pressure are assessed with a score of 1 (*Rare*) to 5 (*Frequent*). An example of a role conflict statement is, “When ... my work accepts conflicting task demands from 2 or more people.” Statements on the aspect of role conflict are assessed with a score of 1 (*Rare*) to 5 (*Frequent*). An example of an emotional demand statement is, “My job requires patience and friendliness.” Statements on the emotional demand aspect are assessed with a score of 1 (*Rare*) to 5 (*Frequent*). An example of a hassle statement is, “I ... face some troublesome things to complete the task.” Statements on the hassle aspect are assessed with a score of 1 (*Rare*) to 5 (*Frequent*). The higher the score, the more participants experience a perception of high *job demand*. The internal consistency reliability coefficient (Cronbach’s Alpha) for the 21 items of *job demand* is 0.998.

Burnout was measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (*MBI*) developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981). The instrument consists of 22 items, including 15 positive and 7 negative statements. The Maslach Burnout Inventory is three-dimensional: (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) personal accomplishment, and (c) depersonalization. An example of an emotional exhaustion item is, "I ... feel emotionally tired because of my work," with the statement assessed with a score of 1 (*Rare*) to 5 (*Often*). An example of a personal accomplishment item is, "I ... feel that I do not have a way/method to make my work better," with the statement assessed with a score of 1 (*Rare*) to 5 (*Often*). An example of a depersonalization item is, "I ... understand the feelings of others since I became an employee," with the statement on the depersonalization aspect assessed with a score of 1 (*Cannot*) to 5 (*Can*). The higher the score, the higher the burnout level. The internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) for the 4 burnout dimensions in this measuring tool is 0.999.

This research procedure was carried out through three main stages: preparation, data collection, and data analysis. After making preparations, the researcher distributed a questionnaire containing informed consent and a research questionnaire via Google Form. Data collection began on October 28, 2024. After the data was collected, it was followed by the data analysis stage. The data analysis stage was carried out using *SPSS* software. The collected data were analyzed descriptively to describe the characteristics of the participants. Correlation tests were used to test the relationship between work-life balance, *job demand*, and burnout.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the results of the Spearman Brown correlation test between work-life balance, job demand, and burnout in employees using SPSS software will be presented.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistic

Descriptive Statistic				
	Min.	Maks.	Average	SD.
Work-life Balance	1.00	5.00	3.58	.73
Job Demand	1.38	4.86	3.06	.68
Burnout	1.00	3.41	2.34	.59

The variation in scores (minimum = 1.00, maximum = 5.00) showed that a small percentage of respondents had a low work-life balance. A mean score of 3.57 (SD = 0.73) indicated a relatively good level of work-life balance among respondents. An average of 3.06 (SD = 0.68) indicates a fairly high level of job demand. Variation in score (minimum = 1.38, maximum = 4.86) showed a difference in job demand between respondents The average burnout score of 2.34 (SD = 0.59) showed that the respondents' burnout level was in the medium category. The variation in score (minimum = 1.00, maximum = 3.41) indicates the presence of respondents with low to high burnout rates.

This study uses the SPSS application to answer hypothesis 1 (H1), using the Spearman Brown correlation method test, at the alpha level of 0.05. The results of the correlation test showed a significant negative correlation between work-life balance (M=3.58, SD=0.73) and burnout (M=2.34, SD=0.59), rs(114) = -0.336, p<0.01. This means that the more the subject has a good work-life balance, the lower the tendency of the subject to burnout.

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This study uses the SPSS application to answer hypothesis 3 (H3), using the Spearman Brown correlation method test, at an alpha level of 0.05. The results of the correlation test showed a significant positive correlation between Job Demand (M=3.06, SD=0.68), and burnout (M=2.34, SD=0.59), rs (114) = -0.350, p<0.01. This means that the higher the subject's perception of job demand, the more Burnout experienced by the subject.

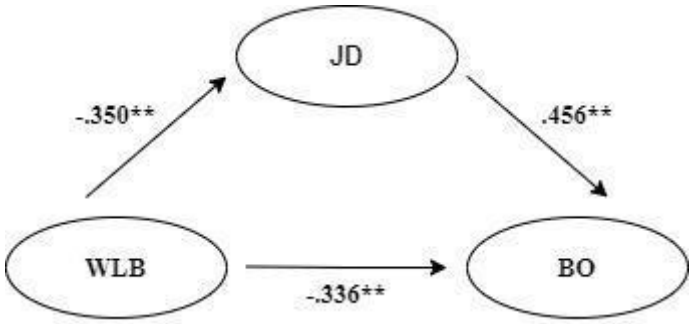


Figure 2. Research Model Results

Note: WLB = Work-life Balance, JD = Job Demand, BO = Burnout

DISCUSSION

The results of this study strengthen previous research, namely in hypothesis 1 of this study where work-life balance has a negative correlation with burnout. According to research by Allen et al. (2000), Work-Life Balance (WLB) can help reduce conflicts between the demands of work and personal life. Having a good balance between the two can contribute to a decrease in work stress which can ultimately prevent burnout.

Hypothesis 2 in this study regarding the relationship between work-life balance and job demand is also in line with previous research in the context of doctor participants in the study (Yester, 2019) which stated that low work-life balance is a strong predictor of pressure or perception of high demands faced. Based on conservation of resource theory, stress and burnout occur when individuals experience threats to the resources they have. The resource in question in this case is work-life balance. Where work-life balance is the most useful resource in the context of organizations that promote work-life balance and personal life.

Based on the results of this study, hypothesis 3 shows that job demand has a significant positive correlation with burnout. This corroborates the previous research of Khan

et al. (2014) where there is a positive relationship between job demand and burnout, where high job demands can trigger burnout. When individuals are unable to recover optimally from the demands of heavy work, the impact can accumulate gradually from day to day until it eventually leads to burnout (Bakker et al., 2004).

The contribution of this study is to see how the relationship between work-life balance, job demand, and burnout in employees. It is known that the three are significantly correlated. The research is also expected to provide useful information for employees in understanding the importance of work-life balance, to reduce the risk of perceived workload (job demand). For companies and organizations, especially for human resource managers, the results of this research can be a reference in designing policies and programs to reduce burnout rates. The limitation of this study is that this study uses a correlational method so that it limits the ability to conclude the cause-effect relationship between Job Demand (JD), Burnout (BO), and Work-Life Balance (WLB). The participants in this study are also still limited, thus limiting the ability to generalize the findings of this study to a broader context.

CONCLUSION

From the research that has been carried out, the following conclusions can be drawn: (1) *Work-life balance* plays a negative and significant role in *job demand*. This means that the higher the *work-life balance*, the lower the *job demand*; conversely, a lower *work-life balance* predicts higher *job demand*. (2) *Job demand* plays a positive and significant role in burnout. This means that the higher the *job demand*, the higher the burnout. (3) *Work-life balance* plays a negative and significant role in burnout. This indicates that the higher the *work-life balance*, the lower the burnout, while a low *work-life balance* tends to result in higher burnout.

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