

Psychological Well-Being: The Impact of Work-Life Balance and Work Pressure

Kiky D.H. Saraswati^{1*}, Daniel Lie¹

¹Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Tarumanagara, Jakarta 11440, Indonesia

*Corresponding author. Email: kikys@fpsi.untar.ac.id and daniell@fpsi.untar.ac.id

ABSTRACT

It has been well-known that employees who experience positive emotion at work demonstrate better work performance. This individual performance will lead to the organizational productivity. Therefore, it is important for any organization to ensure the employee's psychological well-being (PWB) by promoting and/or eliminating factors that may affect it. The purpose of this study is to investigate the contribution of determinants such as work-life balance (WLB) and work pressure (WP) in predicting the level of employee's PWB. This study adopted a quantitative method in which data was collected from a sample of 250 employees from various business sectors and demographic backgrounds. Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-Being, Work-Life Balance Checklist developed by Daniels and MacCarraher, and Tilburg Work Pressure Questionnaire were used to measure PWB, WLB, and WP respectively. The results show that both WLB and WP contribute a significant impact on PWB ($F= 32.035$, $p < 0.05$). Further findings also show that PWB is dominantly and significantly affected by WLB ($R^2= 0.185$, $F= 56.142$, $p < 0.05$). On the other hand, WP was not a significant contributor toward PWB among the employees ($F= 0.506$, $p > 0.05$).

Keywords: *Psychological well-being, work-life balance, work pressure, employee*

1. INTRODUCTION

Improvements in technology and changes in socio-economic life have caused transformations in the occupational areas. To survive the market competition, organizations should develop a smart strategy to maintain their innovation and productivity. Eventhough technology has taken over the industrial process, human contributions still play the most important role to run the business. Thus, the organization needs to ensure that their employees have performed their best effort to reach each goal that the company has already set.

Previous studies have been conducted to investigate the factors that enable to increase the productivity. One of which is the psychological aspect experienced by the employees. Feelings, thoughts, and behaviour that the employees portray at their workplace lead to the level of well-being. People with higher well-being reported that they felt happy, capable, well-supported, and satisfied with their life. Higher well-being also resulted in better physical health, mediated possibly by brain activation patterns, neurochemical effects, and genetic factors [1].

Moreover, well-being was found to be highly correlated with the employee's ability to perform well at their

workplace. Employees with higher well-being were reported to be more productive and having better psychological and physical health compared to those with lower well-being [2]. Employees showing a good well-being have proven to be more productive and able to promote organizational effectivity when compared to others who show a lower level of well-being [3]. Another research conducted by Harter, Schmidt and Keyes [4] concluded that well-being correlated with organizational performance, such as attendance (sickness and absence), customer satisfaction, organizational productivity, and turnover rate. Lyubomirsky, King, and Diener [5] reported that people with higher well-being most likely exhibit higher flexibility and originality, respond better towards unfavorable feedback, give more positive judgments about others, show higher levels of engagement, are more productive, are likely to live longer, have better physical health, and have a happier work and family life. Employees with higher well-being show more positive attitudes and respond better to various situations in life as well [6].

In contrast, people with lower levels of well-being tend to feel threatened by neutral or ambiguous events [7] which is unfavorable in organizational setting where everything is dynamic and lots of changes may occur. Further finding exhibits that people with lower level of well-being interpret negative feedback as something

hurtful and positive feedback cause less beneficial to them.

McGregor and Little [8] defined well-being as evaluating the meaning and purposes in life. Other experts explained well-being in a different framework. Ryan and Deci [9], for example, well-being is felt when basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and established relationships) are fulfilled. Waterman [10] developed a different concept of well-being which defined as striving for challenge, making efforts, personal development, and growth.

Ryff [11] defined well-being as achieving a state of balance which was affected by both challenging and rewarding life events. Moreover, well-being should be explained through an integrative understanding benefiting from life development, mental health, and clinical viewpoint. Being different from happiness, well-being has been discussed as individuals' effort to realize their own real potential. Ryff [6] stated that happiness was not the key message, and happiness could be as result of a good life. A good life or well-being includes positive relations with others, environmental mastery, autonomy, purpose in life, personal growth, and self-acceptance and that is called psychological well-being (PWB).

People who exhibit a high score in positive relations with others have warm, satisfying, trusting relationships; are concerned about the welfare of others; capable of strong empathy, affection, and intimacy; understand give and take of human relationships. High score in environmental mastery is characterized by having a sense of mastery and competence in managing the environment, controls complex array of external activities, makes effective use of surrounding opportunities, and able to choose or create contexts that are accordance to personal needs and values. High score in autonomy is described as self-determining and independent, able to resist social pressures as to think and act in certain ways, regulates behavior from within, and evaluates self by personal standards. People who report a high score in purpose in life have goals in life and a sense of directedness, feel there is meaning in regards to their present and past life, hold beliefs that give life purpose, and have aims and objectives for living. Moreover, a high score in personal growth is characterized by having a feeling of continued development, seeing self as growing and expanding, being open to new experiences, having sense of realizing his or her potential, seeing improvement in self and behavior over time, changing in ways that reflect more self-knowledge and effectiveness. Finally, people with high level of self-acceptance are described as possessing a positive attitude toward themselves; acknowledge and accept multiple aspects of self, including good and bad qualities; and feel positive about past life.

Taken together, those six dimensions of PWB encompass a breadth of wellness that includes positive evaluations of one's self and life, a sense of continued personal growth and development, a belief that life is purposeful and meaningful, having good relationships with others, the capacity to manage one's life and the surrounding effectively, and a sense of self-determination. When the concept of PWB is applied in the occupational life, it can be defined as how an individual builds positive relationships with people; having occupational acceptance, personal development, fulfilling life and occupational needs; and willing to develop themselves personally.

Further findings in industrial and organizational setting show that there is link between PWB and work-related issues. Focusing on types of work, female teachers were found to have higher well-being compared to women working in banks, who in turn, experienced higher well-being than women working in industry. Others also found that unpaid work was associated with lower levels of self-acceptance and environmental mastery by women, whereas for men, paid work was associating with increased levels of personal growth. Well-being has been investigated as an influence on vocational identity and career pursuits. Purpose in life and personal growth were found to contribute to career commitments. Women who saw themselves as falling short of their early career goals had lower levels of purpose in life and higher depressive symptoms, after adjusting for multiple background and health characteristics [12].

Previous studies have discovered that PWB is influenced by personal factors such as personality, and temperament. It can also be affected by occupational factors such as job, work environment, and job satisfaction. Research has suggested that there is a correlation between PWB and multiple dimensions of a person's life, including marital satisfaction, general health, and work-life balance. Prior research suggests that there are significant gender differences as it relates to PWB. Dimenas, Carlsson, Glise, Israelsson, and Wiklund [13] found that in general population Swedish men tend to have a higher level of PWB than women.

It also has been proven for many years by the scholars that work influences psychological and physical distance within the members of a family and the inability in prioritizing between work and family issues results in decreased well-being. Karunanidhi and Chitra [14] investigated factors influencing PWB of policewomen. They found that occupational stress, work-life balance, job attitude, and personality contributed to PWB significantly. Another research also found that well-being, decreased job stress and

decreased burnout were the consequences of work-life balance (WLB) which beneficial to the organizations [15]. WLB has also been found to affect well-being. The result of the study also indicates that conflict between work and life can lead to lower loyalty to the organization, decreased job satisfaction and decreased well-being [16].

Work-life spillover theory explains that an individual's attitudes, emotions, skills, and behaviors occurred in one domain (either work or personal life) affected into the other. Spillover can have positive or negative effects and can occur in bidirectional (work-to-personal life or personal life-to-work) [17]. For example, when an individual feels happy at work, he or she will experience the happiness when they get home. In contrast, when they feel that their work is boring and monotonous, they will feel lazy and not do anything back at home because of the deficit energy that they experience at work.

WLB is the degree to which an individual can continuously balance the emotional, behavioral and time demands of both paid work, family, and personal duties [18]. WLB is a state of a person who manages the potential conflict between different requirements concerning their time and energy in the way of satisfying needs of welfare and self-realization [19].

WLB is also defined as the ability of individuals, regardless of age or gender, to combine work and household responsibilities successfully. The distinction between work and life is unclear, for instance, in regard to work-related time, time for travelling to work cannot be considered as a leisure, but also cannot be considered as work especially on any paid employment [20]. Guest [21] proposed an argument that a balance between work and life should not be at an equal weighting of the twos. The relationship between work and life should be viewed as an acceptable and stable because of the subjectivity in perceiving this issue of desired point that could be differ among individuals. Additionally, the relationship between work and life is dynamic according to employees' needs or employer's demands. With that, Hughes and Bonzonielos [22] defines WLB as harmonizing the combination between their work and non-work responsibilities, activities and aspirations.

For women, especially the married ones, trying to balance the multiple demands of work and personal life as a wife or a mother, can be physically and psychologically draining [23]. Higgins, Duxbury, and Lyons [24] used the term role overload to describe the process of juggling between work and family issue. Role overload leads to anxiety, fatigue, poor mental, stress and eventually caused in detrimental physical

health. Moreover, some women may find the process of balancing work and home responsibilities to be a worrisome one, in which pharmacological interventions are required to alleviate those harmful effects [25]. On the other hand, efforts to balance the work-life have also been found on men. Previous researchers have found that many men often experience intense pressure for being not only as a financial provider but also as a committed partner, a father, or even a member of the community [23].

Another research found that poor WLB led to high levels of stress and anxiety. The explanation of this finding is that when an individual prioritizes either work or his/her personal life over another, he or she will feel guilty. This guilt feeling will result in stress and anxiety. Moreover, the continuous pressure and stress experienced by the employees at work also led to poor WLB. This situation is called job burnout. In personal growth issue, poor WLB creates an inability in realizing people's full potential. This issue is usually experienced by women who often to be discouraged to prioritize career over family. Therefore, they lose many opportunities in career advancement. On the other hand, the repetitive and monotonous works are often assigned to female employees that inhibit their creativity and prevent them to realize their real potential. In personal life issue, poor WLB may cause disharmony at home. Both men and women are expected to share domestic responsibilities, despite of their status as a working man and/or woman. The inability to fulfil the responsibility may create frustration to their spouses and disharmony among the couples [26].

Individuals' perceptions of WLB may be affected by many factors, such as value system, personality, socialization, attitudes, beliefs, expectations or motivation. On the other hand, organizations are also responsible for maintaining a satisfactory relationship between the employee and the workplace. The challenges in the work environment are characterized by heightened competition, increased work targets, threats of job loss, organizational change, lack of time and space to complete the jobs, continuous technological development, conflicting demand from organizational stakeholders, increased use of participatory management and computerization [27].

Sundaresan [26] summarized factors affecting WLB. Burden of excessive work was one of the factors that the respondents reported. The increasing work demands force them to stay longer at work and sometimes bring the unfinished works home. This also leads to interference of work with family life because consequently the long work hours will cause less time to spend with their family and do things that they are interested in. Work pressure and social roles that the

respondents must fulfill will also result in poor WLB.

Despite of Sundaresan’s [26] summary, the efficiency programs launched by the organizations to cut operational costs has caused a significant impact on the workloads of those who remain employed. Employees felt that the organization made excessive demands on them in terms of workload including demands for both increased quantity and quality of the output. To manage these workloads, individuals must spend longer hours at work, which then leads to feelings of stress and loss of control. This time pressure leads to a negative impact on individuals’ personal life which in turn increases the feelings of stress and dissatisfaction, and eventually creating a never-ending circle [16].

The pressure occurs at the working place is called work pressure (WP). WP refers to the intensity of work demands, both physical and psychological, experienced by workers, and the degree of work effort required in employment [28]. WP is a cognitive-energetic state of the person, producing the experience of strain or felt pressure, which is correlated with the ongoing and anticipated execution of work tasks. Currently WP can be best understood as the subjective reflection of the employee’s psychological/physiological state while carrying out work tasks. Obviously, this statement has a various meanings and WP can augment or decline, depending on the worker’s expectation of the amount of work that remains to be done and their assessment of the chance to accomplish the work successfully [29].

WP should be differentiated with work stress [29]. Stress is defined as a harmful response that occurs when an individual is in the threatening situation for a period of time or/and when he or she is unable to get out from such situation. Given such definition, WP can be considered as one of the threatening situations and hence it seems related to stress. However, the difference between stress and WP is the frequency in which stress is persistent, while WP is changeable. WP may be one of the stressors, but under typical condition, WP can be perceived by an individual as high or even low without causing stress to him or her. With that, it suggests that the ‘wavelength’ of WP is shorter than stress [29].

Gallie [30] stated that there are many factors that affect WP and they are skill, job control, new technology, job security, and the length of working hours. The pressure experienced by the employees may cause strain that will result in decreased well-being. Several studies have proven that WP is one of the factors that negatively affect employee’s health and well-being. It has been found that WP leads to greater work stress and disability to perform as the organization expects.

Furthermore, in the long run, WP will bring social and economic disadvantages, both to the employees and the organization [29]. Stressful employees are more likely to be identified as unhealthy, poorly motivated, less motivated, and less safe at work. Work related stress has been related to organizational problems, such as absenteeism, high turnover, poor job performance, accidents and errors, and alcohol and drug abuse, and burnout. Further finding also concluded that work stress may have caused less productive worker [27].

Considering the importance of PWB, we conduct a study to investigate how WLB and WP may influence the level of PWB among employees. Proposed hypothesis in this study are:

- H₁ : WP contributes a significant impact towards WLB
- H₂ : WLB contributes a significant impact towards PWB
- H₃ : WP contributes a significant impact towards PWB
- H₄ : Both WLB and WP contribute a significant impact towards PWB

The model of the current study is described in the Figure 1 below:

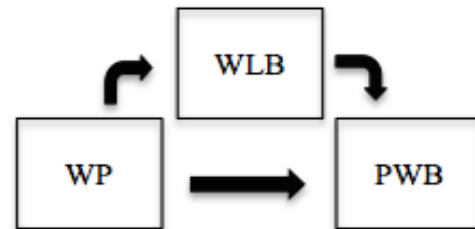


Figure 1 Research model

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study applied a quantitative method. Data were collected by distributing questionnaires to 250 participants. The participants recruited for this study included employees with a paid job and work full time at various business sectors in Java, Indonesia, at various levels, ranging from junior to senior positions. The range of participant’s age is 18 to 55 years old. The questionnaires were sent to the participants manually as well as online.

Information of the demographics of the participants are described in the Table 1.

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of the participants

Age	18 – 25	21.6%
	26 – 30	22%
	31 – 35	20.8%
	36 – 40	15.6%
	> 40	20%
Gender	Male	49.6%
	Female	50.4%
Education	Elementary	34%
	Diploma	6%
	Under and/or Graduate	60%

The questionnaires used in this study were 12-item Ryff’s Scales of Psychological Well-Being (example: “Saya merasa iri kepada orang lain dan kehidupan yang mereka jalani”), Daniels and MacCarragher’s 10-item Work-Life Balance Checklist (example: “Saya tidak memiliki banyak waktu untuk bersosialisasi dan bersantai-santai dengan pasangan/keluarga”), and Tilburg’s 9-item Work Pressure Questionnaire (example: “Tugas-tugas yang saya kerjakan memiliki tenggat waktu yang ketat”). The questionnaires had been translated into Bahasa Indonesia so that the participants would have had a better comprehension and they would have been able to deliver responses representing their actual perception towards each of the statements as expected. Each questionnaire was measured on a four-point Likert-scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 4 = Strongly agree).

Table 2 shows coefficient alpha of each scale which suggests that the questionnaires are suitable for measuring the variables:

Table 2 Alpha cronbach

Scale	Alpha Cronbach
Scales of PWB	0.830
WLB Checklist	0.899
WP Questionnaire	0.803

Regression analysis was carried out with the SPSS Program version 21.

3. RESULTS

The result of data analysis that used to investigate the hypothesis are described below:

Hypothesis 1: WP contributes a significant impact towards WLB.

Table 3 Linear regression analysis of WP and WLB

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2.267	1	2.267	13.396	0.000
Residual	41.973	248	0.169		
Total	44.240	249			

Table 4 indicates that WP contributed 5.1% impact towards WLB. The result of the analysis is as follows:

Table 4 Contribution of WP towards WLB

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.226	0.051	0.047	0.41139

Hypothesis 2: WLB contributes a significant impact towards PWB.

Table 5 Linear regression analysis of WLB and PWB

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3.887	1	3.887	56.142	0.000
Residual	17.170	248	0.069		
Total	21.057	249			

Further analysis suggests that WLB contributed 18.5% impact towards PWB. The result of the analysis is shown in Table 6

Table 6 Contribution of WLB towards PWB

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.430	0.185	0.181	0.263

Hypothesis 3: WP contributes a significant impact towards PWB.

Table 7 Linear regression analysis of WP and PWB

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	0.043	1	0.043	0.506	0.477
Residual	21.014	248	0.085		
Total	21.057	249			

WP contributed only 0.2% impact towards PWB. The result of the analysis is explained in the Table 8.

Table 8 Contribution of WP towards PWB

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.045	0.002	-0.002	0.291

Hypothesis 4: Both WLB and WP contribute a significant impact towards PWB.

Table 9 Linear regression analysis of WLB, WP and PWB

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	4.337	2	2.168	32.035	0.000
Residual	16.720	247	0.068		
Total	21.057	249			

Further analysis showed that WLB and WP contributed 20.6% impact towards PWB. The result of the analysis is in Table 10

Table 10 Contribution of WLB and WP towards PWB

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.454	0.206	0.200	0.260

4. DISCUSSION

The result shows that WP significantly affects WLB. As mentioned previously, WLB is influenced by how the employee balance the responsibility in dealing with the demands that they encounter at work. By doing such action, they will not miss what they should enjoy and fulfill in their personal life, such as family and hobby. Job demands that the employee hardly able to meet, such as targets, deadlines, and workloads, may lead to negative impact and become pressure that causes inconvenience. This feeling may occupy their mind that they do not have any more time to do other things. On the other hands, according to work-life spill over theory, the negative affect they experience at work will influence their personal life at home.

WLB is also found to affect PWB. In the past, female workers tend to have conflicting roles in which they had to balance between their role as an employee at work and as a wife/mother at home. However, recently the conflicting roles seem to be faced by both men and women as both parties have the same responsibility to commit as partners in the family. Balancing roles is not an easy thing to do. Each role has its own demands and balancing them is stressful (both physiologically and psychologically). Thus, the stress caused by the effort to balance the work-life demands will influence their well-being. Those who are successful will experience an acceptable and stable work-life relationship, that leads to PWB.

An interesting finding in this study is that WP does not contribute a significant impact towards PWB although previous research found otherwise. The negative

feelings that the participants experience that due to the job demands that they encounter at work do not affect their well-being. The higher or the lower the pressure does not lead to excessive strain and does not affect their physiology, human relations, and mood to do other activities and responsibilities.

Finally, the data shows that both WLB and WP contribute a significant impact towards PWB. But further finding shows that the contribution of WLB is higher than WP. It indicates that balancing work issues and personal life plays more challenging effort to enhance well-being among the employees than how to deal with pressures at work. On the other hand, WP contributes a significant impact towards WLB. Therefore, one may conclude that the negative affect occurred at work will be occupying employee's time and will lessen their time to do other activities in their personal and/or family life.

For further studies, we recommend investigating another demographic aspect, such as year of service, job level, and employment status. This recommendation is addressed due to previous research results which concluded that such demographic backgrounds also contribute to well-being level of the employees. Additionally, marital status should be put into consideration to measure WLB due to increased complication the employee may encounter in married life compared to their life as singles.

The results of this study are highly applicable and able to deliver significant contribution to industrial and organizational settings. To expect high work performance, employer should create a conducive work atmosphere that leads to positive emotion and well-being. The higher level of well-being experienced by the employee, the higher work performance they will exhibit. The level of well-being can be promoted by enabling employees to balance their work and personal life by undertaking some steps, for instance by providing the employees with flexible work schedules, compressed work week, work sharing, telecommuting, provision of day care and elder care centers, part time work, enhanced job mobility, and flexible leave arrangements.

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of current study is to investigate how WP and WLB affect PWB among employees in Java, Indonesia. As the results, this study concludes that PWB is dominantly and significantly affected by WLB. It proves that the participants perceive that balancing the work and personal life is an essential factor to experience well-being. WP is not solely a significant

contributor towards PWB. It does not directly lead to PWB, but when it is combined together with WLB, the impact becomes greater. It also proves that the job demands that the participants encounter at work does not directly affect their well-being.

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