

# **The Relationship Between Work-Life Balance and Perceived Job Performance Among Workers**

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## **Abstract**

This study aimed to examine the relationship between work-life balance and perceived job performance among workers. This study used a descriptive cross-sectional quantitative survey design, and participants were asked to answer questions online via a Google Form link that was distributed to them. The Work-Life Balance Scale and the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) were two instruments employed in this study. Data of N = 151 from workers who work in one of the public organizations, labeled as Company X, were collected in this study. The data (n = 47 male, n = 104 female) were then analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 23. Results from this study's descriptive and inferential analyses were both reported. To examine the correlation between these two variables, Pearson's correlation analysis was employed. The result, which was as expected, indicates a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and perceived job performance ( $r(151) = 0.469$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ). The results of this study also showed that respondents have a moderate level of work-life balance and perceived job performance, with both scores of each variable being quite close to their respective medians. This study has been assessed to be significant for companies or organizations that wish to improve their welfare policies, particularly in relation to work-life balance and job performance. It can also strengthen the collection of knowledge on these topics that already exists in the literature, particularly in the context of Malaysia.

## **Keywords:**

Perceived Job Performance, Work-Life Balance, Workers

## **INTRODUCTION**

Work-life balance is one of the most vital aspects to be addressed by workers and management in order to make sure the welfare rights as workers are upheld. Work-life balance is defined as "the ability to feel in control, remain productive and competitive at work, and maintain a happy, healthy home life with enough leisure time" (Campo et al., 2021). Work-life balance will be different from person to person over time. While individual work performance (IWP) has a definition as "behaviors or actions relevant to the goals of the organization," and it is a crucial outcome in a variety of study fields and practices (Koopmans et al., 2014).

The concept of work-life balance has been explained by numerous individuals, with work generally referring to the tasks that individuals need to complete as part of their job responsibilities. Conversely, our life comprises various activities beyond work, such as household chores and childcare duties (Bataneh, 2019). Therefore, individuals will perceive balance when they experience harmony between their professional and personal lives. The advantages of work-life balance can improve a company's effectiveness and its employees' quality of life. There seem to be numerous comparisons made in terms of work-life balance,

yet they concur that "work" refers to a collection of official tasks one performs while holding down a certain employment. Not being able to find the ideal balance between reward and effort was highly connected with both a lack of motivation and lack of control over one's workload to take care of one's own needs and duties. Poor performance, exhaustion, and a deterioration in life quality might result from an unbalanced relationship between reward and effort (Johari et al., 2018; Bataineh, 2019).

Fogaça et al. (2018) claimed that job performance ought to be defined in the aspect of patterns of behavior as opposed to outcomes and only include those behaviors that are essential to the objectives of the organization. Performance was frequently influenced by context factors, such as the effectiveness of macro indicators or the results of those indicators. Performance is the use of abilities, professional competencies, and knowledge in relation to a responsibility or task, or the effectiveness and efficiency of an individual's actions in support of the achievement of organizational goals and mission. Most studies now place more emphasis on defining job performance in the aspects of actions and behavior. One of the things that worries management the most was a problem with job performance. This was due to the significance of the person in the organizational activity development and in the outcomes that follow; one might develop organizational and people-management practices aimed at enhancing human performance at the individual level by understanding antecedents and consequences. Therefore, to ensure high job performance, a positive work environment is vital to enhance employees' productivity and retention (Almarzooqi & Ab Wahid, 2024).

According to the human resource solutions agency in digital asia news (2022), the pandemic had given 88% of malaysian respondents the ability to better combine their job and personal lives. The pandemic had reportedly caused 94% of respondents to demand more flexibility in their jobs and occupations. More than four in five respondents reported having more clarity on both their personal and professional goals since the outbreak started, which also led many malaysians to reevaluate their priorities in life and professional aspirations. In addition, the finding of the research from udin (2023) showed that employees that effectively juggle their work duties with their personal lives will typically exhibit higher motivation, job satisfaction, and dedication to enhancing their performance. Moreover, they are more inclined to allocate time for creative pursuits, thereby introducing fresh ideas and viewpoints to their work, ultimately resulting in improved performance.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Work-Life Balance**

According to Byrne (2005), as cited in Johari et al. (2018), it may be simpler for workers to balance between work and life when they are engaged, productive, and less stressed. They believe that their employers value them, leading to improved productivity, decreased absenteeism, and lower turnover rates, as well as an increase in their work-life balance. Companies that support the concept of work-life balance are more likely to attract potential employees, and these businesses will gain a reputation for being desirable places to work. According to Wolor et al. (2020), achievement and happiness are two concepts that can improve work-life balance because both factors will aid employees in achieving success. People who are considered successful do not feel unhappy or happy as they should.

### **Job Performance**

Every employee's struggle has always been job performance (Edun & Soyebi, 2022). Stress concerns, like conflicts between work and family, can therefore undermine employee loyalty and involvement, which can have a positive or negative impact on job performance. Typically, high-performing workers consistently do the tasks allocated to them, carry out the duties outlined in their job descriptions, and carry out actions that have a direct bearing on how well their team or company performs as a whole (Anita et al., 2020). Companies that are aspiring for greater success should commit to various strategies that can help employees achieve their job performance effectively. This is because when employee welfare isn't well taken care of, it can lead to significant losses for the company (Jayanandana & Jayathilaka, 2023).

### **The Relationship between Work-Life Balance and Perceived Job Performance**

In terms of the relationship between work-life balance and job performance, some studies have found that work-life balance has a positive correlation with job performance. A previous study during the pandemic that involved 200 millennial-generation employees in a modern workplace showed there was a positive correlation ( $r = 0.22$ ) and a significant influence of work-life balance on employee performance (Wolor et al., 2020). Due to that, they also conducted in-depth research regarding the suitable interventions that can be applied to maintain employees' work-life balance and job performance, and it turned out that interventions such as leadership and e-training have a good impact on the variables. Another past study that involved 600 employees from small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) also showed results of ( $r = 0.152$ ) and demonstrated a direct effect of work-life balance on job performance that is substantial (Susanto et al., 2022). These scientific findings also imply that a better work-life balance will improve an employee's ability to accomplish their job duties. The study's participants also discussed their willingness to be adaptable at work when necessary and emphasized that they were not prepared to give up their personal lives for their jobs (Susanto et al., 2022).

The consistency of the positive correlation between those variables was also shown in past articles that involved 225–250 employees from various businesses in developing nations, and the outcome showed ( $r = 0.14$ ), which indicated that work-life balance and project performance have a marginally positive and significant relationship (Irfan et al., 2021). Lastly, the results from previous research that involved 293 Sri Lankan IT industry professionals from 50 companies that actively engaged in work-from-home ( $r = 0.5491$ ) also showed that work-life balance significantly affects how well IT remote employees perform their jobs (Jayanandana & Jayathilaka, 2023).

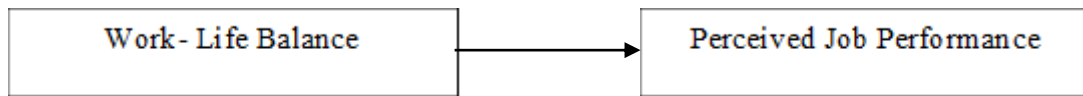
On the whole, it was shown that work-life balance generally had an effect on employees' job performance. Having a good work-life balance can lead to a good perceived job performance. Nevertheless, according to the previous studies that have been discussed above, most of these studies were focused on the context of other countries. Moreover, the majority of studies have primarily focused on particular genders. Due to a lack of understanding of this issue within the Malaysian context and across both genders, the present study aims to address these gaps. Consequently, the hypotheses developed for this study are:

- H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between work-life balance and perceived job performance among workers.
- H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between work-life balance and perceived job performance among workers.

### **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

There were two theories that were used in the current research, which were Boundary Theory and Job Performance Theory. Boundary Theory is defined as how people segment or integrate their personal and professional lives to maintain the division between the two roles (Zerubavel, 1991). Role boundaries are lines of demarcation that are socially constructed and set the limits of a role by identifying the situations and settings in which it is performed. Having this kind of boundary will help people better understand how to organize when the suitable time is to play their role as a worker and the role as somebody else in their personal lives (Capitano et al., 2019).

The second theory is Job Performance Theory (Motowidlo et al., 2014), which focuses on the consideration of the factors that involve behavioral episodes that either support or hinder the achievement of organizational goals as one way of creating behavioral categories.



**Figure 1: Conceptual framework of work-life balance and perceived job performance**

## **METHODOLOGY**

A quantitative research design was employed in this study. The technique and measures used in a quantitative research design result in definite, quantifiable results (Asenahabi, 2019). A correlational research design, which is one of the non-experimental quantitative research designs, was chosen in this study. This is because the main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between the variables, which were work-life balance and perceived job performance. Hence, it is in line with the statement from Creswell (2014) in Asenahabi (2019) that the goal of correlational research is to assess and describe the degree of relationship among variables or sets of scores without using an experimental design.

This study also utilized a cross-sectional approach for data collection. In a cross-sectional study, data from a population are examined at a single point in time. Since cross-sectional types of studies are quicker and cheaper than many other types of studies, researchers were enabled to swiftly acquire data that can be the basis for subsequent research.

The study population consisted of employees from a single company, referred to as Company X by the researcher. Company X, situated in Putrajaya, is primarily responsible for rural development, regional development, community development, Bumiputera and Orang Asli affairs, support for rubber industry smallholders, land consolidation, and land rehabilitation. The reason why the workers at Company X were chosen in this study is because the results obtained might help the Human Resources Department of Company X to develop training and psychological profiling for their workers with average work performance. A total of 151 respondents were involved in this study through the convenience sampling technique. A 5-point Likert scale from the Work-Life Balance Scale and Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) was established in the study to measure the degree of respondents' agreement with the statements in the questionnaire. Then, the data collected were analyzed further using IBM SPSS 23.

## **ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

According to a statement by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2022, ethics for research govern the expected behavior of scientific researchers. To uphold the dignity, rights, and welfare of study participants, ethical rules must be adhered to. Every study involving human subjects should undergo scrutiny by an ethics committee to ensure compliance with the appropriate ethical guidelines. The primary focus of ethical review involves deliberation on ethical concepts such as fairness, beneficence, and autonomy. Furthermore, ensuring the protection of subjects' rights, enhancing research validity, and upholding scientific integrity all hinge on ethical considerations. These guidelines ensure that the participation of study subjects is voluntary, informed, and secure. Consequently, this study obtained approval from the UPSI Human Research Ethics Board from April 4, 2023, to April 4, 2024 (reference number: 2023-0712-02), to mitigate any ethical concerns during the research process.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Demographic Data

The demographic data that were collected in this research were gender, years of working experience, and marital status. Table 1 below summarizes the respondents' demographic data.

**Table 1: Summary of the respondents' demographic data**

Demographic	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Female	104	68.9%
Male	47	31.1%
Years of Work Experiences		
1	4	2.6%
2	0	0%
3	4	2.6%
4	2	1.3%
5	7	4.6%
6	4	2.6%
7	2	1.3%
8	0	0%
9	6	4.0%
10	3	2.0%
11	1	0.7%
12	4	2.6%

*continued*

	13	14	9.3%
	14	13	8.6%
	15	17	11.3%
	16	9	6.0%
	17	9	6.0%
	18	7	4.6%
	19	6	4.0%
	20	18	11.9%
	21	2	1.3%
	22	2	1.3%
	23	5	3.3%
	24	1	0.7%
	25	1	0.7%
	26	2	1.3%
	27	3	2.0%
	28	1	0.7%
	29	3	2.0%
	30	1	0.7%
Marital Status			
	Married	126	83.4%
	Single	25	16.6%

Based on the table above, most of the participants who were willing to take part in this study were female participants, which accounted for 68.9%, followed by 31.1% male participants who took part in the study. The present research was able to collect respondents with job histories spanning 1 to 30 years. Regarding work experience, 11.9% of the respondents in this study had 20 years of work experience, which was considered the majority. Furthermore, the next highest number of respondents came from those who had worked for around 15 years (11.3%), 13 years (9.3%), and 14 years (8.6%). Meanwhile, the least number of respondents who took part in this study were those with around 11 years, 28 years, and 30 years of work experience, which were only 0.7% of the respondents. Lastly, there was no participation from respondents who had about 2 years or 8 years of working experience. Regarding marital status, 83.4% of the respondents who took part in this study identified as married, which was seen as the majority. At the same time, 16.6% of the respondents were single.

### **The Correlation of the Variables in the Study**

**Table 2: The correlation work-life balance and perceived job performance**

		Work-Life Balance	Perceived Job Performance
Work-Life Balance	Pearson Correlation	1	.469**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	151	151
Perceived Job performance	Pearson Correlation	.469**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	151	151

Based on the outcome shown in the table above, the correlation coefficient between work-life balance and perceived job performance was ( $r(151) = 0.469$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ), indicating a significant positive relationship between these variables. Hence, H1 was accepted.

The results discovered, as stated above, align with most findings from previous research. For example, the research by Soomro et al. (2018) showed that the correlation coefficient was significantly positive between work-life balance and job performance ( $r = 0.5491$ ) among Sri Lankan IT industry professionals. In addition, Irfan et al. (2021) reported that the result of ( $r = 0.14$ ) demonstrated a significant positive correlation between work-life balance and project performance among employees from various businesses in developing nations. Similarly, Wolor et al. (2020) also reported a positive correlation between work-life balance and job performance ( $r = 0.22$ ) within Honda motorbike dealers in Jakarta. Furthermore, the research by Susanto et al. (2022) also found a positive correlation between work-life balance and job performance among employees of SME companies, with a coefficient of ( $r = 0.152$ ). Thus, the findings in the current research are aligned with those of past research conducted within the last five years.

There might be some possible reasons or factors that contributed to the findings obtained in this study. Since female employees made up the majority of the respondents, differing social roles might have influenced the outcomes. According to Pace and Sciotto (2021), men and women have historically had different social roles in terms of the time spent on work and family responsibilities; traditionally, males work full-time outside the home, while females are responsible for domestic and family duties. In fact, gender-based roles are deeply ingrained in the collective culture, including in Malaysia. Consequently, even though these traditional social roles are now becoming obsolete, it is still likely that women continue to bear the responsibility of caring for the family (Pace & Sciotto, 2021). Thus, the participants' diverse social roles possibly contributed to their individual situations regarding how they maintain a work-life balance.

Another possible reason that influences their satisfactory level of work-life balance and perceived job performance is that they might feel satisfied with their overall work environment. This condition can be related to Affective Event Theory (AET). This theory is defined as the affective experience that employees face during situations that can impact their work attitude and behavior (Anita et al., 2020). Favorable affective outcomes from an employee's positive work experiences, such as being able to juggle work demands with responsibilities in their familial life at home, may eventually alter their work attitude and behavior. Thus, work-life balance for married women employees, as the majority of respondents in this study, was a beneficial affective result that might come from favorable working conditions established by efficient job design. Bailyn (2006), as cited in Anita et al. (2020), mentioned that employees will have greater resources if their jobs are well-designed, giving them the ability to manage their professional and domestic responsibilities. So, if their perception of working conditions

is positive, their work-life balance will be better, and their perceived job performance will also be high.

On the same note, social support might be another factor that can influence participants' work-life balance and perceived job performance. According to Cobb (1976), as cited in Oludayo & Omonijo (2020), he described social support as the assurance a person has that, within a social network of shared relationships, he or she is liked, appreciated, and cared for. Support from coworkers and managers within the organization is considered work-related social support, whereas support from parents, spouses, children, friends, or close associates is considered personal social support (Oludayo & Omonijo, 2020). Since managers, supervisors, colleagues, and family members play major roles in providing support and boosting individual performance, maintaining familial ties and fostering positive relationships with those in their close circle must be emphasized to employees. The strength of one's social network reflects their social integration, and the greater the integration, the better equipped an individual is to cope with challenging life circumstances (Oludayo & Omonijo, 2020).

To correlate the findings of this research with the theoretical concepts which are Boundary Theory and Job Performance Theory, it can be assumed that the respondents at Company X managed to have an impermeable work role boundary, which is associated with segmented or disconnected roles. For example, in terms of working hours in Company X, employees have flexible working hours, where they can choose to clock in at either 8 or 9 a.m., as long as they fulfill 8 hours of work per day. During those 8 working hours, they have to use their time wisely in the role of a worker to show their best in job performance. After fulfilling the requirement of 8 working hours, they can go home and disconnect from the role of a worker to focus on their family members. Regarding job performance, it involves considering the behavioral episodes that either help or hinder the accomplishment of organizational goals. All organizations have their own goals, including Company X, but the main goal of every organization is to maintain their workers' job performance. Since there was a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and perceived job performance, it can be inferred from the findings that workers' work-life balance still needs to be addressed in order to enhance the quality of their job performance.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

This current study has several implications. One of them, this current study managed to present the latest research regarding the relationship between work-life balance and perceived job performance among workers. These variables change from time to time because they are influenced by several factors. In the current situation, this research was held after the endemic of COVID-19. So, the results of present data might assist in post-pandemic studies that are focusing on work-life balance and perceived job performance. This study might also assist in educating Malaysian organizations or industries about the value of maintaining a work-life balance in order to deliver top-notch work output. This study revealed a substantial positive association between perceived job performance and work-life balance. Therefore, the current findings of this study can be referred to as one of the pieces of evidence for the need of keeping the work-life balance to show a good work performance by higher management or the human resources department of the industries or organizations

Lastly, the study's current findings might then assist organizations or industries in enhancing the quality of employees' work-life balance so that they can perform well on the job. These recent discoveries also can be referred to by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, which establishes the policies and directions to accomplish the goals of gender equality, family development, and a caring society to enhance the issues, such



as by implementing any interventions to raise the level of work-life balance and job performance especially for women workers.

## **LIMITATIONS**

Apart from that, this current study also has several limitations. First, the time required for the researcher to perform the research is one of the study's limitations. Since the instruments used in this study did not have a translation in Bahasa Malaysia, the researcher should do a back-to-back translation to make sure the instruments were properly translated. However, because of time constraints, the researcher could only complete a one-way translation, and the university's linguistic experts simply proofread the instruments. A back-to-back translation is important to make sure that the questions in the instruments are all well translated and suited with the cultural background in Malaysia. Other than that, the time to collect the data from the respondents also exceeded the actual time that had been planned by the researcher. Since the questionnaires were only distributed via online platform which were emails and WhatsApp group, the number of respondents that successfully collected data every day was uncertain. Next, although 151 respondents were gathered for this study, it is still insufficient to generalize the findings about the relationship between work-life balance and perceived job performance to all industries or organizations in Malaysia. A sample that is larger than required will more accurately reflect the population as a whole, leading to more reliable results (Andrade, 2020).

After that, the instruments that have been used in this study were self-report. According to the American Psychological Association (2023), a methodological issue develops when researchers rely on interviewing participants on their ideas, feelings, or behaviors rather than directly and objectively quantifying these. Because they did not know the complete answer or were trying to look good, people might not give answers that are entirely accurate. Self-report bias was frequently used as justification for using direct observation wherever possible. Furthermore, the collected data in this study was compared with the exact same category of job from past research. There was plenty of category of jobs with different background, different complexity and also different design of the job. Since there was a lack of research that has been done regarding work-life balance and perceived job performance in a specific category of job in Malaysia compared to other countries, so it might have imperfection during the interpretation process of work-life balance and perceived job performance variables.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

By referring to the limitations in this current study, one of the suggestions for the future research is perhaps there will be psychometric research that can establish a Malay version of the instruments, so it will increase the psychometric properties and validity of the scales to be used in the Malaysian setting. Any research has more credibility when it uses culturally valid measurements (Menon & Praharaj, 2019). From this vantage point, it is encouraging to see that more and more research is being done on creating and evaluating culturally suitable instruments. This will undoubtedly improve the quality of the data from respective settings and make it easier to make comparisons to works from other countries. After that, instead of just focusing on one company in one sector in Malaysia, the suggestion for future research is to conduct a deep analysis regarding the difference between the relationship between work-life balance and perceived job performance in public sectors and private sectors. This is based on Schein's (1985) organizational culture theory, which defined it as a group of values, standards, and customs that direct and influence all team members' behavior. Through informal, non-structural means, organizations are held together and under control by shared values, beliefs, understandings, and norms (Akpa et al., 2021). Hence, it is great to conduct deep research on the relationship

between work-life balance and perceived job performance in public sectors and private sectors because each sector has its own perspective of organizational culture

Furthermore, to reduce any bias that might happen when the participants answer the self-report questionnaire, there is a suggestion that future study might potentially use a non-self-report as an assessment method. It is also suggested that future research can conduct a deep analysis on individual differences that might affect these variables such as the factors of gender and marital status as well as disabled workers, because different gender groups have their own perspective about work-life balance and perceived job performance. A married person also might have a different personal view regarding work-life balance compared to a single person. Same goes for normal workers and disabled workers, they also might have a different perspective about work-life balance and perceived job performance.

## **CONCLUSION**

Since the main aim of this study was to examine the relationship between work-life balance and perceived job performance, a Pearson's Correlation Analysis in SPSS was used to analyze the data. It turned out that the variables of work-life balance and perceived job performance have a positively significant relationship in line with previous studies that have been discussed before. The several factors that might affect the results also have been discussed and turned out to be essential factors to be considered by the company. Subsequent studies are encouraged to make deeper research on the possible factors that might influence the work-life balance and perceived job performance as have been discussed above.

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