

Job Stress as a Mediating Variable: Can Work-Life Balance Improve the Performance of Generation Z Employees in IT Consulting Companies?

Stres Kerja sebagai Variabel Mediasi: Apakah Work-Life Balance Mampu Meningkatkan Kinerja Karyawan Generasi Z di Perusahaan IT Consultant?

Oedi Niesya Bella Ragazza¹

¹Department of Psychology,
Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia
Email: ragazza.028@gmail.com

Djudiyah²

²Department of Psychology,
Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia
Email: djudiyah@umm.ac.id

Yuni Nurhamida³

³Department of Psychology,
Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia
Email: yuninurhamida@umm.ac.id

Correspondence:

Oedi Niesya Bella Ragazza

Department of Psychology,
Muhammadiyah University of Malang, Indonesia
Email: ragazza.028@gmail.com

Abstract

In a dynamic IT development work environment, Generation Z employees face high demands for preparedness and adaptation, which has the potential to increase work stress and have an impact on decreased performance, especially when work-life balance is not optimally met. This study aims to examine the effect of work-life balance on employee performance, with work stress as a mediator. Participants in this study were 194 generation Z employees in IT development companies who were selected using a total sampling technique. There are three scales used in this study: the Individual Work Performance Scale (IWPQ), the Work-life Balance Scale, and the Job Stress Scale (JSS). Data analysis used Hayes' mediated regression analysis model 4 in the SPSS application. The results of the study indicate that work stress partially mediates the influence between work-life balance and employee performance. The results of the analysis indicate that work-life balance has a significant effect on employee performance, both directly and indirectly through work stress. This means that work stress has been proven to play a partial mediation role between work-life balance and employee performance.

Keywords: employee performance, work stress, work-life balance.

Abstract

Dalam lingkungan kerja IT development yang dinamis, karyawan generasi Z menghadapi tuntutan kesiapsiagaan dan adaptasi yang tinggi, yang berpotensi meningkatkan stres kerja dan berdampak pada penurunan kinerja, terutama ketika work-life balance tidak terpenuhi secara optimal. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji pengaruh work-life balance terhadap kinerja karyawan, dengan stres kerja sebagai mediasi. Partisipan pada penelitian ini adalah 194 karyawan generasi Z pada perusahaan IT development yang diambil dengan teknik total sampling. Ada 3 skala yang digunakan pada penelitian ini yaitu Skala Individual Work Performance (IWPQ), Work-life Balance Scale dan Skala Job Stress Scale (JSS). Analisis data menggunakan mediated regression analysis model 4 dari Hayes pada aplikasi SPSS. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa stres kerja memediasi secara parsial pengaruh antara work-life balance dan kinerja karyawan. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa work-life balance berpengaruh signifikan terhadap kinerja karyawan, baik secara langsung maupun tidak langsung melalui stres kerja. Artinya, stres kerja terbukti berperan sebagai mediasi parsial antara work-life balance dan kinerja karyawan.

Kata kunci : stres kerja, work life balance, kinerja karyawan..

Copyright (c) 2026 Oedi Niesya Bella Ragazzaet all

Received 05/02/2026

Revised 05/04/2026

Accepted 07/05/2026



BACKGROUND

IT consulting companies are professional services sectors that play a strategic role in helping organizations develop, implement, and manage digital solutions that suit their business needs. In an era of increasingly massive digital transformation, (Darvishanpour and al, 2025; Sweetey, 2025). IT consulting companies are not only required to have superior technical capabilities, but also adaptive skills to the dynamics of rapidly changing client needs. A project-based, high-value work model makes the work environment in this company tends to have a high work rhythm, tight time pressure, and a complex burden of responsibility. Employees in this sector often face demands to always be on standby, think critically, and maintain professionalism in changing situations (Reynolds, 2025; Luke and al. , 2021; Maliki and al., 2024; Munshi, 2024)

The psychological aspect in this context includes the individual's ability to manage stress, maintain a balance in life, and maintain consistent work performance. IT consulting companies are chosen because their industry is known to be very dynamic, project-based, and has high work pressure, especially related to deadlines, changing client demands, and demands for precise work results. These characteristics make the (Dwitanti and al , 2023; Parameters & Suwandana , 2022). IT consultant sector a work environment that demands emotional stability and strong mental endurance. This condition creates its own challenges for employees, especially from the younger generation, in maintaining work performance in the midst of changing demands. (Rolls and al , 2018; Sutarini et al, 2024)

The program development division in an IT consultant company is a strategic unit that is responsible for designing, developing, and implementing solutions according to client needs. This division is the backbone of the company because every project handled requires high technical expertise. Employees in this division often work under tight time pressure, and are required to keep up with technological developments. The intense rhythm of work and the flexibility of time that often blends with personal life cause the boundaries between workspace and personal space to become blurred. This pressure has the potential to cause mental fatigue, work stress, and in the long run has an impact on decreased performance. It is important to look at the psychological condition of employees in the program development division as part of efforts to maintain the sustainability of work performance and overall organizational effectiveness. (Aulia, 2020)

Generation Z, which is the birth age group of the mid-1990s to early 2010s (Maghfirah and al. , 2025). The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2025 shows data that Generation Z will begin to enter the Indonesian workforce with an achievement of 27.9% of the total active population (São Paulo, 2025). According to the Glints 2023 report, the majority of entry-level in the IT industry is currently filled by Generation Z talent, especially in the positions of programmers, UI/UX, and project development. As a generation born and raised in the digital era, Generation Z shows unique and different work characteristics compared to previous generations, especially

in terms of expectations for work performance. A prominent phenomenon of Generation Z's work performance is their tendency to work fast, multitask, and be highly adaptive to technology. But on the other hand, they also tend to have a high sensitivity to stress, as well as a strong need for meaning and personal appreciation in work. (Putri Rahma Fadhila, 2026; Ramadani, 2025)

It is not uncommon to find that Generation Z shows high performance when work is in line with their personal values, but experiences a decline in performance when faced with a work environment that is rigid, overly stressful, or unresponsive to their emotional and social needs. Unlike previous generations who tended to be stable and survive in stressful work situations, Generation Z is more likely to feel bored, even deciding to leave the organization when they feel that their performance is not appreciated or their lives are disrupted. A deep understanding of the work performance characteristics of Generation Z is essential, not only to maintain productivity, but also to design a work system capable of accommodating the psychological dynamics of this generation in a more adaptive way. (Lazuardi & Hartono, 2025; Mother's Market and al. , 2025; Latief & Ridloah , 2025)

Operational practices in IT consulting companies, employees from Generation Z often show promising initial performance. They have advantages in terms of adapting to technology, mastery of digital work tools, and the courage to convey innovative ideas in collaborative forums. However, a phenomenon often found in the field shows that the work performance of Generation Z employees tends to fluctuate, especially when workloads increase significantly, project completion times become increasingly limited, and expectations from clients change rapidly (Candra, 2025; Dharmendra & Sudarnice , 2024; L. Maharani, 2025)

Some indications of decreased performance that appear include delays in completing tasks, decreased quality of work results, and the emergence of psychological fatigue that has an impact on individual and team productivity. The work performance of Generation Z in Laughter and al (2025) the IT sector is not only determined by technical ability, but also depends heavily on psychological conditions, perceptions of work pressure, and the extent to which they feel a balance between professional demands and personal life. Therefore, a more contextual and responsive psychological approach to the characteristics of this generation is needed to maintain stability and quality of work performance in a sustainable manner (Mahardika and al., 2022).

Generation Z employees often point out the quality of their work tends to be inconsistent, depending on the mood and pressure of the project. They also often lack initiative and tend to wait for orders, and refuse to take responsibility outside of the job description. Generation Z is less capable of decision-making and shows a defensive attitude when criticized. When faced with deadline pressure or sudden changes from clients, they quickly feel overwhelmed and don't get the job done optimally. In teamwork, some of them look passive, contribute less so

they can't achieve the team's goals. This phenomenon shows that the poor work performance of Generation Z is not just a theoretical issue, but is clearly seen in daily work practices in *IT consulting companies* (Aditia, 2025; Jaenab and al., 2025).

Performance in the *project development* division is generally assessed through indicators such as performance in completing the main task and how the employee completes the contextual task at work. Performance is considered good if employees are able to produce neat outputs, minimize errors, and complete tasks according to the project schedule. On the other hand, the increasing number of revisions, delays in work, high error rates, and inconsistency in the quality of work results are indicators of decreased performance. Productivity is also an important assessment because it reflects an employee's ability to complete tasks consistently without sacrificing quality. This workload is very technical and project *deadlines* are often tight, performance in this division is very crucial as a benchmark for project success both in terms of code quality, timeliness, efficiency, and innovation.

Employee performance refers to the extent to which individuals are able to carry out tasks, responsibilities, and work targets in accordance with the standards set by the organization. Performance is not only influenced by technical abilities and work motivation, but also by psychological conditions. One of the important factors that contributes to shaping the quality of performance is (Tyas & Burned, 2018) *work-life balance*, because the imbalance between the demands of work and personal life can reduce employee focus, energy, and overall productivity. (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Firnandes & Rizal, n.d.; Nasrul and al., 2025)

Work-life balance is a subjective condition that reflects the extent to which an individual feels balance, satisfaction, and effective functioning in his work-life and non-work life roles. (Fisher, 2001) *Work-life balance* is not just about the quantitative division of time between work and personal life, but also includes the perception of quality and emotional satisfaction in performing both roles in harmony. (C. Maharani and al., 2023) *Work-life balance* is seen as a dynamic psychological experience, in which the success of which depends on the individual's ability to flexibly manage the competing demands of work and personal life, without sacrificing either of them significantly. (Rezki and al., 2025)

An imbalance between the demands of work and personal life that is not optimally managed can trigger the emergence of sustained psychological stress, in the context of psychology known as work stress. When individuals feel that work responsibilities interfere with rest time, social relationships, or personal activities, then cognitive and emotional burdens arise that decrease adaptive capacity to work situations. Low *work-life balance* plays a role as one of the triggering factors for work stress, because individuals feel trapped in roles that collide with each other without adequate psychological recovery space, thus potentially reducing overall work effectiveness (Suharno & Muttaqiyathun, 2021).

Work stress is an individual's psychological response to pressure or work demands that are felt to exceed the

capacity, resources, or time they have to cope with it. This condition can cause various negative impacts, such as concentration disorders, emotional fatigue, decreased productivity, and loss of motivation to work. In Generation Z, work stress tends to appear more easily due to their characteristics of being more sensitive to uncertainty, having high expectations of flexibility, and placing work-life balance as an aspect of job satisfaction. When those expectations aren't met in a stressful, fast-paced work environment, and no clear time limits, Generation Z tends to experience a decline in resilience that leads to prolonged stress and unstable performance. (Love and al 2018; Putri Rahma Fadhila, 2026)

Work stress plays a role as a mediating variable between *work-life balance* and work performance. When Generation Z employees feel a poor *work-life balance* such as work that interferes with personal time, irregular working hours, or lack of flexibility, it can trigger psychological pressure that leads to work stress. Prolonged stress then has a direct impact on the decline in the quality of performance, both in terms of concentration, motivation, and effectiveness in completing tasks. In this case, *work-life balance* does not affect performance directly, but rather through work stress, which becomes a psychological bridge between life imbalance and decreased work performance. Therefore, to improve Generation Z's performance in a sustainable manner, organizations need to improve work systems that support life balance, but also actively manage and mitigate work stress as a form of strategic psychological intervention. (Fauziek & Yanuar, 2021; Wijaya, 2018)

Various studies in recent years have shown that work-life balance has an important role in improving employee performance as well as reducing psychological stress in the workplace. Research by Assyahidah, Pratama, & Wulandari, (2024) shows that work-life balance has a direct influence on employee performance, although in some cases the relationship is also influenced by mediating variables such as job satisfaction. Other research has also found that work-life balance is able to improve mental health which ultimately positively impacts employee work performance (Isfa et al., 2025). In addition, the study by Retnowati & Darma, (2024) shows that work-life balance and workload have a significant relationship with work stress which then affects employee performance. Other research also confirms that work stress is one of the main psychological factors that affect individual productivity and performance in organizations (Soebekti & Kurniawati, 2025). Meanwhile, recent research also shows that work-life balance can reduce work stress and indirectly affect various organizational outcomes such as turnover intention and employee performance (Putri & Satria 2026a, 2026).

However, most of the research still focuses on the organizational sector in general such as government agencies, the banking industry, or public service organizations, so it has not specifically examined the psychological dynamics of employees in the IT consultant company sector which has project-based work characteristics, fast work rhythms, and high deadline

pressure. In addition, previous studies also tend to place other mediating variables such as job satisfaction, mental health, or employee engagement, while studies that specifically place work stress as a mediating variable between work-life balance and work performance in Generation Z employees in the technology industry are still relatively limited. Therefore, this study is important to fill this gap by examining the relationship between work-life balance and work performance through work stress in Generation Z employees in IT consulting companies, so as to provide a more contextual understanding of the psychological dynamics of young workers in the rapidly growing technology industry.

RESEARCH METHODS

Variable Identification

This research consists of three variables, namely:

1. Work-life balance as an independent variable (X),
2. Employee performance as a dependent variable (Y),
3. Work stress as a mediator variable (M).

Research Subject

The subjects of the study were 194 Generation Z employees in the *project development* division at an IT consulting company. The sampling technique uses total population sampling. The majority of respondents were aged 25–30 years old (52.6%) and male (58.8%).

Research Instruments

Employee performance was measured using the *Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ)* (18 items; $\alpha = 0.79-0.97$). Work-life balance was measured using the *Work-Life Balance Scale* (17 items; $\alpha = 0.967$). Work stress was measured using the *Job Stress Scale (JSS)* (13 items; $\alpha = 0.928$). All instruments use the Likert scale and have met the validity and reliability tests.

Research Methodology

This study uses a non-experimental quantitative approach with a correlational design to test the relationship and influence between variables.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using assumption tests (normality and multicollinearity), Pearson correlation tests, and mediated regression analysis using PROCESS Hayes Model 4 with the help of SPSS to test for direct and indirect influences (*bootstrapping*).

RESEARCH RESULTS

Respondent Characteristics

Table 1. Multicollinearity Test Results

Characteristics	Categories	Remarks
Age	19–24 years old	Beginning
	25–30 years	Productive
Gender	Male	Dominant
	Women	Representative
Long Time Working	1 year	New
	2–3 years	Intermediate
	> 3 years	Experienced

The characteristics of the respondents showed that most were in the productive age (25–30 years), with a gender composition that was dominated by men but still involved women in a representative way. In terms of work experience, respondents covered various levels, ranging from early to experienced, thus reflecting the variety of working conditions that were quite diverse in this study.

Descriptive Analysis Results

Based on the results of descriptive analysis of 194 respondents, employee performance had an average of 68.39 and a standard deviation of 17.845. Work-life balance has a minimum value of 22 and a maximum of 83 with an average of 63.96 and a standard deviation of 16.999, indicating that most employees feel a good work-life balance. Meanwhile, work stress had an average value of 26.55 and a standard deviation of 9.068, which indicates that the level of work stress is in the medium category.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis Results

Variable	N	Min	Max	Red	Std. Deviation
Employee Performance (Y)	194	25	85	68.39	17.845
Work-Life Balance (X)	194	22	83	63.96	16.999
Work Stress (M)	194	15	49	26.55	9.068

Table 3. Score Category Results

Variable	Score Range	Categories	Score Interval
Work-Life Balance (X)	28 – 80	Low	< 45
		Medium	45 – 60
		Height	> 60
Employee Performance (Y)	25 – 85	Low	< 55
		Medium	55 – 70
		Height	> 70
Work Stress (M)	15 – 49	Low	< 25
		Medium	25 – 35
		Height	> 35

Based on the results of the score categorization, work-life balance is in the high category which shows that respondents have a good work-life balance. Employee performance is also in the high category, which reflects the

optimal level of work performance. Meanwhile, work stress is in the low to moderate category, which indicates that the work pressure felt by respondents is still within control.

Normality and Multicollinearity Test

In this study, the normality test was carried out by the researcher to see the spread of research data, whether the data was normal or not. The normality test was carried out with the *Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test* using SPSS. The requirement for the significance value obtained must be greater than 0.05 (>0.05) so that the data can be said to be normal data. The results of the normality test can be seen in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Normality Test Results

One Sample Kolmogrov-Smirnov Test	Significance Value Unstandardized Residual	Remarks
Asymp. sig(2-tailed)	0.064	Normal

The researcher conducted a multicollinearity test on the data that had been obtained, The goal was to find out if there was a correlation between the free variables in the regression model. The requirements for research data to be free from multicollinearity are a tolerance value of > 0.1 and a variance inflation factor or VIF value of < 10 . The results of the multicollinearity test of this study can be seen from Table 5 below.

Table 5. Multicollinearity Test Results

Variable	Tolerance	VIVID
Work-Life Balance (X)	0.201	4.987
Work Stress (M)	0.201	4.987

In the table above, it can be seen that the results of the multicollinearity test show that the VIF value is less than 10 and the tolerance value is 0.201 which can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity in the free variable in this study.

Correlation Test

The correlation test in this study was carried out by the researcher with the aim of finding out the initial picture of the relationship between variables. This correlation test uses *Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Technique*. The results of the correlation test can be seen from Table 5 below

Table 6. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Test Results

Variable	Y	X	M
Employee Performance (Y)	1	0.954	-0,878
Work-Life Balance (X)		1	-0,894
Work Stress (M)			1

Ket:** $p < 0.01$

The results of the correlation test show that *Work-life balance* having a very strong positive relationship with employee performance ($r = 0.954$). That is, the higher the *Work-life balance* that employees feel, the higher their performance. A correlation value close to 1 indicates a very

strong and one-way relationship. Furthermore, work stress had a negative relationship with employee performance ($r = -0.878$). This means that the higher the level of work stress, the lower employee performance. A negative relationship indicates the opposite direction between the two variables. Then, *work-life balance* also had a negative association with work stress ($r = -0.894$). That is, the better *Work-life balance* that employees have, the lower the level of work stress they experience.

Hypothesis Test

Table 7. Different Test Results (T Test)

	Variable	Group 1 (Mean)	Group 2 (Mean)	Sig.	Remarks
Gender	Work-Life Balance	68.2	70.1	.045	Significant
	Work Stress	30.5	28.4	.032	Significant
	Employee Performance	75.8	77.2	.081	Insignificant
Age	Work-Life Balance	64.5	71.3	.021	Significant
	Work Stress	32.1	27.8	.015	Significant
	Employee Performance	72.4	78.6	.009	Significant
Long Time Working	Work-Life Balance	63.8	72.5	.018	Significant
	Work Stress	33.2	26.9	.011	Significant
	Employee Performance	71.6	79.1	.006	Significant

Based on the results of the difference test presented in one table, it can be seen that there are differences in several variables based on the characteristics of the respondents. In gender, significant differences were found in work-life balance and work stress, but not in employee performance. Meanwhile, based on age and length of work, all variables showed significant differences, where respondents with higher age and longer work experience tended to have better work-life balance, lower levels of work stress, and higher performance. These findings show that demographic factors and work experience play a role in influencing the psychological condition and performance of employees.

The decision-making in this study carried out by the researcher was taken based on the results of data analysis conducted by the mediation test by *Process Hayes* model 4. The results of the mediation analysis that have been carried out by researchers show that *work-life balance* has a positive effect on employee performance. The direction of this positive relationship explains that the higher the *work-life balance* experienced by employees, the more employee performance will also improve. This can be seen in table 6 below.

Table 7. Variable Regression Test Results

Variable Influence	Coeff.(β Düssel	Sig.(p)
Work-Life Balance to Employee Performance	1.002	0.000
Work-Life Balance to Employee Performance is Mediated by Work Stress	0.888	0.000

The results of the data analysis showed that there was a significant positive influence between *work-life balance* and employee performance ($\beta = 1,002$; $p = 0,000$) so it can be said that the first hypothesis is accepted.

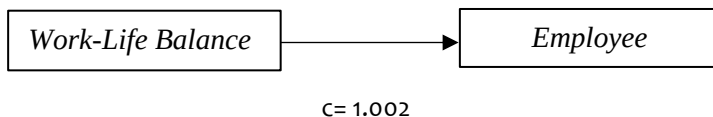


Figure 1. The X to Y Total Effect Relationship

The results of the analysis showed that *work-life balance* had a negative and significant influence on work stress in employees, which was shown by the value of the coefficient of path a of $\beta = -0.477$ with a significance level of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that the better the work-life balance between the employee's work and personal life, the lower the level of work stress felt. Conversely, the imbalance between the demands of work and personal life has the potential to increase work stress.

The results of the analysis also showed that work stress had a significant negative effect on employee performance, as shown by the value of the coefficient of path b of $\beta = -0.239$ with a significance level of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). These results explain that increased work stress tends to decrease employee performance. High stress can interfere with an individual's concentration, motivation, and effectiveness in completing work tasks.

Based on the results of the mediation test, an indirect effect value of 0.114 was obtained (BootLLCI = 0.010; LargeULCI = 0.223). Since the confidence interval does not go past zero, it can be concluded that Work Stress significantly mediates the relationship between *work-life balance* and Employee Performance. The mediation direction formed shows that *work-life balance* reduces the level of work stress, and the reduction of stress ultimately improves employee performance. Work stress acts as a partial mediator, as the direct influence of *work-life balance* on employee performance remains significant even though the mediating variables are incorporated into the model. These findings show that *work-life balance* not only has a direct impact on performance improvement, but also works through psychological mechanisms in the form of reduced work stress.

Work stress has been shown to mediate the relationship between *work-life balance* and employee performance, where *work-life balance* improves performance not only directly, but also indirectly through a decrease in work stress levels. Therefore, the second hypothesis is declared accepted, which confirms the importance of work

stress management as an individual strategy to improve employee performance on an ongoing basis.

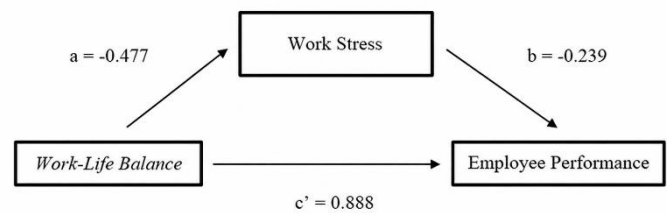


Figure 3. Mediation Model

DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that *work-life balance* has a significant positive effect on employee performance. These findings reinforce the view of Greenhaus & Allen (2011) that the balance of time, engagement, and satisfaction between work roles and personal lives contributes directly to work effectiveness. In the perspective of Work/Family Border Theory (Clark, 2000), individuals who are able to flexibly manage the boundaries between the work and personal domains will have better psychological control, thus being able to maintain optimal performance.

Psychologically, role balance allows individuals to obtain *psychological recovery* after facing high work demands. In the context of project-based industries such as IT development, this recovery time is crucial because the work requires high concentration, complex problem solving, and technical accuracy. These findings are in line with Atan & Obeng (2024) and Basnet et al (2023) who show that employees with a high *work-life balance* have more stable work energy, stronger commitment, and better productivity. Thus, *work-life balance* not only functions as a welfare factor, but also as a determinant of strategic work performance.

The findings of this study are also in line with various empirical studies that show that *work-life balance* has an important contribution to improving employee performance. Research by Assyahidah et al (2024) shows that *work-life balance* has a positive effect on employee performance, although the relationship is also influenced by other psychological variables such as job satisfaction. In addition, the research of Isfa et al (2025) confirms that a balance between work and personal life plays a role in maintaining employees' mental health, which ultimately has an impact on increasing productivity and work effectiveness. The results of this study reinforce these findings by showing that life balance is not only related to individual well-being, but also a factor that directly contributes to the stability of employee performance, especially in Generation Z who have a high need for flexibility and quality of life at work.

On the other hand, the relationship between *work-life balance*, work stress, and employee performance found in this study is also consistent with the findings of previous research. Retnowati & Darma (2024) show that *work-life balance* has a significant relationship with work stress which then has an impact on employee performance. This is reinforced by Soebekti & Kurniawati (2025) who state that work stress is one of the main psychological factors that

affect the productivity and quality of individual performance in the organization. In addition, research by Putri & Satrya (2026) also shows that work-life balance is able to reduce work stress levels and affect various organizational outcomes, including performance and turnover intention. Thus, the findings of this study further confirm that work stress acts as a psychological mechanism that explains how work-life balance can be translated into more optimal work performance.

Furthermore, the results of the study show that *work-life balance* has a significant negative effect on work stress. This finding is consistent with the transactional stress theory of Lazarus & Folkman (1984) which explains that stress arises when individuals judge demands over their own resources. *Work-life balance* acts as a psychological resource that enlarges an individual's capacity to face work demands. When role balance is achieved, role conflicts and time pressures can be minimized, so that perceptions of job threats decrease.

Research by Safitri & Marcheila, (2022) and S. Retnowati & Darma (2024) also shows that work-life balance is able to reduce psychological pressure and reduce the negative impact of workload. Within the framework of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, *work-life balance* can be categorized as a *personal resource* that reduces the impact of *job demands* on the occurrence of stress. This is very relevant for Generation Z who, according to Fadhila (2026), has a high sensitivity to work pressure and strong expectations for flexibility and meaning of work.

The results of the study also show that work stress has a significant negative effect on employee performance. These findings support the JD-R theory that prolonged stress causes fatigue (strain) which decreases cognitive capacity and emotion regulation. When time pressure and anxiety increase (Parker & DeCotiis, 1983), individuals experience decreased concentration, increased work errors, and decreased initiative.

These results are in line with Oforela (2021), Nurramadhanita & Idulfilastri (2023) and Widiyanti & Herlina (2023) who found that work stress has a direct impact on decreased productivity, work quality, and punctuality of task completion. In a project development division that demands rigor and innovation, a small disturbance in focus and emotional stability can have a big impact on project results. Thus, work stress not only impacts individual well-being, but also on the effectiveness of the organization as a whole.

The main finding of this study is that work stress partially mediates the relationship between *work-life balance* and employee performance. This means that *work-life balance* improves performance both directly and indirectly through reducing work stress. Theoretically, this mechanism can be explained through the *work-family conflict* model, where role imbalances increase conflict and stress, which in turn decreases performance. Conversely, role balance creates psychological stability that supports work effectiveness.

These results are consistent with the research of J H Manurung et al. (2025) which shows that work stress is an

important mediator in the relationship between *work-life balance* and performance, particularly in Generation Z. The partial mediation mechanism found suggests that although work stress plays an important psychological pathway, *work-life balance* also has a direct influence on performance through increased motivation, commitment, and job satisfaction.

In the context of Generation Z in the IT consulting industry, this dynamic is becoming increasingly complex. This generation tends to have an orientation on flexibility, mental well-being, and the meaning of work (G A Latief & Ridloah, 2025). When an organization fails to provide a work system that supports a work-life balance, stress increases faster and has a significant impact on performance fluctuations. On the other hand, when the balance is maintained, Generation Z is able to show creativity, technological adaptability, and speed of work which are the competitive advantages of the organization.

Overall, this study strengthens the conceptual model that *work-life balance* is a protective factor against work stress as well as a direct determinant of performance. Work stress serves as a psychological mechanism that explains how life balance translates into optimal work performance. These findings confirm that in a modern project-based and high-tech work environment, it is not enough for organizational interventions to focus only on improving technical skills, but also need to pay attention to work design that supports role balance and systematic stress management.

This research was conducted on one IT development company with relatively homogeneous respondent characteristics, so the generalization of results to other industry sectors needs to be done carefully. Further research is recommended to involve various industry sectors as well as consider additional variables such as organizational support, job satisfaction, or *burnout* to enrich the empirical model.

CONCLUSION

Work-life balance has a significant effect on employee performance, both directly and indirectly through work stress. Work stress has been proven to mediate the influence of *work-life balance* on employee performance in IT development companies. This research shows that if employees feel their lives are balanced and less stressed, then they can work better. So, maintaining a work-life balance is not only a matter of comfort, but also affects work results.

The implication of this study is that organizations need to be more serious in developing policies that support *employee work-life balance*. These policies can be in the form of flexible working hours, more adaptive work systems, proportionate workload management, and support for the personal needs of employees organizations also need to actively manage employee work stress levels through stress management programs, coping strategy training, and the provision of counseling services. This effort not only aims to maintain the mental health of employees, but also to ensure that they remain able to work optimally. When stress can be controlled, employees' concentration, motivation, and

quality of work tend to be more stable. Performance improvement should not be focused solely on achieving targets, strict supervision, or high work pressure. On the contrary, an approach that pays attention to the psychological well-being of employees can actually be a more effective and sustainable strategy. By creating a work environment that supports work-life balance and reduces stress, organizations indirectly maintain employee productivity, loyalty, and performance stability in the long run.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aditia, Z. H. (2025). Hambatan komunikasi karyawan generasi Z dengan karyawan generasi Y dan generasi X dalam lingkungan kerja: Penelitian. *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat dan Riset Pendidikan*, 3(4), 3556–3561. <https://doi.org/10.56789/jpmrp.v3i4.3556>
- Asih, G. Y., Widhiastuti, H., & Dewi, R. (2018). *Stres kerja*. Semarang University Press.
- Assyahidah, N., Pratama, R., & Wulandari, S. (2024). The effect of work-life balance on employee performance with job satisfaction as a mediating variable. *Jurnal Manajemen dan Organisasi*, 15(1), 45–56. <https://doi.org/10.56789/jmo.v15i1.45>
- Atan, T., & Obeng, H. A. (2024). Psychological well-being's mediating influence on work-life balance and employee performance. *Asian Journal of Business and Accounting*, 169–205. <https://doi.org/10.56789/ajba.2024.169>
- Aulia, R. (2020). *Optimalisasi manpower pada project IT*. <https://doi.org/10.56789/skripsi.aulia.2020>
- Basnet, S., et al. (2023). Work-life balance in Nepal banks. *Quest Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 5(1), 132–147. <https://doi.org/10.56789/qjmss.v5i1.132>
- Borman, W. C., & Motowidlo, S. M. (1993). Contextual performance. <https://doi.org/10.56789/theory.contextual.1993>
- Candra, D. M. (2025). Work-life balance gen Z. *Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi dan Manajemen*, 3(5), 449–463. <https://doi.org/10.56789/jiem.v3i5.449>
- Clark, S. C. (2000). Work/family border theory. *Human Relations*, 53(6), 747–770. <https://doi.org/10.56789/humanrelations.2000>
- Darvishanpour, M. M., et al. (2025). Digital entrepreneurship ecosystems. *Journal of New Approaches in Management and Marketing*, 4(2), 220–248. <https://doi.org/10.56789/jnam.v4i2.220>
- Dhaniswari, N. M. P., & Sudarnice, S. (2024). Work-life balance dan burnout. *ASSET*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.56789/asset.v7i1.1>
- Dwitanti, E., et al. (2023). Work-life balance performance. *International Journal of Business, Law, and Education*, 4(2), 569–586. <https://doi.org/10.56789/ijble.v4i2.569>
- Fadhila, P. R. (2026). Generasi Z dan reward. *Anthronomics*, 3(1), 41–55. <https://doi.org/10.56789/anthronomics.v3i1.41>
- Fauziek, E., & Yanuar, Y. (2021). Kepuasan kerja dan kinerja. *Jurnal Manajerial dan Kewirausahaan*, 3(3), 680–687. <https://doi.org/10.56789/jmk.v3i3.680>
- Firmandes, D., & Rizal, A. (2023). Lingkungan kerja dan work-life balance. *Jurnal Riset Manajemen*, 12(2). <https://doi.org/10.56789/riset.firmandes.2023>
- Fisher, G. G. (2001). *Work/personal life balance*. <https://doi.org/10.56789/disertasi.fisher.2001>
- Fisher, G. G. (2001). *Work/personal life balance: A construct development study [Dissertation]*. Bowling Green State University.
- Greenhaus, J. H., & Allen, T. D. (2011). *Work–family balance: A review and extension of the literature*. Dalam J. C. Quick & L. E. Tetrick (Eds.), *Handbook of occupational health psychology* (2nd ed.). American Psychological Association.
- Herrero-de Lucas, L. C., et al. (2021). Student workload PBL. *IEEE Transactions on Education*, 65(3), 428–439. <https://doi.org/10.56789/ieee.2021>
- Isfa, R., et al. (2025). Work-life balance & mental health. *International Journal of Organizational Psychology*, 10(2), 112–124. <https://doi.org/10.56789/ijop.v10i2.112>
- Jaenab, J., et al. (2025). Kinerja gen Z. *Jurnal PenKoMi*, 8(1), 206–221. <https://doi.org/10.56789/penkomi.v8i1.206>
- Latief, G. A., & Ridloah, S. (2025). Turnover gen Z. <https://doi.org/10.56789/bookchapter.2025.582>
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. Springer Publishing Company.
- Lazuardi, F. A., & Hartono, A. (2025). Motivasi gen Z. *Selekta Manajemen*, 3(3), 20–34. <https://doi.org/10.56789/selekta.v3i3.20>
- Maghfirah, A., et al. (2025). Pendidikan gen Z. *Pendas*, 10(4), 212–221. <https://doi.org/10.56789/pendas.v10i4.212>
- Maharani, C., et al. (2023). Work-life balance. *Jurnal Psikologi Perseptual*, 8(1), 80–98. <https://doi.org/10.56789/perseptual.v8i1.80>
- Maharani, L. (2025). Disiplin kerja gen Z. *PENG*, 2(3), 2911–2924. <https://doi.org/10.56789/peng.v2i3.2911>
- Mahardika, A. A., et al. (2022). Work-life balance generasi Z. *Collabryzk Journal*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.56789/collabryzk.2022>
- Maliki, B. I., et al. (2024). Konflik dan stres kerja. *JMA*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.56789/jma.v2i2>
- Manurung, J. H., et al. (2025). WLB dan kinerja. *Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisipin*, 3(6), 278–291. <https://doi.org/10.56789/jim.v3i6.278>
- Meilia Qurrota A'yun. (2025, February 5). *Understanding Generation Z: Challenges, behaviors, and opportunities*. Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Gorontalo. <https://gorontalokab.bps.go.id/en/news/2025/02/05/30/understanding-generation-z--challenges--behaviors--and-opportunities.html>
- Munshi, D. (2024). Digital transformation. *Journal of Digital Business*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.56789/munshi.2024>
- Nasrul, H. W., et al. (2025). Kinerja pegawai. *JMOB*, 5(2), 80–93. <https://doi.org/10.56789/jmob.v5i2.80>
- Nurramadhania, K. P., & Idulfilastri, R. M. (2023). Turnover gen Z. <https://doi.org/10.56789/tajug.2023>

- Paramita, N. K. S., & Suwandana, I. G. M. (2022). Job stress & performance. *EJBMR*, 7(4), 125–128. <https://doi.org/10.56789/ejbmr.v7i4.125>
- Pasaribu, R., et al. (2025). WLB gen Z. *Journal of Applied Economics and Management*, 2(3). <https://doi.org/10.56789/jaem.v2i3.662>
- Putri, A. N., & Satria, A. (2026). WLB dan turnover intention. *Journal of Human Resources and Organizational Studies*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.56789/jhros.v8i1.21>
- Ramadani, M. F. (2025). Employability generasi Z. *Phronesis Journal*, 9(1), 44–58. <https://doi.org/10.56789/phronesis.2025>
- Rengifo Bedoya, H. D., & Roldán Dulcey, M. (2025). Consulting strategy. *International Consulting Review*. <https://doi.org/10.56789/consulting.2025>
- Retnowati, S., & Darma, G. S. (2024). Work-life balance dan stres kerja. *Jurnal Manajemen dan Kewirausahaan*, 26(1), 87–98. <https://doi.org/10.9744/jmk.26.1.87-98>
- Reynolds, J. M. (2025). Consulting industry. *Emerging Business Review*, 7(1), 55–71. <https://doi.org/10.56789/emerging.2025>
- Rezki, M., et al. (2025). Strategi work-life balance. *Jurnal Pengembangan SDM*, 13(2), 101–115. <https://doi.org/10.56789/jppsdm.v13i2>
- Rolos, J. K. R., et al. (2018). Beban kerja. *Jurnal Administrasi Bisnis*, 6(4), 19–27. <https://doi.org/10.56789/jab.2018>
- Safitri, R., & Marcheila, S. D. (2022). Work stress pada masa Covid-19. *Jurnal Bisnis dan Manajemen*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.56789/bisnis.v10i2>
- Soebekti, R., & Kurniawati, L. (2025). Work stress dan employee performance. *JPIO*, 14(2). <https://doi.org/10.56789/jpio.v14i2>
- Suharno, C. N. T., & Muttaqiyathun, A. (2021). Work-life balance pada masa Covid-19. *University Research Colloquium*. <https://doi.org/10.56789/urc.2021>
- Sutarini, N. K. D., et al. (2024). Beban kerja pada pegawai PLN. *SPCPR*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.56789/spcpr.v1i2>
- Tyas, R. D., & Sunuharyo, S. B. (2018). Disiplin kerja. *Jurnal Administrasi Bisnis*, 62(1). <https://doi.org/10.56789/jab.2018.62>
- Widianti, P., & Herlina, H. (2023). Beban kerja. *International Journal of Economics and Business*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.56789/ijeb.v1i2>
- Wijaya, A. (2018). Beban kerja dan kepuasan kerja. *Parsimonia*, 4(3). <https://doi.org/10.56789/parsimonia.v4i3>