

Work-Life Balance and Happiness: Driving Employee Performance in Kupang City

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to understand the role and relationship between work-life balance, happiness, and performance, as well as the influence of happiness as a mediating variable. Specifically, the study focuses on employees in Kupang City. It employs a quantitative and explanatory research method. The questionnaire was distributed to government and private sector employees working within Kupang City. Of the 132 questionnaires distributed, the data was further analyzed using SmartPLS 4. The findings illustrate a direct influence of the work-life balance variable on performance and happiness. Additionally, the happiness variable directly affects performance. The mediation test results indicate that the happiness variable can mediate the relationship between work-life balance and performance.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami peran dan hubungan work-life balance, kebahagiaan dan kinerja serta pengaruh kebahagiaan sebagai variabel mediasi. Secara khusus, penelitian ini dilakukan pada karyawan di Kota Kupang. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif dan riset explanatori dengan kuesioner sebagai instrumen penelitian. Kuesioner ini dibagikan kepada karyawan pemerintah maupun swasta yang bekerja di lingkup Kota Kupang. Dari 132 kuesioner yang disebarkan selanjutnya dianalisis lebih lanjut menggunakan SmartPLS 4. Hasil penelitian menggambarkan adanya pengaruh langsung variabel work-life balance, berpengaruh terhadap kinerja dan kebahagiaan. Selain itu, secara langsung variabel kebahagiaan juga berpengaruh terhadap kinerja. Hasil uji mediasi menunjukkan variabel kebahagiaan mampu memediasi variabel work-life balance terhadap kinerja.



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INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced, competitive, and knowledge-oriented business landscape, human resources have gained significant importance as organizations shift their focus from the scarcity of financial resources to the limited availability of top-tier human capital (Williams et al., 2016). Consistent employee performance has emerged as a key factor driving companies toward achieving their objectives (Wolor et al., 2020). To meet long-term goals, organizations must implement effective strategies to develop their human resources, ensuring they cultivate a workforce that is both competent and loyal (Manafe et al., 2022).

Employee competence and loyalty play a crucial role in enhancing employee performance. Additionally, other factors, such as good mental well-being often referred to as the concept of a "happy employee" (Abualloush et al., 2016; Joo & Lee, 2017) also contribute significantly to this outcome. Employees who experience greater happiness at work tend to be more productive and demonstrate a higher level of commitment. They are also more willing to go beyond their basic responsibilities, making meaningful

contributions to the success and sustainability of their organization (Shaffer et al., 2016; Sheikhaboumasoudi et al., 2018).

Happiness can serve as a powerful tool for organizations to enhance employee quality and performance (Rego & Cunha, 2008). Workplace happiness refers to factors that reflect pleasant evaluations, enjoyable experiences, or positive affective states in the work environment (Fisher, 2010). An individual's ability to uphold harmony between professional duties and personal well-being significantly influences their level of happiness (Elnanto & Suharti, 2021). Happiness at work goes beyond simply experiencing pleasure, positive emotions, or enjoyment, it also involves finding meaning in one's professional life. Furthermore, a person is considered truly happy when they consistently experience positive emotions. Having frequent positive emotions indicates a well-balanced life, free from immediate threats or distress.

In a broader sense, happiness is a fundamental quality of human life that contributes to overall well-being. It can be categorized into two key aspects. First, the affective aspect, which refers to emotional experiences such as joy, excitement, and pleasure. Second, the cognitive aspect, which relates to a person's satisfaction with various aspects of life (Rini, 2023). As individuals enter the workforce, their ability to balance professional and social roles serves as a pivotal force in shaping their overall well-being and happiness (Gröpel & Kuhl, 2009). In this context, the process of maintaining equilibrium between work and social responsibilities closely aligns with the concept of work-life balance (Begüm Ötken & Erben, 2013).

Work-life balance encompasses two key aspects: effectively managing work hours and fulfilling responsibilities at home (Iswahyudi et al., 2023). When individuals struggle to achieve work-life balance, they may feel burdened and unable to enjoy their lives. This often stems from challenges in spending quality time with family, partners, or friends (Bataineh, 2019; Meenakshi & V, 2013). Work-life balance refers to the extent to which individuals can engage in and find satisfaction in both their personal and professional roles without experiencing conflicts between the two (Ula et al., 2015). It involves maintaining a harmonious distribution of responsibilities and roles between work and personal life, ensuring that neither is sacrificed or given undue priority over the other. Achieving work-life balance allows individuals to effectively manage their time between professional and personal commitments, fostering a sense of comfort and satisfaction in the workplace while enabling them to enjoy their personal lives (Sondakh et al., 2023).

When individuals find themselves in a position where work-life balance is well-maintained and fosters a sense of happiness, these two conditions should ideally support their performance in the workplace. However, the reality is that most work practices become unbalanced and ineffective when working hours exceed the designated limits. In Indonesia, the working hours system is regulated by labor laws. According to UU Cipta Kerja No. 6 of 2023, Indonesia's standard workweek is 40 hours. Data published by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2023 indicates that 55,189,400 workers still work more than 44 hours per week. Based on the 2023 population data, East Nusa Tenggara Province has a total population of 5,656,039, with a workforce of 2,990,716. Of this workforce, 200,623

individuals are recorded as part of the Labor force in Kupang City. This data highlights that there are still workers whose total working hours exceed the limit established by the UU Cipta Kerja.

As the capital and economic center of East Nusa Tenggara, Kupang City has a rapidly growing labor market with diverse employment sectors, making it an ideal location to examine work-life balance and its impact on performance. Then, there are indications of long working hours in various industries, particularly in the public sector and service industries, which may contribute to work-life imbalance issues. As an urban area experiencing economic development, Kupang provides a relevant case study for understanding the dynamics of workplace conditions and their effects on employee well-being. These factors make Kupang City a strategic location to explore the relationship between working hours, work-life balance, and job performance.

This data highlights that there are still workers whose total working hours exceed the limit established by the UU Cipta Kerja. Exceeding the standard total working hours can disrupt an individual's work-life balance, as it reduces the time available for personal and family life, which may negatively impact their well-being (Gröpel & Kuhl, 2009). Organizations that provide employees with opportunities to balance work demands with their personal lives can enhance their performance (Bataineh, 2019).

This research aims to delve the interconnected among work-life balance, happiness, and performance, which previous exploration has often examined separately (Aruldoss et al., 2021; Haralayya, 2021; Kurnia & Widigdo, 2021; Ramdhani & Rasto, 2021; Saritha & Mukherjee, 2024). The researcher seeks to understand how the implementation of work-life balance influences employee happiness and performance in Kupang City. Moreover, many studies still focus on measuring the connection between work-life balance and job satisfaction (Rathi & Islam, 2024; Waworuntu et al., 2022).

However, research specifically examining work-life balance and happiness in Kupang City remains very limited, if not entirely absent, in existing academic literature. This gap highlights the novelty and significance of this study, as it seeks to provide empirical evidence on work-life balance in Kupang, offering new insights into its relationship with happiness and job performance. Therefore, it is worth developing this perspective by examining work-life balance in relation to job performance, with happiness serving as a mediating variable.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach and explanatory research to examine the relationships of the variables. The development of the research model is illustrated as follows:

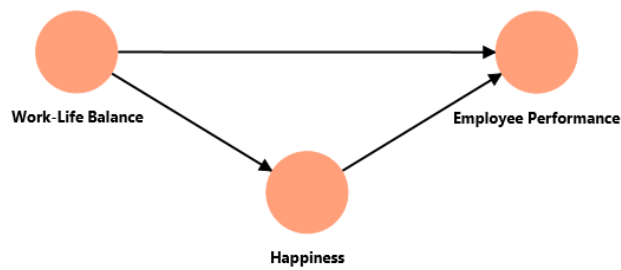


Figure 1 *Research Model*

Questionnaires served as the primary instrument for this study and were distributed across all regions of Kupang City, East Nusa Tenggara Province. To gather responses on each variable's indicators, the researchers utilized a 7-point Likert scale. The questionnaires were disseminated both online via Google Forms and manually in areas with limited internet access, with the assistance of enumerators.

The population for this study includes all individuals classified as part of the workforce in Kupang City, totaling 200,623 people who meet the criteria of being employed in government and/or private organizations. These two sectors were chosen because of the large sectors and the most employment choices of people in Kupang City and no studies have used them as research targets/objects. Using the sample size calculator provided by Qualtrics, the ideal sample size was determined to be 132 respondents, with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. The collected questionnaire data was analyzed using PLS-SEM and SmartPLS 4 for data analysis.

RESULT and DISCUSSION

Total 132 questionnaires were distributed to government (45,5%) and private sector (54,5%) employees working within Kupang City. These questionnaires were subsequently analyzed using SmartPLS 4 for further insights.

Indicator Reliability

Outer loadings are used to assess Indicator Reliability. These values represent the extent to which the variance of an indicator is explained by its construct and are considered the variance extracted from the indicator. To be valid, all outer loadings must be statistically significant. As a general rule, the minimum acceptable value for outer loadings is 0,7.

Table 1 *Outer Loading Test Result*

Work-Life Balance	
WLB.1	0,854
WLB.2	0,866
WLB.3	0,895
WLB.4	0,875
Performance	
P.1	0,944
P.2	0,919
P.3	0,941
P.4	0,941
P.5	0,900

Happiness	
H.1	0,873
H.2	0,809
H.3	0,858
H.4	0,878
H.5	0,886
H.6	0,847
H.7	0,786
H.8	0,840
H.9	0,878
H.10	0,901
H.11	0,876
H.12	0,885
H.13	0,761
H.14	0,882
H.15	0,836
H.16	0,883

Source: Results of Primary Data Processing, 2025

From Table 1, all indicators for the variables of work-life balance, happiness, and performance have values exceeding 0,7.

Construct Internal Consistency Reliability

The criteria for Construct Internal Consistency Reliability include Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability, with reliability estimated based on the level of correlation among the indicator variables. Acceptable values for Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability are $> 0,70$.

Table 2 Construct Internal Consistency Reliability

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)
Happiness	0,943	0,946
Performance	0,930	0,931
Work-Life Balance	0,896	0,896

Source: Results of Primary Data Processing, 2025

From Table 2, the values for the variables work-life balance, happiness, and performance exceed 0,7, indicating that all variables are reliable.

Convergent Validity

Convergent Validity refers to the extent to which an indicator positively correlates with other indicators measuring the same construct. A common method for assessing Convergent Validity at the variable level is through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). For the AVE to be considered valid, its value must exceed 0,5.

Table 3 Convergent Validity

	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Happiness	0,692

Performance	0,863
Work-Life Balance	0,762

Source: Results of Primary Data Processing, 2025

From Table 3, the values for the variables work-life balance, happiness, and performance are all above 0,5, confirming that all variables are valid.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant Validity refers to the extent to which a variable is distinct from other variables based on empirical standards. It indicates that a variable is unique and reflects characteristics not captured by other variables in the model. One method to assess discriminant validity is the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio criterion, which requires the HTMT value to remain below 0,9.

Table 4 Discriminant Validity

Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)	
Performance <-> Happiness	0,843
Work-Life Balance <-> Happiness	0,716
Work-Life Balance <-> Performance	0,677

Source: Results of Primary Data Processing, 2025

From Table 4. the values for the variables work-life balance, happiness, and performance are all below 0,9, indicating that they meet the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio criterion.

Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Adjusted R² serving as a standard to reduce bias in more complex models (Legate et al., 2023). The findings indicate that work-life balance and happiness collectively influence performance by 67,4%, while work-life balance alone affects happiness by 44,6%. The relationships between the variables work-life balance, happiness, and performance are presented in Table 5, which contains the answer of the hypothesis testing.

Table 5 Hypothesis Testing Result

	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Work-Life Balance -> Performance	3,585	0,000
Work-Life Balance -> Happiness	17,699	0,000
Happiness -> Performance	15,114	0,000
Work-Life Balance -> Happiness -> Performance	11,115	0,000

Source: Results of Primary Data Processing, 2025

The statistical analysis demonstrates that Work-Life Balance exerts a substantial influence on Performance (T=3,585; p=0.000), indicating that an enhancement in Work-Life Balance corresponds to a measurable improvement in Performance. Additionally, Work-Life Balance exhibits a strong association with Happiness (T=17,699; p=0.000), suggesting a meaningful connection between these variables. Moreover, Happiness contributes significantly to Performance (T=15,114; p=0.000), confirming that elevated levels of Happiness positively correlate with better performance outcomes. The mediation

assessment further reveals that Happiness serves as a crucial intermediary between Work-Life Balance and Performance ($T=11,115$; $p=0.000$), indicating that the indirect pathway through Happiness is statistically robust. All relationships within the model are substantiated by T-statistics exceeding 1.96 and p-values below 0.05, reinforcing the statistical validity of the proposed linkages.

Discussion

Work-Life Balance on Performance

According to the hypothesis testing results, this study proves that work-life balance has a bearing on performance. Work-life balance refers to the extent to which individuals can engage in and find satisfaction in both their personal and professional roles without experiencing conflicts between the two (Ula et al., 2015). This conflict will lead to two situations, referred to as two of the three dimensions of work-life balance (Hayman, 2005), namely Work Interferes with Personal Life (WIPL) or Personal Life Interferes with Work (PLIW). Work Interferes with Personal Life (WIPL) occurs when job responsibilities require greater time and effort from employees, leaving them with little to no energy or capacity to effectively manage personal matters. Conversely, in PLIW, employees tend to be drained by personal issues, making them less capable of performing optimally at work.

It is essential for organizations to prioritize maintaining a healthy work-life balance. When employees spend excessive time at work, it cuts into their personal time, which can lead to overwork, increased stress, and reduced performance. On the other hand, if employees devote too much time to their personal lives, it can negatively affect the organization by decreasing productivity. Tasks that should be completed on schedule may be postponed as employees focus on personal matters over their workplace responsibilities, ultimately impacting their performance.

It can be interpreted that employees who can balance their work and personal lives have a direct uplifting effect on their performance in the workplace. The task scheduling capability is effectively between professional and personal responsibilities enhances their capacity to complete assigned tasks. These findings align with studies by Kurnia & Widigdo (2021), Ramdhani & Rasto (2021) and Lukmiati et al. (2020), which demonstrates that a healthy work-life balance is strongly correlated with improved employee performance.

Work-Life Balance on Happiness

The t-statistic value of 17,699 is significant with a p-value of 0000, indicating a significant influence of work-life balance on happiness. As per the hypothesis testing results, this proves that work-life balance has a bearing on happiness. From these results, two aspects of work-life balance and happiness can be interpreted. First, happiness in this context signifies a state of contentment when an employee's plans and work progress as expected. Second, employees experience a moderate state of happiness when both work and personal life are harmoniously integrated. The failure to achieve optimal work outcomes due to managing personal matters can lead to unhappiness, especially for employees with a balanced orientation, those who perceive work as a means to fulfill their life needs. Conversely, while resolving personal issues may provide temporary relief, it may also lead

to unfinished work, causing employees to feel incompetent and dissatisfied. This means that even though personal matters are addressed, the incapacity to complete work optimally and responsibly is likely to be the consequence in a lack of fulfillment and overall happiness.

Happiness is a universal goal for all individuals. In the context of work-life balance, employees tend to feel happier when they have adequate time for both work and personal life. However, if employees spend excessive time on work, it may negatively affect their happiness, as the lack of personal time can lead to dissatisfaction with their current job. If employees devote too much time to personal life, it can hinder their ability to complete tasks and fulfil responsibilities at work. This imbalance may also reduce happiness due to work pressures that demand tasks to be completed within very limited timeframes. Therefore, employees who can balance their work and personal lives can enhance their level of happiness. The ability to harmonize professional and personal aspects provides positive energy, which in turn improves their ability to complete assigned tasks. These findings are supported by previous studies which confirm that work-life balance significantly impacts happiness (Jannah et al., 2020; Rini, 2023).

Happiness on Performance

The t-statistic value of 15,114 is significant with a p-value of 0,000, indicating that happiness has a significant impact on performance. This relationship can be understood through the two key aspects of happiness. The affective aspect, which encompasses emotional experiences such as joy, excitement, and pleasure, contributes to increased motivation, engagement, and resilience in the workplace. Employees who frequently experience positive emotions are more likely to approach tasks with enthusiasm and sustain high levels of productivity. Meanwhile, the cognitive aspect, which reflects a person's satisfaction with various life domains, influences overall well-being and workplace commitment. When employees feel satisfied with both their work and personal lives, they are more likely to be focused, efficient, and dedicated to their professional responsibilities.

In the workplace, happiness is the positive feeling employees experience when their expectations regarding assigned tasks and responsibilities align with reality or achieved outcomes. This is also influenced by intrinsic elements like an employee's personality and preferences in performing their duties. When employees meet the expectations set for their work (goals, objectives, results), they feel a sense of happiness. This accomplishment motivates them to maintain their current level of performance and strive for future success. Such achievements have a positive effect on both short-term and long-term performance. Therefore, the statistical evidence supporting the link between happiness and performance aligns with the broader psychological understanding that both emotional well-being and life satisfaction play crucial roles in shaping a person's skill set to excel in their work. These findings align with research by Weny et al. (2023) and Awada et al. (2019) which demonstrates that happiness significantly contributes to improved employee performance.

Work-Life Balance on Performance Mediated by Happiness

The t-statistic value of 11,115 is significant with a p-value of 0,000, indicating that happiness successfully mediates the relationship between work-life balance and performance. These results demonstrate that an individual's ability to harmonize their work and personal life can generate positive energy, which enhances their happiness and, indirectly, improves their performance. The mediation assessment confirms that happiness acts as a key intermediary in the relationship between work-life balance and performance, meaning that work-life balance does not only directly influence performance but also enhances it indirectly through the presence of happiness. This finding suggests that happiness serves as a psychological mechanism that explains how ensuring harmony between professional and personal responsibilities enhances workplace efficiency.

Happiness can be an effective mediator because it integrates both emotional and cognitive well-being, which are essential for productivity. When employees achieve a well-maintained equilibrium between professional and personal commitments, they go through lower stress levels, greater job satisfaction, and enhanced emotional stability, leading to increased happiness. In turn, a happy employee is more likely to be engaged, motivated, and resilient, which positively impacts their ability to perform tasks efficiently and effectively.

Moreover, happiness buffers the negative effects of work-related stress and enhances intrinsic motivation, allowing employees to remain focused and productive even in demanding work environments. Therefore, the significant mediation effect suggests that organizations should not only promote work-life balance policies but also create an environment that fosters employee happiness, as it serves as a vital link to maximizing performance outcomes. These results demonstrate that an individual's ability to harmonize their work and personal life can generate positive energy, which enhances their happiness and, indirectly, improves their performance. These results also highlight the role of happiness as a mediating variable in the influence of work-life balance on performance, as previous studies have used job satisfaction as a mediator.

CONCLUSIONS

The demands of fulfilling workplace responsibilities reveal three key indicators: employees' ability to balance work and personal life, the sense of happiness that impacts performance, and the relationship between these factors. This study provides empirical evidence that work-life balance and happiness influence employee performance, supported by statistical tests based on t-statistic and p-value results. Furthermore, work-life balance also directly affects employee happiness. Mediation analysis shows that happiness mediates the effect of work-life balance on employee performance. These findings align with previous studies and have implications for policies and work system arrangements that promote work-life balance, employee happiness, and enhanced performance.

This analysis carries significance for policies and work system arrangements that support work-life balance, employee happiness, and improved performance. It is essential for organizations not only to implement work-life balance policies but also to support them by fostering a conducive and comfortable work environment that promotes employee

happiness. However, this study alone is not sufficient to serve as comprehensive empirical evidence regarding happiness as a mediating variable, as it only presents the general practice of work-life balance, happiness, and performance by combining all job categories from respondents. Future research should further specify these conditions by examining each job category separately, allowing for more targeted recommendations for workplaces regarding work-life balance policies and employee performance management. In addition, it can be done by looking at other variables that can influence such as compensation, gender and organizational culture to provide a more in-depth comprehensive understanding.

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