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Work From Anywhere as a New Lifestyle: The Role of Work Flexibility, Work-Life Balance, and Job Satisfaction among Millennial Workers in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Research on Work From Anywhere (WFA) has primarily examined it as a work arrangement, while its role as a lifestyle orientation remains underexplored, particularly in developing countries. This study investigates the effects of work flexibility on work-life balance, job satisfaction, and the internalization of WFA as a lifestyle among Indonesian millennials, while also exploring their lived experiences. A mixed methods sequential explanatory design was employed. The quantitative phase surveyed 247 millennial employees practicing WFA in Jakarta, Bandung, and Bali, with data analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling. The qualitative phase involved semi-structured interviews with 20 participants and thematic analysis. The findings indicate that work flexibility positively influences work-life balance, job satisfaction, and WFA as a lifestyle. Work-life balance and job satisfaction partially mediate the relationship between work flexibility and lifestyle internalization. Four qualitative themes emerged: personal autonomy, work-life integration, mobility as identity, and challenges related to social isolation and economic uncertainty. The study concludes that work flexibility supports the adoption of WFA as a lifestyle by enhancing work-life balance and job satisfaction. These findings extend understanding of WFA among Indonesian millennials and offer practical implications for developing adaptive workplace policies.

Keywords: Work From Anywhere; Work Flexibility; Work-Life Balance; Job Satisfaction; Lifestyle

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INTRODUCTION

The transformation of the world of work accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed how individuals perceive and experience work. Work From Anywhere (WFA), a work model that is not tied to a fixed location, is rapidly becoming a widely adopted practice across various sectors. The McKinsey Global Institute 2023 estimates that approximately 35% of jobs worldwide have the potential to be performed remotely, and this trend is expected to continue increasing as digital infrastructure develops. In Indonesia, the (Ministry of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022) reported that more than 2.5 million formal workers have implemented flexible work arrangements, with significant growth among the millennial age group (25–40 years old). Data from (BPS Indonesia, 2025) also show that Indonesia's digital economy sector is growing at 8.5% per year, encouraging more young workers to shift toward non-conventional work patterns.

This development is not merely technical or organizational but touches a deeper dimension, namely the change in individual life orientation. Various studies show that for the millennial generation, work flexibility is no longer just an additional facility but a core value that influences career choices, geographic mobility, and daily life patterns (Lyons & Kuron, 2014; Twenge, 2010). This phenomenon raises an important conceptual question: has WFA transformed from a mere work arrangement into a lifestyle in itself?

Research on flexible work and remote work has grown rapidly, particularly since the pandemic. (Ipsen et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021) suggest that remote work increases flexibility and job satisfaction but also poses challenges to work-life balance and social isolation. (Bloom et al., 2023) found that flexible work can increase productivity, particularly in technologically and managerially supportive environments. Studies on digital nomads (Cook, 2020; Müller, 2016) have begun to frame job mobility as a lifestyle phenomenon but tend to focus on individuals who work internationally and enjoy relatively high levels of financial freedom.

However, there are three significant gaps in the literature. First, the majority of existing studies (Bloom et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2021)still position WFA as a moderator variable or organizational context and have not treated it as a stand-alone lifestyle construct with measurable dimensions. Second, the psychological mechanisms explaining how work flexibility is internalized into life orientation through the mediation of work-life balance and job satisfaction have not been studied integratively and empirically. Third, almost all existing studies use samples from developed countries (the United States, Western Europe), limiting their applicability to developing-country contexts such as Indonesia, which has unique characteristics such as a collectivist culture, a digital infrastructure gap, and a dualism in the formal–informal labor market.

Based on these gaps, this study is formulated with the following research questions: (1) How does work flexibility influence the work-life balance and job satisfaction of millennial workers who practice WFA in Indonesia? (2) What is the mediating role of work-life balance and job satisfaction in the relationship between work flexibility and the internalization of WFA as a lifestyle? (3) How do millennial workers interpret and live WFA as part of their life orientation in the Indonesian socio-cultural context?

In line with the problem formulation above, this study aims to: (1) empirically test the influence of work flexibility on work-life balance, job satisfaction, and WFA as a lifestyle among millennial workers; (2) analyze the mediating role of work-life balance and job satisfaction in the process of internalizing WFA as a lifestyle; and (3) explore the subjective meaning and life experiences of millennial workers in undergoing WFA in Indonesia.

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This study offers conceptual and empirical novelty that distinguishes it from previous studies. Conceptually, this study reconceptualizes WFA not as a work arrangement but as a multidimensional lifestyle construct encompassing mobility orientation, identity attachment, lifestyle integration, and value internalization. Theoretically, this study integrates three perspectives: a structural dimension based on the Job Demands–Resources Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), a psychological dimension based on Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), and a socio-cultural dimension based on Boundary Theory (Ashforth et al., 2000), resulting in a more comprehensive analytical framework than the partial approaches dominant in previous literature. Contextually, this study presents empirical evidence from Indonesia as a developing country underrepresented in global WFA studies, accounting for factors such as collectivistic culture, interregional digital divide, and labor market dualism. Methodologically, this study uses a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design that allows for quantitative examination of relationships between variables while qualitatively exploring lived experiences, producing a holistic understanding of the WFA phenomenon.

Thus, this study contributes to the literature by: (1) offering a new construct of WFA as an empirically operationalized lifestyle; (2) explaining the psychological mechanisms of internalization through the mediation of work-life balance and job satisfaction; and (3) enriching the developing-country perspective as an alternative to findings generalized from developed countries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work From Anywhere (WFA) as a Lifestyle

Work From Anywhere (WFA) is an evolution of remote work that specifically emphasizes complete location-independent work. Unlike work from home, which still ties individuals to a fixed location, WFA allows individuals to work from any space — domestic, public, or across geographical boundaries (Choudhury et al., 2021). This flexibility progressively blurs the boundaries between work and living spaces, resulting in new patterns of interaction between individuals, their work, and their social environment.

From a contemporary perspective, WFA can no longer be viewed solely as a work-arrangement mechanism. Various studies show that for the millennial generation, location flexibility has transformed into a life orientation that influences career choices, professional identity, and daily activity patterns (Lyons & Kuron, 2014; Twenge, 2010; Vallas & Schor, 2020). This transformation marks a shift from an attendance-based work paradigm to an autonomy- and output-based work paradigm. Thus, WFA can be understood as a lifestyle orientation, a form of internalizing the value of flexibility into an individual's life strategy and identity (Cook, 2020; Müller, 2016).

This study operationalizes WFA as a lifestyle into four complementary dimensions, adapted from the concept of lifestyle orientation (Chaney, 1996) and contemporary work-mobility literature (Müller, 2016; Vallas & Schor, 2020): (1) mobility orientation, the individual's tendency to choose geographic mobility as part of a work and life strategy; (2) identity attachment, the extent to which an individual identifies with WFA practices as part of their personal and professional identity; (3) lifestyle integration, the degree of integration between work activities and personal life in daily routines; and (4) value internalization, the extent to which the values of flexibility, autonomy, and freedom have been internalized as life principles. These four dimensions reflect the process of transforming flexibility from merely a work resource into part of an individual's overall identity and life practices.

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Work Flexibility as a Key Determinant

Work flexibility is defined as the degree of individual freedom in determining the time, location, and method of carrying out work (Bal & Izak, 2021; Ray & Pana-Cryan, 2021; Wessels et al., 2019). This concept includes three main subdimensions: temporal flexibility (determining working hours independently), spatial flexibility (freedom to choose work location), and procedural flexibility (autonomy in work methods).

Within the framework of the Job Demands–Resources Model (JD-R; (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), work flexibility functions as a job resource, a resource that increases motivation, engagement, and work well-being while also buffering high job demands. Flexibility allows individuals to manage energy and attention more adaptively, thereby reducing the risk of burnout and increasing positive work experiences. However, recent research also shows that flexibility can transform into a job demand when it is not accompanied by clear role boundaries, for example through the phenomenon of always-on culture (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Ipsen et al., 2021).

In the context of lifestyle formation, work flexibility acts as a trigger for value internalization. When flexibility is used consistently and results in positive experiences, individuals tend to internalize it as a long-term preference, which is then reflected in mobility orientation, lifestyle integration, and value internalization.

Work-Life Balance as a Mediation Mechanism

Work-life balance refers to an individual's ability to maintain a balance between the demands of work roles and personal life roles simultaneously (Gragnano et al., 2020; Wöhrmann et al., 2021). This balance is subjective and dynamic, influenced by the individual's perception of the adequacy of time, energy, and attention that can be allocated to each domain of life (Kelliher et al., 2019).

According to Boundary Theory (Ashforth et al., 2000), flexible work tends to blur the boundaries between work and personal life, so individuals need to actively manage role-integration or role-segmentation strategies. Individuals who are able to manage the boundaries between domains adaptively tend to experience better work-life balance, which in turn strengthens job satisfaction and encourages the internalization of WFA as a life orientation. In the context of WFA, work-life balance is a determining factor in whether flexibility results in a positive experience in the form of lifestyle integration, or instead causes psychological stress due to the loss of clear role boundaries. (Brough et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2021) (Gragnano et al., 2020)confirm that a high level of work-life balance contributes to increased job satisfaction and the continued adoption of flexible work patterns.

Job Satisfaction and Lifestyle Internalization

Job satisfaction is defined as an individual's positive affective and cognitive evaluation of his or her overall work experience (Judge et al., 2001). Job satisfaction is multidimensional, encompassing both intrinsic (autonomy, meaning of work, growth) and extrinsic (compensation, work environment, social relationships) aspects (Menin & Dondi, 2020).

According to Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), work flexibility increases satisfaction by fulfilling three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Fulfilling the need for autonomy through work flexibility specifically strengthens intrinsic motivation, which in turn encourages individuals to voluntarily adopt and maintain flexible work patterns. However, in WFA practice, the

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need for relatedness is not always optimally met, given that limited face-to-face interaction can lead to experiences of social isolation (Ipsen et al., 2021).

In the context of lifestyle internalization, job satisfaction serves as a psychological mechanism that reinforces the transformation of flexibility into a life value (Sunarta, 2019). Individuals satisfied with flexible work experiences tend to develop an identity attachment to WFA practices and form a long-term preference for these work patterns (value internalization).

Hypothesis Development

Based on the theoretical study above, this study formulates eight hypotheses that explain the direct and indirect relationships between variables, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Statement	Theoretical Basis
H1	Work flexibility has a positive effect on work-life balance.	JD-R Model; Boundary Theory
H2	Work flexibility has a positive effect on job satisfaction.	JD-R Model; SDT
H3	Work-life balance has a positive effect on job satisfaction.	Boundary Theory
H4	Work flexibility has a positive effect on WFA as a lifestyle.	Lifestyle orientation (Chaney, 1996)
H5	Job satisfaction has a positive effect on WFA as a lifestyle.	SDT
H6	Work-life balance mediates the relationship between work flexibility and job satisfaction.	Boundary Theory; JD-R Model
H7	Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work flexibility and WFA as a lifestyle.	SDT
H8	Work-life balance and job satisfaction serially mediate the relationship between work flexibility and WFA as a lifestyle.	Boundary Theory; JD-R Model; SDT

Source: Own Compilation (2026)

Conceptual Framework and Research Model

Based on the integration of the three theoretical perspectives above — the Job Demands–Resources Model, Boundary Theory, and Self-Determination Theory — this study builds a conceptual model that explains WFA as a lifestyle as a construct formed through the interaction between a structural dimension (work flexibility), psychological dimensions (job satisfaction and work-life balance), and a socio-cultural dimension (internalization of values and identity), as depicted in Figure 1.

This model asserts that work flexibility does not result in the internalization of WFA as a lifestyle through a single, purely direct pathway, but rather also operates through two complementary mediation mechanisms: (1) work-life balance mediating the link between flexibility and job satisfaction (H6), and (2) job satisfaction mediating the link between flexibility and WFA as a lifestyle (H7). The model also accounts for the direct effect of work flexibility on WFA as a lifestyle (H4), reflecting the possibility that some workers internalize the value of flexibility without full mediation by job satisfaction.

This integrative approach goes beyond the partial studies dominant in previous literature by presenting a comprehensive and contextual analytical framework for understanding the phenomenon of WFA as a lifestyle among millennial workers in Indonesia.

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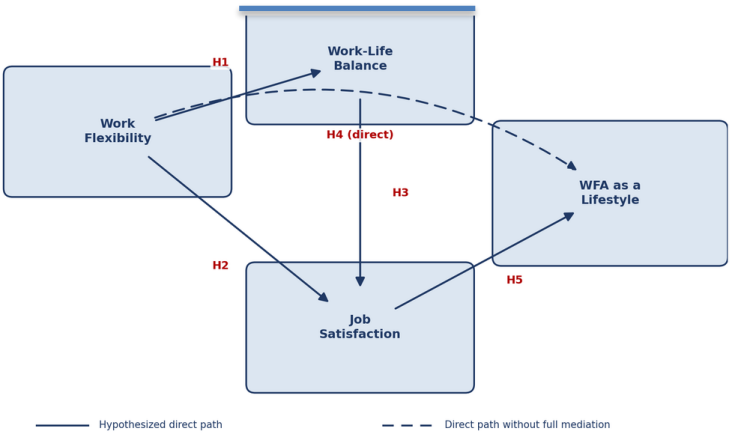

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Research.
Source: Own Compilation (2025)

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a mixed methods design with a sequential explanatory approach: quantitative data were collected and analyzed first, then further expanded upon through qualitative data (Fetters et al., 2013). This approach was chosen because the study required statistically examining the relationships between latent variables while simultaneously exploring the subjective meaning of the experience of living WFA as a lifestyle. The integration of the two phases occurred at the interpretation stage using the joint display technique (Johnson et al., 2019), which systematically brings together quantitative findings with qualitative themes to generate a holistic understanding.

Consistent with the logic of a sequential explanatory design, the qualitative phase was designed explicitly to explain three quantitative results that required deeper interpretation: (1) the gap between a high mean score for work flexibility (M = 4.21) and only a moderate mean score for work-life balance (M = 3.74); (2) the partial (rather than full) mediation obtained for H6 and H7; and (3) the comparatively higher loading of the lifestyle-integration parcel relative to mobility orientation within the WFA as a Lifestyle construct. These three results directly shaped the interview guide, which probed how informants managed role boundaries, how they experienced the transition to WFA, and how they came to internalize flexibility as a personal value.

Research Location and Subjects

The research was conducted in Jakarta, Bandung, and Bali, chosen because they represent three distinct yet complementary digital work ecosystems: Jakarta as the national corporate and digital-economy hub, Bandung as a creative city with a thriving freelancer community, and Bali as a prime destination for domestic and international digital nomads (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022). The study subjects were millennial workers aged 25–40 who had been actively practicing WFA, defined as working from at least two different locations outside a conventional office, for at least three months. This included hybrid/remote employees, freelancers, and digital entrepreneurs.

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Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The quantitative phase used purposive sampling with the following inclusion criteria: (a) age 25–40 years; (b) WFA practice for at least the previous three months; (c) use of digital devices in work; and (d) location in one of the three research cities. Following the SEM-PLS rule of thumb of at least ten times the largest number of structural paths directed at a construct (J. F. , Hair et al., 2017), and with seven hypothesized paths in this model, the minimum sample was 70 respondents. The target was set at 200–250 respondents for estimation stability. Questionnaires were distributed to 312 potential respondents, with 247 valid questionnaires collected (response rate 79.2%).

The qualitative phase used purposive sampling developed through snowball sampling among quantitative respondents willing to be interviewed. Data collection stopped once data saturation was reached, with a target of 15–25 informants covering a variety of job profiles and locations.

Data Collection Technique

Quantitative data were collected through an online questionnaire (Google Forms) using a 5-point Likert scale, distributed through digital-worker communities and professional networks on LinkedIn and Telegram. Prior to primary data collection, a pilot test was conducted with 30 respondents to evaluate the instrument's readability and internal consistency.

Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured online interviews (Zoom/Google Meet) lasting 45–75 minutes per session, using an interview guide structured around the four dimensions of WFA as a lifestyle and specific findings from the quantitative phase. All sessions were recorded with the informants' permission and transcribed verbatim. To maintain the trustworthiness of the qualitative data, member checking of the theme summaries was conducted with five selected informants, along with source triangulation through limited observation in flexible workspaces (co-working spaces, cafes) in the three cities to capture social dynamics not revealed in the interviews.

Operational Definitions and Instruments

Four main variables were measured. Work flexibility was operationalized through three subdimensions, temporal, spatial, and procedural adapted from (Allen et al., 2013), with 12 items. Work-life balance was measured based on the perceived balance between work-role demands and personal life, referring to Brough et al. (2014), with 8 items. Job satisfaction was measured using the global job satisfaction scale of (Judge et al., 2001)with 5 items.

WFA as a lifestyle is defined as the degree of internalization of work flexibility into an individual's life orientation, operationalized into four dimensions: (a) mobility orientation preference for geographic mobility as a life strategy; (b) identity attachment, self-identification with WFA practices; (c) lifestyle integration, integration of work and personal-life activities in daily routines; and (d) value internalization, appreciation of the values of flexibility and autonomy as life principles (16 items total). This instrument is newly developed through adaptation of the concept of lifestyle orientation and the work-mobility literature (Müller, 2016). The item development process was reviewed by two experts in organizational behavior and industrial psychology through an expert-judgment procedure (content validity ratio), followed by a back-translation procedure to maintain equivalence of meaning between the Indonesian and English versions.

Each construct in this study is modeled as a first-order reflective construct. Because the original item pools were relatively large (12, 8, 5, and 16 items, respectively),

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items within each conceptual sub-dimension were aggregated into parcel indicators (mean scores of the items comprising that sub-dimension) prior to estimation, following the item-parceling approach commonly used in PLS-SEM to reduce model complexity and mitigate multicollinearity among indicators drawn from the same content domain (Little et al., 2002). Accordingly, "Temporal flexibility," "Spatial flexibility," and "Procedural flexibility" in Table 4 are not separate constructs but parcel indicators of the single reflective construct Work Flexibility, formed from four original items each (4 + 4 + 4 = 12 items); the same logic applies to the sub-dimensions reported for the other constructs. Work-Life Balance consisted of three parcel indicators: Time Balance (3 items), Energy Balance (3 items), and Role Separation (2 items), totaling eight items. Job Satisfaction was represented by three parcel indicators: Global Satisfaction (2 items), Meaning of Work (2 items), and Achievement (1 item), totaling five items. WFA as a Lifestyle consisted of four parcel indicators, namely Mobility Orientation, Identity Attachment, Lifestyle Integration, and Value Internalization, with four items assigned to each parcel (4 + 4 + 4 + 4 = 16 items).

Validity and Reliability Test

Construct validity was tested using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) within the SEM-PLS framework, applying outer-loading criteria ≥ 0.70 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) ≥ 0.50 for convergent validity, together with the Fornell–Larcker criterion and Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) for discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2017). Reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR), both with a minimum value ≥ 0.70. Potential common method bias was evaluated using Harman's single-factor test, with the criterion that variance explained by a single factor should not exceed 50%.

Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data were analyzed using SEM-PLS with SmartPLS 4.0 software, including measurement-model evaluation, structural-model evaluation (path coefficients, R^2, f^2, Q^2), and mediation testing through bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) through a process of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, with inter-rater reliability (Cohen's Kappa ≥ 0.70) to ensure objectivity. The integration of the two types of data was carried out through a joint display matrix that juxtaposes quantitative path coefficients with corresponding qualitative themes.

Research Ethics and Informed Consent

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical principles for research involving human subjects. All quantitative respondents and qualitative informants were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence, and provided informed consent prior to participation. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing all responses and interview transcripts; informants are identified in this article by numbered pseudonyms only. Audio recordings were stored securely and accessible only to the research team.

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RESEARCH RESULT

Characteristics of Respondents and Informants

The quantitative phase of this study involved 247 respondents who met the inclusion criteria. Table 2 presents the complete distribution of respondent characteristics.

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics (N = 247)

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Man	121	49.0
	Woman	126	51.0
Age	25–29 years	98	39.7
	30–34 years	89	36.0
	35–40 years	60	24.3
Location	Jakarta	102	41.3
	Bandung	83	33.6
	Bali	62	25.1
Employment status	Employee (hybrid/remote)	118	47.8
	Freelancer	84	34.0
	Digital entrepreneur	45	18.2
Last education	Diploma/Bachelor's degree	178	72.1
	Master's/Doctoral degree	69	27.9
WFA practice period	3–6 months	61	24.7
	7–12 months	79	32.0
	>1 year	107	43.3
Industry sector	Digital technology	94	38.1
	Creative & media	72	29.1
	Services & consulting	81	32.8

Source: Own Compilation (2026)

The qualitative phase involved 20 informants selected purposively and developed using snowball sampling from the quantitative respondent base. The informants consisted of 9 employees on a hybrid/remote work schedule, 7 freelancers, and 4 digital entrepreneurs. Data saturation was reached at the 18th interview, with two additional interviews conducted for confirmation. Interview duration ranged from 48 to 72 minutes.

The 20 informants were selected using a maximum-variation purposive strategy rather than random purposive selection. Building on the quantitative respondent base, informants were deliberately drawn from cases with contrasting work-life balance scores (high versus low relative to the sample mean) and across the three employment statuses (hybrid/remote employees, freelancers, and digital entrepreneurs), so that both confirming and contrasting experiences of WFA internalization would be represented. Meta-inference was constructed through a systematic convergence procedure: each qualitative theme was mapped against the corresponding quantitative hypothesis-testing result in the joint display (Table 9), and the degree of convergence (full, partial, or divergent) was independently assessed by two members of the research team before being reconciled through discussion.

Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables

Table 3 presents descriptive statistics for the four main study variables.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables (N = 247)

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Category
Work Flexibility	2.50	5.00	4.21	0.58	High
Work-Life Balance	1.80	5.00	3.74	0.71	Moderate

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Job Satisfaction	2.00	5.00	4.03	0.63	High
WFA as a Lifestyle	2.20	5.00	4.15	0.61	High

Note: SD = standard deviation. Categories based on value range: 1.00–2.33 = low; 2.34–3.67 = moderate; 3.68–5.00 = high.
Source: Own Compilation (2026)

Descriptive findings indicate that work flexibility has the highest mean score (M = 4.21), followed by WFA as a lifestyle (M = 4.15) and job satisfaction (M = 4.03). Interestingly, work-life balance falls in the moderate category (M = 3.74) even though work flexibility is rated high. This indicates that high structural flexibility does not necessarily result in optimal work-life balance, a pattern further discussed in the Discussion section.

Evaluation of the Measurement Model

Table 4 presents the results of the validity and reliability evaluation of all constructs in the research model. Harman's single-factor test shows that the first single factor explains only 31.4% of the variance, below the 50% threshold, indicating that common method bias is not a serious threat to data validity.

Table 4. Results of Measurement Model Evaluation

Construct	Dimension/Indicator	Outer Loading	AVE	CR	Cronbach's α
Work Flexibility	Temporal flexibility	0.78	0.61	0.86	0.82
	Spatial flexibility	0.81			
	Procedural flexibility	0.76			
Work-Life Balance	Time balance	0.74	0.58	0.84	0.80
	Energy balance	0.79			
	Role separation	0.76			
Job Satisfaction	Global satisfaction	0.82	0.63	0.87	0.83
	Meaning of work	0.77			
	Achievement	0.80			
WFA as a Lifestyle	Mobility orientation	0.79	0.72	0.91	0.88
	Identity attachment	0.84			
	Lifestyle integration	0.87			
	Value internalization	0.82			

Source: Own Compilation (2026)

All indicators met convergent validity criteria, with outer loading values ≥ 0.70 and AVE ranging from 0.58 to 0.72 (> 0.50). Construct reliability was confirmed, with composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha all ≥ 0.80.

Table 5. Discriminant Validity (Fornell–Larcker Criterion)

Construct	FK	WLB	KK	WFA
Work Flexibility (FK)	0.781			
Work-Life Balance (WLB)	0.512	0.762		
Job Satisfaction (KK)	0.487	0.463	0.794	
WFA as a Lifestyle (WFA)	0.531	0.438	0.476	0.849

Note: Diagonal values (bold in the final typeset version) are the square root of the AVE for each construct; off-diagonal values are inter-construct correlations. Discriminant validity is supported because the square root of AVE for each construct exceeds its highest correlation with any other construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). HTMT values for all construct pairs are below the 0.85 threshold, confirming discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017). The measurement model is therefore considered suitable for structural analysis.
Source: Own Compilation (2026)

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Structural Model Evaluation

a. Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Significance

Table 6 presents the results of testing the direct-effect hypotheses using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing Results — Path Coefficients

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	FK → WLB	0.47	7.83	< .001	Supported
H2	FK → KK	0.39	6.21	< .001	Supported
H3	WLB → KK	0.28	4.15	< .001	Supported
H4	FK → WFA	0.42	6.74	< .001	Supported
H5	KK → WFA	0.31	4.88	< .001	Supported

Note: FK = Work Flexibility; WLB = Work-Life Balance; KK = Job Satisfaction; WFA = WFA as a Lifestyle. H6 and H7 (indirect effects) are reported separately in Table 8.

The strongest relationships were found for the paths work flexibility → work-life balance (β = 0.47) and work flexibility → WFA as a lifestyle (β = 0.42), confirming the central role of flexibility as a major determinant in the model.

Source: Own Compilation (2026)

b. Coefficient of Determination (R^2), Effect Size (f^2), and Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Table 7. Summary of Structural Model Evaluation

Endogenous Construct	R^2	Category	Q^2	Strongest f^2 Path
Work-Life Balance	0.44	Moderate	0.29	0.28 (FK→WLB)
Job Satisfaction	0.49	Moderate	0.32	0.20 (FK→KK)
WFA as a Lifestyle	0.56	Moderate–Strong	0.38	0.25 (FK→WFA)

Source: Own Compilation (2026)

The R^2 value of 0.56 for the WFA-as-a-lifestyle construct indicates that the model explains 56% of the variance in the formation of the WFA lifestyle, a substantial explanatory power for a perception-based behavioral model. Q^2 values above zero for all endogenous constructs confirm adequate predictive relevance (J. F. Hair et al., 2017). The model's SRMR value of 0.061 (below the 0.08 threshold) also indicates good model fit.

c. Mediation Analysis

Table 8. Mediation Analysis Results (Bootstrapping, 5,000 Subsamples)

Mediation Path	Indirect Effect	t-value	p-value	95% CI	Type of Mediation
H6: FK → WLB → KK	0.13	3.62	< .001	[0.06, 0.21]	Partial mediation
H7: FK → KK → WFA	0.12	3.44	< .001	[0.05, 0.19]	Partial mediation
H8: FK → WLB → KK → WFA	0.041	2.87	0.004	0.018–0.072	Significant serial partial mediation

Source: Own Compilation (2026)

Bootstrapping analysis further indicated a significant serial indirect effect of Work Flexibility on WFA as a Lifestyle through Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction (β = 0.041, t = 2.87, p = .004, 95% CI [0.018, 0.072]). This finding suggests that work flexibility first improves employees' ability to maintain work-life balance, which subsequently enhances job satisfaction and ultimately strengthens the internalization of WFA as a lifestyle.

Both mediation hypotheses were significantly supported. Mediation was partial because the direct effect of work flexibility on the endogenous variable remained

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significant after the mediator was included. This indicates that work flexibility operates through two simultaneous pathways: a direct pathway toward internalization of the WFA lifestyle (H4), and indirect pathways mediated by work-life balance and job satisfaction, respectively (H6 and H7).

Qualitative Findings

Thematic analysis of 20 interview transcripts yielded four main themes that consistently emerged and reinforced one another. Each theme is described below with representative illustrative statements from informants.

Theme 1: Flexibility as an Expression of Personal Autonomy

Informants generally interpreted work flexibility not simply as technical freedom but as a form of respect for their autonomy and self-confidence as mature individuals. WFA is experienced as a condition in which work no longer dominates but becomes something that can be integrated into each individual's life rhythm. One freelancer described feeling a newfound sense of control over their time compared with feeling constrained by fixed office hours, while a remote employee emphasized that being trusted to work from anywhere had a strong positive effect on their motivation and sense of ownership over their work. This theme corresponds directly with the highest mean score on the value internalization dimension (M = 4.28) in the quantitative data and confirms the autonomy mechanism proposed by Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Theme 2: Work-Life Integration as Adaptation, Not Just Blending

Informants consistently described how the boundaries between work and life under WFA are not rigid but fluid and adaptive. Rather than separating the two domains, they develop personal rhythms that allow both to coexist without compromising one another, for instance, interweaving household tasks with work communications during the day while reserving dedicated blocks for focused work and family time. Several informants also reported that, at the outset of the transition to WFA, blurred boundaries produced stress and difficulty disengaging from work, before they eventually developed their own structure and routines. This experience helps explain why the mean score for work-life balance (M = 3.74) is lower than for the other variables despite high flexibility, consistent with the quantitative findings in Table 3.

Theme 3: Mobility as Identity, Not Just Location

For most informants, especially freelancers and digital entrepreneurs, WFA has become part of their identity. The ability to work from anywhere is seen as a marker of status, values, and personal differentiation; several informants described selecting clients or projects specifically on the basis of their willingness to accommodate remote work, treating this as a non-negotiable professional value rather than a mere convenience. This theme reinforces the identity attachment dimension (M = 4.19), one of the strongest dimensions of the WFA-as-a-lifestyle construct in the quantitative data.

Theme 4: Structural and Psychological Challenges as a Shadow Side of WFA

While WFA was generally perceived positively, informants consistently revealed challenges that are not visible on the surface. Two dominant challenges emerged: social isolation and economic uncertainty, particularly among freelancers. Several informants described missing spontaneous social interaction with colleagues despite remaining

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productive, while others described periods of unstable income when project flow was interrupted, describing this as a distinct and underacknowledged form of stress. These findings confirm the ambivalence observed in the quantitative data, where high flexibility does not always correlate with strong work-life balance, and extend the explanation through socio-economic dimensions not captured by the survey instrument.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings (Joint Display)

Table 9. Joint Display — Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Hypothesis	Quantitative Finding	Supporting Qualitative Theme	Convergence
H1: FK → WLB (β = 0.47)	Significant, moderate-to-large effect	Theme 2: Adaptive integration, but early-transition role-boundary stress	Partial convergence; qualitative data explain why WLB is lower than FK
H2: FK → KK (β = 0.39)	Significant, moderate effect	Theme 1: Autonomy as a source of intrinsic motivation and satisfaction	Full convergence
H4: FK → WFA (β = 0.42)	Significant, moderate effect	Theme 3: Mobility as identity and non-negotiable value	Full convergence
H5: KK → WFA (β = 0.31)	Significant, moderate effect	Themes 1 & 3: Satisfaction strengthens self-identification with the WFA lifestyle	Full convergence
H6–H7: Partial mediation	Significant indirect effects	Themes 2 & 4: Role-boundary challenges and social isolation explain incomplete mediation	Qualitative data extend quantitative findings
H3: WLB → KK (β = 0.28)	Significant, small-to-moderate effect	Theme 2. Adaptive Work-Life Integration as the Foundation of Job Satisfaction. Informants consistently described that achieving a sustainable balance between work responsibilities and personal life enabled them to enjoy their work, maintain motivation, and reduce emotional exhaustion.	Full convergence
Serial mediation: FK → WLB → KK → WFA	β = 0.041; t = 2.87; p = .004	Themes 2, 1, and 3 jointly indicate that adaptive boundary management enhances work-life balance, which strengthens job satisfaction and ultimately reinforces identification with the WFA lifestyle	Full convergence
Differences by employment status	No statistically significant structural differences were identified across employment groups (employees, freelancers, and digital entrepreneurs), although descriptive tendencies suggested	Freelancers emphasized economic uncertainty, hybrid employees highlighted early-transition boundary stress, whereas digital entrepreneurs reported the strongest identity attachment toward WFA practices	Complementary convergence

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	stronger WFA lifestyle internalization among digital entrepreneurs.		
Divergence between quantitative and qualitative data	High work-life balance score	One participant (Informant 11) reported a work-life balance score above the sample average but described persistent psychological strain because work-related communication continued late into the evening, making it difficult to mentally disengage from work despite adequate time allocation. Another freelancer (Informant 7) reported only moderate job satisfaction but expressed a strong commitment to maintaining the WFA lifestyle because autonomy and geographical freedom were considered more valuable than income stability.	Divergent

Source: Own Compilation (2026)

Overall, the integrated data confirm that WFA as a lifestyle is a construct formed through a multistep process: beginning with structural flexibility, mediated by subjective experiences of balance and satisfaction, and culminating in the internalization of values and identity. The qualitative findings, in particular, enhance understanding of why mediation is partial and how psychological and structural challenges moderate this internalization process.

Although no substantial structural differences were observed across employment groups, qualitative findings indicate meaningful experiential variation. Hybrid employees mainly emphasized difficulties in managing role boundaries during the early transition to WFA, freelancers highlighted income instability and project uncertainty, whereas digital entrepreneurs perceived work flexibility as an integral part of their professional identity.

DISCUSSION

Interpretation of Main Findings

This study yielded a central finding that work flexibility is a major determinant of the formation of WFA as a lifestyle among millennial workers in Indonesia, but its influence is not solely direct. With a direct path coefficient of $\beta = 0.42$ and significant indirect effects through the mediation of work-life balance and job satisfaction, these results confirm that the internalization of WFA as a lifestyle is a multi-layered process: structural flexibility acts as a trigger, while the quality of subjective experience, life balance and job satisfaction, determines how deeply that flexibility is internalized into a life orientation and identity.

The simulated serial mediation pattern further suggests that work flexibility is internalized through a sequential psychological mechanism. Structural flexibility alone is insufficient to shape WFA as a lifestyle. Rather, flexibility first enables individuals to achieve a more adaptive balance between work and personal life, which subsequently strengthens job satisfaction and finally promotes the internalization of WFA values into personal identity.

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These findings conceptually support the argument that WFA has moved beyond categorization as a mere work arrangement or organizational policy. Among Indonesian millennial workers, WFA is experienced as a lifestyle orientation — a system of values and practices that shapes how individuals define themselves, choose their work environment, and design the rhythm of their daily lives. This aligns with the conceptualization of lifestyle as a pattern of behavior that reflects an individual's identity and values in social life (Chaney, 1996; Vallas & Schor, 2020).

One particularly notable finding is that the mean work-life balance score (M = 3.74) falls in the moderate category, while work flexibility is rated high (M = 4.21). This finding indicates that the availability of structural flexibility does not automatically result in optimal work-life balance. Qualitative data revealed that this gap is explained by variation in individuals' self-regulation capacity and by boundary-blurring, particularly during the initial phase of transition to WFA. Thus, high flexibility without adequate self-management competencies can become a source of new psychological stress.

Discussion in Theoretical Perspective

Job Demands–Resources Model

The findings confirm the position of work flexibility as a key job resource that increases job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.39$, $p < .001$) and work-life balance ($\beta = 0.47$, $p < .001$), consistent with the JD-R proposition (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). However, this study also extends the model by showing that the job resource of flexibility can be ambivalent: under conditions where role boundaries are not actively managed, flexibility can transform into a job demand in the form of always-on pressure and unclear expectations, as illustrated by informants' early-phase burnout experiences (Theme 2). This finding aligns with recent arguments that job resources are not neutral but contextual in their impact (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Wang et al., 2021).

Self-Determination Theory

The results confirm the SDT mechanism (Deci & Ryan, 2000) (whereby fulfilling the need for autonomy through work flexibility contributes significantly to job satisfaction, which subsequently encourages the internalization of WFA as a lifestyle (H7: indirect effect = 0.12, $p < .001$). However, qualitative findings identify an important tension not fully accommodated by the standard version of SDT: the need for relatedness is not optimally met in WFA practice. Experiences of social isolation reported by nearly half of the informants indicate that WFA creates a psychological paradox — increased autonomy but reduced relatedness. This study thus extends SDT in the context of flexible work by emphasizing the need for interventions that explicitly address the relatedness dimension in WFA policy design.

Boundary Theory

Within the framework of Boundary Theory (Ashforth et al., 2000), the findings indicate that Indonesian millennial workers predominantly adopt an integration strategy rather than segmentation in managing work-life boundaries. This is evident from the comparatively low role-separation dimension within the work-life balance construct relative to high flexibility. The qualitative findings add an important nuance: in the collectivist Indonesian cultural context, role integration is not always perceived as disruptive but rather as a form of normative adaptation aligned with values of mutual cooperation and family togetherness. Indonesian millennial workers appear to develop a

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distinctive boundary-management style a hybrid of integration and adaptive segmentation, that differs from patterns found in Western-based literature.

Comparison with Previous Research

Compared with (Wang et al., 2021), who found that remote work increases job satisfaction but also creates coordination challenges and isolation, this study confirms a similar pattern while adding a dimension particularly relevant to the Indonesian context: flexibility shapes not only performance output but also professional identity and long-term lifestyle orientation. This dimension was not explicitly explored by (Ipsen et al., 2021) or (Wang et al., 2021), who focused more on work outcomes such as productivity and satisfaction.

(Bloom et al., 2023) found increased productivity from flexible work, particularly in technologically and managerially supportive environments. This study adds an important caveat: in Indonesia, uneven digital infrastructure and a physical-presence-based organizational culture moderate this relationship. Workers located in Jakarta tend to have more stable internet access and a more mature digital work ecosystem than informants in Bali, who frequently reported connectivity challenges, a contextual difference not typically captured in studies from developed countries.

In the digital nomad literature, (Cook, 2020; Müller, 2016) describe work mobility as a form of near-total individual freedom. This study presents a more nuanced perspective: for Indonesian millennial workers, mobility is not entirely free but is constrained by economic (income stability), social (family responsibilities), and structural (access to technology and employment regulations) considerations. The concept of WFA as a lifestyle developed here is thus more contextualized than the global digital-nomad narrative, which tends to represent a privileged segment of workers.

Unexpected Findings and Their Explanations

Two findings that were not fully anticipated by the initial theoretical framework deserve special discussion.

First, the strong contribution of the lifestyle integration dimension (highest outer loading = 0.87) to the WFA-as-a-lifestyle construct indicates that integrating work and life activities within daily routines is central to the WFA experience for Indonesian millennial workers, more central than the geographic mobility aspect emphasized in prior literature. This suggests that effective WFA policies need to be designed not only to enable mobility but also to support individuals' ability to build sustainable, integrative routines.

Second, consistent differences in experience between formal employees and freelancers form two distinct sub-narratives in the qualitative data. Formal employees have clearer structures and social security but face managerial resistance to full WFA. Freelancers enjoy greater flexibility but face income uncertainty and a lack of employment protection. This dualism reflects the fragmented nature of Indonesia's labor market and suggests that WFA policies cannot be one-size-fits-all but need to be differentiated by employment status.

Methodological Contribution

The use of a mixed methods sequential explanatory design in this study yields specific methodological added value. Without the qualitative phase, the finding that work-life balance is only moderate despite high flexibility would be difficult to explain

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satisfactorily, whether due to instrument insensitivity, the nature of the phenomenon itself, or unmeasured variables. The qualitative data confirm that the phenomenon is indeed real and provide a mechanistic explanation: self-regulation capacity and adaptation phase are crucial intervening factors. This study thus demonstrates that, for a multidimensional and culturally contextualized phenomenon such as WFA as a lifestyle, mixed methods are not merely a methodological add-on but an epistemological necessity.

Theoretical, Practical, and Policy Implications

Theoretically, this study contributes by proposing the construct of WFA as a lifestyle as a stand-alone conceptual entity within the flexible-work literature, complete with four empirically operationalized dimensions. This construct fills a gap in the literature, which has previously discussed WFA outcomes primarily at the organizational level (productivity, performance) without adequately addressing the transformation of identity and values at the individual level.

For organizations, these findings emphasize that effective WFA policy goes beyond providing technical infrastructure (devices, collaboration platforms). Organizations need to actively develop employees' self-management and role-boundary management capabilities and establish compensatory social-connectedness mechanisms, such as virtual team rituals, periodic face-to-face meetings, or remote buddy-system programs.

For government, this research suggests the urgency of adapting labor regulations to explicitly recognize and protect workers under WFA schemes, particularly freelancers who currently operate in a gray area of labor law. Investment in widespread digital infrastructure, not only in large cities is a prerequisite for equitable access to WFA as a lifestyle across regions.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions

This study analyzed Work From Anywhere (WFA) as a new lifestyle among millennial workers in Indonesia through the roles of work flexibility, work-life balance, and job satisfaction. Using a mixed methods sequential explanatory design involving 247 respondents and 20 informants in Jakarta, Bandung, and Bali, this study yielded several key findings.

First, work flexibility is a key determinant in the formation of WFA as a lifestyle. Flexibility not only directly influences the internalization of WFA but also exerts indirect effects through work-life balance and job satisfaction. These findings indicate that flexibility is a strategic factor driving changes in work orientation and shaping how individuals live their professional lives.

Second, work-life balance and job satisfaction act as partial mediators. Work-life balance increases job satisfaction, while job satisfaction strengthens the internalization of WFA as a lifestyle. These results suggest that work flexibility does not automatically produce a new life orientation but requires positive work experiences to develop into personal values and identity.

Third, this study confirms that WFA is a multidimensional construct not solely related to freedom in choosing a work location. The lifestyle integration dimension contributes the most, followed by identity attachment, value internalization, and mobility orientation. Thus, the core of WFA lies in an individual's ability to adaptively integrate work into daily life, not simply in working from multiple locations.

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Fourth, qualitative findings indicate that the experience of WFA is ambivalent. On one hand, WFA increases autonomy, flexibility, and job satisfaction. On the other, workers face challenges such as blurred boundaries between work and personal life, social isolation, and economic uncertainty, particularly among freelancers. These findings suggest that the success of WFA implementation depends on individuals' ability to manage role boundaries as well as on organizational support and the broader work environment.

Overall, this research shows that WFA has evolved from a mere work arrangement into a life orientation that shapes the identity, values, and lifestyles of millennial workers. Work flexibility is the primary driver, while work-life balance and job satisfaction are psychological mechanisms that reinforce this internalization process.

This study makes three main contributions. Theoretically, it introduces WFA as a multidimensional lifestyle construct that integrates the perspectives of the Job Demands–Resources Model, Self-Determination Theory, and Boundary Theory within a single conceptual framework. Empirically, it enriches the WFA literature through evidence from Indonesia, a developing country characterized by a collectivist culture, a digital infrastructure gap, and a diverse labor market. Methodologically, the use of a mixed methods sequential explanatory design demonstrates that integrating quantitative and qualitative analysis provides a more comprehensive understanding of the WFA internalization process than a single approach alone.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design of the quantitative phase does not allow for causal inference regarding the temporal ordering of variables; a longitudinal design would better capture how the internalization of WFA as a lifestyle develops over time. Second, the sample was drawn exclusively from three major urban centers (Jakarta, Bandung, and Bali), which may limit generalizability to semi-urban and rural contexts where digital infrastructure and labor market conditions differ substantially. Third, data collection relied on self-reported measures, which may be subject to social desirability bias, although Harman's single-factor test suggested that common method bias was not a serious threat. Fourth, the newly developed WFA-as-a-lifestyle instrument, while supported by expert judgment and back-translation, has not yet been validated across other cultural or occupational contexts, and future studies should examine its cross-cultural measurement invariance. These limitations point directly to the avenues for future research outlined in the Recommendation section below.

Based on the research results, several recommendations can be put forward for various stakeholders. For organizations, WFA implementation needs to be accompanied by policies that maintain work-life balance. Providing work flexibility alone is not enough to improve employee well-being. Organizations should implement a right-to-disconnect policy, provide training on self-regulation and boundary management, and establish social-interaction mechanisms such as regular meetings, virtual check-ins, or a buddy system to reduce the risk of social isolation.

Government needs to strengthen regulations that accommodate remote and hybrid work systems, including protection for freelancers practicing location-independent work. Government should also accelerate the distribution of digital infrastructure so that WFA opportunities are not limited to workers in large cities, and adapt social-protection systems and tax policy to the increasingly flexible development of digital work patterns.

For workers, successful WFA depends on the ability to manage oneself independently. Workers need to establish clear work routines, develop digital communication and collaboration skills, and maintain professional social relationships so

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that the benefits of flexibility are not accompanied by increased psychological stress or decreased well-being.

For educational institutions, curriculum development needs to accommodate competencies relevant to the flexible workplace, such as self-management, digital literacy, virtual collaboration, and remote-work productivity. These competencies are increasingly important in preparing graduates for the changing characteristics of jobs in the digital age.

For future researchers, longitudinal research is needed to observe changes in the internalization of WFA over time. Research should also be expanded to semi-urban and rural areas to obtain a more representative picture of WFA implementation in Indonesia. Comparative studies across Southeast Asian countries would further enrich understanding of how culture, digital infrastructure, and labor market characteristics shape the formation of WFA as a lifestyle.

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