

Work-Life Balance: Between Professionalism and Well-Being, the Role of Office Managers in Maintaining Employee Performance

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how office managers contribute to maintaining employees' work-life balance to help sustain their performance. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings highlight that office managers play a key role in fostering a work environment that supports both mental well-being and productivity. Theoretically, this research supports the perspective within human resource management that work-life balance is a critical factor in employee performance. On a practical level, the insights from this study can inform organizations in designing flexible work policies, managing workloads more effectively, and enhancing managerial support. What sets this study apart is its focus on the role of office managers, an area often overlooked compared to that of senior management in bridging professional demands with employees' personal needs. By doing so, it contributes to a contextual understanding of how middle management can help promote employee well-being in today's evolving workplace.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance; Office Managers; Employee Performance; Middle Management; Employee Well-Being; Qualitative Research



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INTRODUCTION

The modern workplace is evolving at an unprecedented pace, shaped by rapid technological innovation, globalization, and shifting socio-economic expectations. This transformation has not only redefined how organizations operate but also significantly altered the daily experiences of employees. The widespread adoption of digital tools, the normalization of remote and hybrid work models, and the relentless pressure for productivity have blurred the traditional boundaries between professional duties and personal life (Choudhury *et al.*, 2021). Increasingly, employees find themselves tethered to work through mobile devices and virtual platforms, which often extends their working hours into personal time (Nurain *et al.*, 2024). This hyperconnectivity significantly contributes to heightened levels of stress and emotional exhaustion. A web-based study by Jimenez and Bregenzer (2021) found that over 68% of digital workers reported emotional exhaustion due to constant connectivity and blurred work-life boundaries, with mobile device use being a key driver. The study underscores how digital work environments, while offering flexibility, can paradoxically erode employee well-being when not managed effectively (Efawati, 2024). As a result, stress, burnout, and emotional exhaustion are becoming prevalent concerns in contemporary work environments (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Efawati, 2020).

Given the growing pressures of digital connectivity and extended work hours, achieving a healthy work-life balance (WLB) has become increasingly recognized as essential for safeguarding employee well-being and ensuring organizational sustainability. As Hasyim and Bakri (2025) argue, fostering WLB not only supports individual mental health but also plays a pivotal role in maintaining productivity and long-term workforce stability. WLB refers to an individual's ability to effectively manage and harmonize work responsibilities with personal and family commitments (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). A well-maintained balance is associated with numerous positive outcomes, including increased job satisfaction, enhanced performance, reduced turnover intentions, and better psychological health (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). However, despite its importance, achieving WLB remains elusive for many, especially in sectors where high workloads and constant connectivity are normalized.

Much of the existing literature on WLB focuses on structural and policy-level interventions such as flexible scheduling, telework policies, parental leave, or wellness programs, typically designed and implemented by senior management or human resources departments. For example, Kossek (2016) emphasizes that organizational-level work-life interventions, including flextime, telecommuting, and paid leave policies, are critical in shaping employee experiences and are most effective when embedded structurally within company policy. While these top-down approaches are valuable, they often lack the immediacy and contextual relevance that front-line employees need. Consequently, there exists a growing recognition of the importance of informal, relational mechanisms that facilitate WLB in daily work life (Haar *et al.*, 2014; E. Kossek *et al.*, 2014). Despite this shift, a key set of actors remains largely underrepresented in academic discussions: office managers.

Office managers, often classified as mid-level or operational staff, occupy a unique and strategic position in organizational hierarchies. They act as intermediaries between upper management and employees, serving as logistical coordinators, administrative problem-solvers, and perhaps most importantly, sources of emotional and practical support for staff. Their work is often invisible yet indispensable. From managing team dynamics to resolving scheduling conflicts and mediating interpersonal issues, office managers contribute significantly to maintaining a functional and humane workplace. Their proximity to the day-to-day realities of employees allows them to

observe and respond to early signs of stress, burnout, or disengagement often before these issues escalate (Mazzola & Disselhorst, 2019)

In a post-pandemic era characterized by hybrid work, increased digital fatigue, and isolation, the role of office managers has become even more complex and essential. With fewer face-to-face interactions, office managers are often the glue that maintains workplace cohesion, morale, and continuity. They facilitate informal communication, reinforce organizational culture, and help employees navigate the uncertainties of flexible work arrangements (Kniffin *et al.*, 2020). Yet, academic research has largely ignored these contributions, continuing to prioritize macro-level analyses and formal HR initiatives over ground-level relational leadership (Townsend & Hutchinson, 2016)

This oversight creates a critical gap in understanding how organizations can practically and sustainably support WLB. While executive policies set the tone, the translation of these policies into meaningful everyday experiences is often the responsibility of mid-level figures like office managers. Their ability to implement WLB informally through empathetic scheduling, proactive conflict resolution, emotional labour, and relational care makes them vital, though frequently unrecognized, actors in shaping workplace well-being. These soft skills and human-centered practices are rarely captured by traditional metrics of productivity or leadership, further contributing to their invisibility.

This study, therefore, seeks to reposition the role of office managers at the center of WLB discussions. The research question driving this inquiry is: How do office managers help employees maintain a balance between professionalism and personal well-being in a way that positively impacts performance? In exploring this question, the study aims to illuminate the everyday practices and lived experiences that enable office managers to foster supportive environments. This includes their responses to emotional needs, adaptations to workload distribution, and informal negotiations that balance operational demands with human needs.

By focusing on this overlooked yet indispensable role, the research contributes to both theoretical frameworks and practical strategies. It changes the dominant narrative that effective WLB must be driven solely by formalized top-level interventions. Instead, it emphasizes the power of localized, relational leadership in enhancing employee resilience, commitment, and performance. As organizations continue to grapple with employee retention, well-being, and the psychological aftershocks of a global pandemic, empowering office managers could represent one of the most immediate, cost-effective, and sustainable solutions available. Recognizing their role is not just an academic concern it is a strategic imperative.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work Motivation and Employee Well-Being: A Self-Determination Perspective

Work motivation and employee well-being are deeply connected; when one thrives, the other often follows. Both are essential ingredients in achieving sustainable organizational success. A helpful lens through which to understand this relationship is the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Deci and Ryan (2000). At its core, SDT suggests that people are most motivated and psychologically healthy when three basic psychological needs are met: autonomy (the freedom to make choices and take initiative), competence (feeling effective and capable in one's work), and relatedness (a sense of meaningful connection with others). When these needs are satisfied, employees are more likely to experience emotional balance, mental well-being, and a strong internal drive to do their best. In practice, this means that when people feel respected, trusted, and

supported in their roles, they tend to be more engaged, less stressed, and more productive. On the other hand, when work environments limit personal agency, undervalue skills, or create isolation, motivation declines and so does well-being. Recent research continues to affirm this theory. For instance, den Broeck *et al.* (2016) found that organizations that actively support autonomy, competence, and relatedness see significant increases in job satisfaction and psychological vitality. Similarly, Slemp, Kern, and Vella-Brodrick (2018) demonstrated that fostering autonomy not only boosts intrinsic motivation but also helps protect employees from burnout and emotional fatigue. Given this evidence, incorporating Self-Determination Theory into leadership and HR strategies isn't just an academic exercise it's a practical way to build healthier, more resilient workplaces. This approach is especially relevant not only globally but also within the Indonesian work context, where research shows that psychological needs and social dynamics play a vital role in shaping employee experiences.

The Strategic Role of Managers in Creating a Healthy Work Environment

The Role of Managers in Creating a Productive and Healthy Work Environment. Managers play a central role in fostering a work climate that supports both productivity and employee mental health. According to Robbins and Judge (2015) a manager is not just a formal leader but also the guardian of the work atmosphere. They carry both a moral and professional responsibility to build an environment that supports team performance and well-being. Key strategic roles of managers in supporting team productivity and well-being include:

- Providing clear role definitions and setting expectations to reduce task confusion.
- Offering emotional support and maintaining open communication, particularly during periods of heavy workloads.
- Encouraging a healthy work culture, such as discouraging the glorification of overtime and excessive working hours.
- Respecting personal balance by offering flexible scheduling or hybrid work arrangements.

When managers perform these roles effectively, not only does team productivity improve, but a sense of safety, comfort, and connection is also cultivated among team members. Furthermore, implementing flexible work policies and managing workloads fairly are crucial strategies for promoting work-life balance and reducing the risk of burnout.

An ergonomic work environment and balanced workload policies are also crucial in reducing stress and enhancing both the physical and mental health of employees (Hanny Novita Ramadhan *et al.*, 2024). Therefore, the role of a manager goes beyond simply overseeing tasks; it also involves managing employee well-being holistically through proactive and strategic approaches.

Thus, the role of managers extends beyond task coordination and performance supervision. It encompasses a proactive responsibility to address the psychological and emotional needs of employees as a core element of organizational productivity and sustainability. Leaders who embrace this holistic perspective are better positioned to build resilient, engaged, and high-performing teams.

Burnout

Burnout is more than just feeling tired after a long day at work it's a complex psychological condition marked by deep emotional exhaustion, a growing sense of detachment from one's work and colleagues (known as depersonalization), and a

diminished sense of personal achievement. First introduced by Maslach and Jackson (1981), the concept of burnout has become increasingly relevant in today's fast-paced, high-pressure work environments, especially where organizational support is limited or inconsistent.

Among the many contributing factors to burnout, leadership style plays a particularly influential role. The way managers lead, how they communicate, support, and empower their teams can either protect employees from burnout or intensify it. Transformational leadership, in particular, has been widely recognized as a protective factor. This leadership style is grounded in inspiration, individualized support, and a commitment to employee development. Bass and Avolio (1994) found that transformational leaders don't just assign tasks; they cultivate meaningful work environments where people feel seen, valued, and motivated. They recognize individual contributions, foster growth, and build a shared sense of purpose, all of which contribute to emotional resilience and job satisfaction. On the flip side, more rigid or disengaged leadership styles, such as authoritarian or laissez-faire approaches, can do real harm. Authoritarian leaders often micromanage without empathy, while laissez-faire leaders provide little to no guidance or feedback. Both extremes leave employees feeling unsupported, unclear about their roles, and emotionally disconnected from their work, increasing the risk of burnout (Skakon *et al.*, 2010).

Supporting this view, Gilbreath and Benson (2004) discovered a strong link between employees' perceptions of their supervisors and their experience of workplace stress and burnout. When employees feel that their supervisors are approachable, empathetic, and fair, their stress levels drop, and so does the likelihood of burnout. In this sense, managers and leaders act not just as task organizers, but as emotional anchors for their teams. All of this underscores a crucial truth: leadership isn't just about hitting targets or managing workflows. It's about people. Leaders who prioritize empathy, clear communication, and psychological safety create environments where employees are not only more productive but also more loyal, engaged, and mentally healthy. In the long run, organizations that invest in these kinds of leaders are more likely to retain talent, sustain performance, and build a workplace culture that thrives even under pressure.

Empirical Evidence on Leadership Styles and Psychological Well-being in the Indonesian Workplace

Empirical evidence from Indonesia provides compelling insights into how leadership style profoundly influences employee well-being, particularly in high-stress sectors such as healthcare and construction. Among these, transformational leadership has consistently emerged as a powerful tool for reducing burnout, especially among professionals facing intense emotional and physical demands. For instance, a study conducted at PKU Muhammadiyah Hospital in Bantul (Kurniasih & Astuti, n.d.) demonstrated that nurses working under transformational leaders experienced significantly lower levels of burnout. This type of leadership, which emphasizes emotional support, empowerment, and open communication, helps to cultivate a psychologically safe environment where individuals feel heard and valued. One key finding from the study was that involving employees in decision-making processes not only boosted morale but also gave them a greater sense of control over their work an essential factor in reducing emotional exhaustion.

Beyond burnout, the positive ripple effects of transformational leadership are evident in other areas of organizational life. A study of 118 construction workers in Yogyakarta revealed that psychological well-being fully mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment. This means that employees were more loyal and dedicated to their organization when their leaders

prioritized their mental health. Rather than simply instructing or directing, these leaders acted as mentors and motivators, creating work environments grounded in mutual respect, trust, and care.

In stark contrast, authoritarian leadership continues to pose serious risks to employee well-being. Studies conducted at BRI Amurang and PTPN XI found a direct link between top-down, centralized leadership styles and increased psychological strain. Employees working under authoritarian supervisors often reported higher levels of stress, driven by rigid rules, lack of autonomy, and minimal recognition of employee input. These environments not only stifle creativity and engagement but also foster a chronic sense of pressure and powerlessness. Reinforcing this, Sari *et al.* (2024) found that consistent pressure from unsympathetic supervisors significantly heightened employee anxiety, creating an unhealthy work culture that drained both energy and motivation.

Taken together, these studies underscore a vital point: leadership is not just about strategy and structure it's about people. In demanding work settings, especially where emotional resilience is key, empathy-based leadership can make the difference between burnout and balance. Transformational leaders, those who listen, uplift, and involve their teams, serve as critical psychological buffers against workplace stress. By championing employee well-being as a cornerstone of organizational success, they foster not only healthier individuals but also more committed, adaptive, and high-performing organizations.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive method with a phenomenological approach, aiming to deeply understand how employees personally experience the role of their managers in shaping the balance between their professional responsibilities and personal lives. The phenomenological lens allows the research to go beyond surface-level observations and instead delve into the meanings and emotions employees attach to their day-to-day interactions within the workplace. By focusing on lived experiences, this approach brings out the human side of organizational life, capturing how leadership styles, workplace culture, and managerial behavior are felt and interpreted by those directly impacted.

To collect rich and meaningful data, the study employed semi-structured interviews. While a set of guiding questions was prepared to ensure consistency, the interview format remained open and flexible, allowing respondents to freely share their stories, reflections, and emotions. This method encouraged deeper conversations, helping to uncover the subtle dynamics and personal insights that structured surveys might overlook. Each discussion was seen as a unique narrative, shaped by the respondent's individual context and personal journey.

The study's participants were selected with care, using purposive sampling to ensure that the insights gathered were relevant and grounded in real experience. The population consisted of active employees from various sectors both private and public who had worked for at least one year under the supervision of a manager or team leader. To participate, individuals needed to meet several key criteria: they must have direct experience working in a team led by a manager, have encountered real challenges in maintaining a balance between work demands and personal life, and be willing and able to openly articulate their experiences. These thoughtful selection parameters ensured that each voice in the study contributed meaningfully to a richer understanding of the often-unseen emotional and relational layers that define the workplace experience.

General Information of Respondents

In order to better understand the relationship between work-life balance, leadership style, and employee productivity, we gathered insights directly from individuals working across various professional backgrounds. The following section presents both demographic information and personal perceptions regarding their workplace experiences. We believe that behind every data point is a human story one shaped by daily routines, responsibilities, emotions, and relationships both inside and outside the workplace. By approaching this topic from a more personal angle, we aim not only to collect statistics but also to listen to the lived realities of employees navigating modern work challenges. This set of questions was designed to reflect how employees perceive their daily work lives, particularly focusing on how they manage time, cope with stress, respond to leadership, and maintain their well-being. These elements are critical in building a holistic picture of what drives or hinders performance in today's dynamic work environments.

To begin, we collected some basic information about the respondents, including:

1. Name & Occupation – to identify the respondent's professional background, which may influence their experience of work-life balance and management support.
2. Age – as different age groups may have varying expectations and responsibilities that affect their perspective on work and life integration.

Work-Life Balance and Productivity

Balancing professional responsibilities with personal life has become a core issue in maintaining both well-being and productivity. To understand how this balance impacts individual performance, respondents were asked:

1. Do you feel that your work-life balance affects your job performance?
This question invites reflection on whether having adequate time for rest, family, or personal interests contributes to the ability to perform better at work or whether its absence may lead to stress and inefficiency.
2. To what extent are you able to stay focused at work because you have sufficient personal time?
Here, we explore how the availability of personal time free from work obligations contributes to mental clarity, focus, and long-term sustainability in productivity.

Role of Manager

A supportive manager can make a significant difference in how employees experience their work. Managerial behavior not only affects performance but also shapes how safe and valued employees feel in their roles. The next few questions assess managerial impact:

1. Does your manager encourage discipline while remaining flexible when needed?
This question looks at how well a manager balances professional expectations with human understanding acknowledging that structure and flexibility are both necessary.
2. Do you feel that your manager supports you in a humane way when you face work pressure?
Work can be demanding, but compassionate leadership can ease that burden. This item seeks to understand whether managers respond empathetically during high-stress situations.
3. Does your manager set an example in maintaining a healthy work-life balance?
Employees often look to their leaders for cues on how to manage workload and

boundaries. This question examines whether managers themselves model the behavior they encourage in their teams.

Perception of Performance and Work Culture

Culture plays a powerful role in shaping employee behavior, motivation, and sense of belonging. These final questions explore how respondents perceive the culture and values embedded in their workplaces:

1. To what extent do you feel that your work environment supports sustainable hard work rather than short-term results?
 Sustainable productivity is built on a foundation of consistent effort, not constant urgency. This question identifies whether the organization prioritizes long-term growth over quick wins.
2. In your opinion, does having a balanced life make you more loyal and focused at work?
 Lastly, this question explores the link between personal balance and professional dedication whether well-being outside of work contributes to engagement within it.

RESEARCH RESULTS

To gain a clearer and more meaningful understanding of the individuals who took part in this survey, the table below provides a brief snapshot of their names, occupations, and ages. These details help paint a broader picture of the respondents' backgrounds, which may play a significant role in shaping their views on work-life balance and job performance. By considering these personal attributes, we can better appreciate the diverse perspectives they bring to the topic.

Table 1. Respondent's name, employment, and age

No	Name	Employment	Age
1	Jesiska Changdra	Content creator	19
2	Christopher Tito	Private Employee	23
3	Melati Putri	Government Employee	23
4	Natalia Seruni	Private Employee	27
5	Fransesco Timmy	Private Employee	21
6	Ahmad Ridwan	Operation Technician	30
7	Mieke	Private Employee	23
8	Ilham	Private Employee	24
9	Deto	Kitchen Staff	24

Source: Interview (2025)

Work-Life Balance and Productivity

1. The Impact of Work-Life Balance on Job Performance
 For many young professionals, the relationship between work-life balance and job performance is not just an abstract concept it's a daily lived reality. In recent interviews and surveys, a strong majority of respondents expressed that having the space to nurture both their personal and professional lives had a direct, positive impact on their ability to perform at work. Rather than seeing time off as a luxury, they viewed it as an essential foundation for emotional stability and mental clarity.

One respondent captured this sentiment with quiet sincerity: “When my mind and heart are at peace, I can work with better focus and achieve optimal results.” For them, balance was not about doing less it was about doing better. Recharging outside of work allowed them to return with renewed energy, sharper problem-solving skills, and a deeper sense of purpose. This sense of well-being rippled into their workplace behavior. When their emotional needs were met, they were more patient with colleagues, more creative in problem-solving, and more resilient when faced with pressure. Far from diminishing productivity, work-life balance became the fuel that kept their performance consistent and sustainable.

2. Focus at Work Due to Adequate Personal Time

Another key insight that emerged from the data was how time away from work directly influenced focus during working hours. Most respondents rated their workplace concentration at a high average of 8 out of 10, a testament to the power of personal time as a tool for professional excellence. Whether it was a quiet evening spent reading, a morning workout, or quality time with loved ones, these moments outside of work were seen not as distractions, but as essential components of mental wellness. “If I’m constantly thinking about unfinished personal matters, my mind can’t be fully in the room at work,” one participant explained. “But when I know I’ve had time to care for myself, I’m able to give my full energy to my job.” This reflects a shift in mindset that is becoming increasingly common among the younger workforce: productivity is no longer defined by hours clocked in, but by the quality of engagement and presence during those hours. When employees are given the flexibility and trust to manage their own time, they tend to repay it with stronger focus, better performance, and a more positive attitude at work.

The Role of Managers

1. Encouraging Discipline and Flexibility

Respondents also highlighted the critical role managers play in shaping a balanced work culture. Almost all participants said their managers successfully encouraged discipline and accountability, while still allowing flexibility when personal situations required it. This blend of structure and understanding created a workplace environment that felt both respectful and adaptable something that made it easier for employees to maintain consistency without sacrificing their personal lives.

2. Humane Support from Managers During High-Pressure Situations

When pressure mounted, most respondents felt supported by their managers in ways that went beyond deadlines and performance metrics. They described leaders who acknowledged their efforts, celebrated their wins, and showed genuine concern for their well-being. Although one participant noted the absence of such support in their experience, the overwhelming trend pointed to a culture of care and recognition. This human-centered approach to leadership was seen as a vital element in helping employees stay motivated and emotionally resilient.

3. Managers as Role Models for Work-Life Balance

Although not every respondent explicitly used the term “role model,” many of the positive reflections on leadership pointed clearly in that direction. Participants frequently described a deep respect for managers who skillfully balanced high expectations with genuine empathy. These leaders didn’t just talk about work-life balance they lived it. Their actions spoke volumes, often more powerfully than policies or motivational speeches. Several respondents shared how their supervisors made it okay to log off on time, to take breaks without guilt, or to prioritize health

without fear of judgment. By setting their own boundaries and honoring personal well-being, these managers quietly gave their teams permission to do the same. One participant put it succinctly: “When I see my boss taking care of themselves and still getting things done, it makes me feel like I can too.” This kind of leadership created a ripple effect. Teams led by such managers reported adopting healthier work habits themselves logging off after hours, taking proper lunch breaks, and feeling more at ease asking for support when needed. In essence, these leaders led not just through direction, but through example. Their ability to model balance fostered a culture where wellness and performance could coexist where ambition didn’t come at the cost of mental health.

Perceptions of Performance and Work Culture

1. **A Work Environment That Supports Sustainable Performance**
Rather than pushing for quick wins, many companies represented in the survey were seen as valuing sustainable progress. Employees appreciated workplaces that recognized consistent effort, not just instant success. The presence of flexibility, appreciation, and personal consideration suggested that these organizations were thinking long-term investing in people, not just productivity.
2. **The Influence of Work-Life Balance on Loyalty and Focus**
Perhaps the most powerful insight from the survey was the unanimous agreement that a balanced life led to deeper loyalty and greater focus. Employees who felt supported in both their personal and professional lives were more likely to stay, grow, and thrive in their roles. As one participant put it, *“With a healthy work environment and company support, employees feel more comfortable and productive.”* This sentiment captures what many organizations are now starting to understand: that work-life balance is not a perk it’s a foundation for long-term success, both for individuals and the businesses they serve.

DISCUSSION

This study explored the relationship between work-life balance and employee outcomes, specifically job performance, focus, managerial support, and loyalty among young professionals aged 19 to 30. The quantitative data obtained from the survey include numerical scores, such as self-assessed focus levels on a scale from 1 to 10, and categorical responses (e.g., “Yes”/“No”), which were analyzed to calculate the percentage of agreement among respondents. For example, 80% of participants affirmed that work-life balance affects their job performance. The qualitative data were collected through open-ended questions that allowed respondents to describe their experiences and opinions in their own words. These narratives were analyzed thematically. Common themes included the importance of flexible working hours, emotional support from managers, and the ability to maintain personal well-being. For instance, one participant noted, “When life and work are balanced, I feel more motivated and loyal to my job.”. The findings align with broader research suggesting that personal well-being is deeply interwoven with professional performance, particularly in the context of modern, flexible work environments.

WLB indicators influencing both effectiveness and job satisfaction, as revealed in the survey, include managerial support under pressure, workplace flexibility, and opportunities to recharge through adequate personal time. These factors collectively contribute to increased loyalty, focus, and overall employee performance. The findings align with broader research suggesting that personal well-being is deeply interwoven with

professional performance, particularly in the context of modern, flexible work environments. One of the most prominent themes emerging from the data is the clear belief that maintaining work-life balance positively affects job performance. A substantial majority of respondents expressed that having time and space to attend to personal matters allows them to return to work feeling more emotionally grounded and mentally prepared. This emotional equilibrium was consistently linked to increased productivity, sharper focus, and a greater sense of fulfillment. As one respondent, Fransesco Timmy, aptly noted, *"A calm mind and heart lead to better focus and optimal work results."* Such statements highlight how personal well-being is not separate from work, but rather a critical input to achieving professional excellence.

In terms of work focus, the data suggests a strong correlation between adequate personal time and the ability to maintain concentration. Most participants rated their focus level at approximately 8 out of 10, and those who elaborated in open-ended responses frequently attributed this clarity to being able to recharge outside of working hours. This indicates that time spent outside work is not a competing interest, but an investment that enhances the quality of one's contributions in the workplace. Several respondents used phrases like "very helpful" to describe the impact of personal time, reinforcing the view that rest, family, hobbies, and personal freedom are essential components of sustained concentration and energy at work.

Beyond individual habits, the role of managerial support stood out as a significant mediator of work-life balance. Nearly all respondents conveyed that their managers not only enforced discipline but also demonstrated meaningful flexibility. This duality structured expectations paired with adaptive leadership was frequently cited as a key reason why employees felt supported. It enabled them to meet goals while managing personal challenges without guilt or fear of penalization. Many participants spoke positively about how managers provided recognition, offered encouragement, and treated employees with understanding, especially during high-pressure periods. Fransesco Timmy emphasized how his manager consistently showed appreciation whenever targets were met, which, in his view, contributed to higher morale and motivation.

This balance in leadership was echoed by others, including Christopher Tito, who stated, *"With a healthy work environment and strong company support, employees feel more comfortable and productive."* Such responses point to a form of leadership that goes beyond transactional oversight and enters the realm of human-centered management where empathy, encouragement, and realistic expectations help build a more sustainable, engaged workforce.

However, it is equally important to acknowledge divergent responses. One participant, Jesiska Changdra, expressed skepticism about the direct impact of work-life balance on her job performance, suggesting that personal equilibrium may not be equally important for everyone. This deviation, while not common, provides a useful counterpoint. It indicates that while work-life balance is beneficial for most, its effects may vary depending on individual personality, work style, or external motivators. Additionally, a small number of participants pointed out that not all managers were supportive, especially under stress. This reveals a potential gap between organizational values and actual managerial behavior, suggesting that leadership training and consistency are crucial to ensuring the intended workplace culture is truly lived out across all levels of an organization.

Another notable finding was the link between work-life balance and employee loyalty. Respondents consistently stated that when their workplace enabled them to lead balanced lives, their commitment to the company deepened. They felt more valued, more focused, and more likely to remain with the organization in the long term. Loyalty, in this

sense, was not a byproduct of compensation alone, but of emotional safety, mutual respect, and personal agency. This is especially significant in a generation that prioritizes well-being and purpose as much as, if not more than, traditional career advancement.

Finally, the overall perception of workplace culture among respondents leaned toward sustainability rather than short-term productivity. Participants described environments that, while still goal-oriented, placed importance on consistency, recognition, and flexibility. The absence of a rigid, results-only mindset allowed employees to work with less fear and more creativity, ultimately contributing to a more resilient and motivated workforce.

In conclusion, the data shows that work-life balance is not merely a personal preference but a strategic component of employee performance and organizational health. While individual experiences vary, the overwhelming trend supports the view that emotional well-being, flexible yet disciplined leadership, and recognition of personal needs create conditions where professionals can truly thrive. For organizations seeking to retain talent and build sustainable teams, fostering work-life balance is not just ethical it is essential.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings from the survey, which involved employees from a wide range of backgrounds and professions, reveal just how essential work-life balance is to individual performance and overall organizational health. Respondents consistently emphasized that when they are given the space to attend to personal responsibilities alongside professional duties, they experience increased focus, improved mental well-being, and greater efficiency in completing their tasks. This sense of balance not only enhances productivity but also contributes to a more sustainable and fulfilling approach to work. A key factor enabling this balance is the role of leadership particularly managers who are not only capable of maintaining order and accountability but who also lead with empathy, flexibility, and a genuine concern for their team's well-being. Such managers help create an environment where employees feel seen, heard, and supported not just as workers, but as whole individuals.

This type of leadership fosters trust and emotional connection, which in turn builds long-term commitment and loyalty to the organization. Moreover, the survey underscores the importance of cultivating a workplace culture that values and respects employees' lives beyond the office. Organizations that champion work-life balance tend to see better outcomes not because they demand more, but because they support better. Employees in such cultures are not driven solely by deadlines or targets, but by a sense of purpose and belonging. They are more engaged, more resilient, and more likely to go the extra mile not out of obligation, but from genuine motivation and appreciation. To build this kind of environment, companies are encouraged to go beyond surface-level initiatives.

They should invest in meaningful policies like flexible scheduling, mental health support, and generous leave provisions. Equally important is equipping managers with the skills to lead people, not just processes, helping them recognize the unique circumstances and contributions of each team member. Lastly, fostering a culture of recognition where achievements are acknowledged sincerely, whether through formal awards or simple expressions of gratitude, can significantly enhance morale and reinforce positive behaviors. And as with any aspect of organizational development, regular evaluation is key. By continuously assessing employee satisfaction, the quality of leadership, and the effectiveness of work-life policies, companies can adapt and evolve

in ways that keep their workforce both happy and high-performing. In a world where the boundaries between work and life are increasingly fluid, those organizations that lead with empathy, intention, and adaptability will be best positioned for long-term success.

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