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Work-Life Balance as a Predictor of Performance in Female Workers in the Public Sector in the Digital Era

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Abstract. Work-life balance has become an important issue in public sector human resource management, particularly for female employees who simultaneously perform professional and family responsibilities in the era of digital transformation. Increasing digitalization has improved workplace flexibility while also blurring the boundaries between work and personal life, potentially affecting employee performance. This study aims to examine the effect of work-life balance on the performance of female workers in the public sector and to analyze the roles of organizational support, digital capabilities, and family circumstances as contextual variables. A quantitative approach with a correlational design integrated with mixed methods was employed. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires from 210 female public sector employees and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), while qualitative data from interviews and observations were used to strengthen the interpretation of the findings. The results indicate that work-life balance has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Organizational support strengthens this relationship as a mediating variable, whereas digital capabilities and family circumstances function as moderating variables. The findings also reveal that work flexibility in the digital era does not automatically improve work-life balance; without supportive organizational policies and adequate digital competencies, it may increase work stress and role conflict. This study concludes that improving the performance of female public sector employees requires an integrated approach through gender-responsive organizational policies, enhanced digital capabilities, flexible work arrangements, and stronger family support. These findings provide practical implications for developing inclusive and sustainable human resource management policies in the digital era

Keywords: Work-Life Balance; Employee Performance; Female Workers; Digital Transformation.

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INTRODUCTION

Work-life balance is a strategic aspect in managing human resources in the public sector, especially for female workers who have dual roles as professionals and household managers (G. T. Begum, 2024; V. Begum et al., 2024). In the context of modern bureaucracy, these dynamics become increasingly complex as digital transformation transforms the working systems of public organizations. Digitalization not only increases work efficiency and flexibility but also blurs the boundaries between employees' work and personal lives.

Digital transformation presents a paradox in the workplace. On the one hand, flexibility is increasing through the use of technology that allows work to be done anytime and anywhere. However, on the other hand, the phenomenon of "always-on" culture has emerged, a state of continuous digital connectivity without clear time limits (Brailovskaia et al., 2024; Garcia-Murillo &

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MacInnes, 2025). This situation has implications for the blurring of boundaries between work and personal life, potentially triggering role conflict and psychological stress, especially for female workers with domestic responsibilities.

Digital work flexibility that isn't balanced by effective time management policies has the potential to increase work stress, psychological burden, and role conflict. Female workers in the public sector are the most vulnerable group in these situations. (Wu et al., 2019) showed that flexibility without structural support can worsen employee well-being, especially for those with multiple responsibilities. (Fan et al., 2024) also found that unmanaged role stress leads to emotional exhaustion and decreased productivity.

Employee performance is the main indicator of bureaucratic effectiveness. Robbins and Judge (2017) emphasize that performance depends not only on technical competence, but also on support for work-life balance (Jelatu & Jewaru, 2024). When employees feel that their personal lives are valued and facilitated fairly, their levels of satisfaction, loyalty, and performance tend to increase. (Nassani et al., 2024) Therefore, work-life balance is not only a personal need, but also an organizational strategy in achieving bureaucratic efficiency and effectiveness (Ramadhani et al., 2023).

Unfortunately, the public bureaucracy in Indonesia has not been fully responsive to the needs of female workers. Data from the National Civil Service Agency (2023) shows that although 53% of civil servants are women, the majority still occupy lower-level functional positions. This disparity is not solely due to access to education or competence, but also to the social pressures inherent in women's domestic roles. The Indonesian Family Life Survey (IFLS) studied by Cameron et al. (2019) showed that more than 40% of women of productive age stopped working after the birth of their first child (Roseita et al., 2025). This indicates a systemic failure to support the sustainability of women's careers in the public sector.

A number of previous studies have examined the issues of work-life balance, job stress, and role conflict in public sector workers (Larasati et al., 2023; Roseita et al., 2025). Studies (Livnat & Almog-Bar, 2026) also highlights the vulnerability of female workers to emotional exhaustion due to the pressures of dual roles, particularly in organizations that do not yet have flexible policies. However, there are several research gaps which is still unanswered.

First, most previous studies tend to examine work-life balance partially, focusing on work stress or role conflict, without directly integrating it with employee performance as the primary outcome in the context of public bureaucracy. Second, studies that specifically place female workers as the primary subject in the context of the digital public sector are still limited, even

though this group has distinct characteristics and challenges. Third, research examining the role of digital transformation as a context influencing the relationship between work-life balance and performance are still relatively minimal, especially in Indonesia. Fourth, few studies have developed a comprehensive predictive approach that simultaneously considers variables such as organizational support, digital work flexibility, and family circumstances.

This gap highlights the importance of a more integrative and contextual approach to understanding the relationship between work-life balance and the performance of women workers in the public sector. This is also crucial in supporting evidence-based policy development. that is gender responsive and adaptive to changes in the digital work environment. This topic aligns with the national policy direction in the 2025-2029 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN), which emphasizes digital transformation of the bureaucracy, strengthening civil servant human resources, and gender equality and inclusive development, particularly in Eastern Indonesia. Furthermore, this research also contributes to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially goal 5 (gender equality) and goal 16 (effective, accountable and inclusive institutions).

Based on this description, this study aims to analyze and explain the influence of work-life balance on the performance of female workers in the public sector within the context of digital transformation. This study also seeks to develop a comprehensive predictive model by considering various factors influencing this relationship. Thus, this research is expected to not only provide theoretical contributions to the development of public administration studies but also provide practical implications for formulating more inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable human resource management policies.

Furthermore, from a modern human resource management perspective, work-life balance is no longer viewed as a purely individual issue, but rather as part of an organization's strategy to improve institutional performance and sustainability. This approach positions employees as strategic assets requiring holistic support, both in their work and personal lives. In the public sector, this becomes increasingly important because employee performance impacts not only the organization but also the quality of public services more broadly.

Digital transformation in public bureaucracy has also fundamentally changed the nature of work. Digitalization not only accelerates administrative processes but also increases work complexity through demands for multitasking, rapid response, and the simultaneous use of multiple technology platforms. This situation demands new competencies from employees, particularly digital skills and effective time management. However, not all employees are equally

prepared to face these changes, potentially creating an adaptation gap that impacts work-life balance and performance.

In the context of female workers, these challenges are further complicated by the social construct that still places women primarily responsible for domestic affairs. This forces female workers to simultaneously fulfill multiple roles, which often leads to role conflict and work fatigue. As work demands increase due to digitalization, while domestic demands remain high, the risk of work-life imbalance increases.

Furthermore, this phenomenon is also related to the issue of gender inequality in the workplace, particularly in the public sector. Despite the relatively high number of women in the bureaucracy, access to strategic positions and career support remains limited. This indicates that organizational systems are not fully inclusive and responsive to the needs of female workers. In the long term, this situation can impact low female employee retention and hinder career development.

On the other hand, the development of digital technology actually has the potential to be a solution in improving work-life balance, for example through a flexible work and remote working. However, without clear regulations and a healthy work culture, this flexibility can actually lead to unconscious exploitation of working hours. Therefore, a policy approach is needed that can optimize the benefits of digitalization without sacrificing employee well-being.

In addition to organizational factors, individual factors also play a crucial role in determining the success of work-life balance management. Digital skills, time management, and individual coping strategies are crucial determinants in facing modern work demands. Employees with good digital literacy tend to be more adaptable to change and able to utilize technology to improve work efficiency. Conversely, limited digital skills can increase workloads and worsen work-life balance.

Equally important, family factors are also crucial in the context of female workers. Family support, particularly regarding the division of domestic roles, can help alleviate the double burden women face. However, in many cases, social norms still position women as the primary actors in household work, thus limiting their opportunities for professional development. Considering this complexity, a research approach is needed that simultaneously integrates the various factors influencing work-life balance and performance. This approach is crucial for generating a more comprehensive and contextual understanding, thus providing a basis for formulating more effective and equitable policies.

Thus, this research focuses not only on the relationship between work-life balance and performance but also seeks to uncover broader dynamics involving organizational, individual, and family factors within the context of digital transformation. This approach is expected to make a more significant contribution, both theoretically and practically, to the development of adaptive, inclusive, and sustainable public sector human resource management

METHODS

This research uses a quantitative approach with a correlational design combined with a mixed methods approach to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. The mixed methods approach allows researchers to combine the strengths of quantitative and qualitative data in a single study, resulting in a more in-depth and contextual analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2023). This study aims to examine the direct influence of work-life balance on the performance of female workers in the public sector, while identifying the possible role of mediating or moderating variables, such as organizational support, individual digital capabilities, and family conditions. The research design used is an explanatory design with a survey approach. This design is used to explain the causal relationship between independent variables and dependent variables and to test indirect relationships through mediating and moderating variables (Istanti et al., 2021). The research was conducted cross-sectionally, meaning data collection was carried out at a certain point in time (Malik et al., 2023). The conceptual model proposed in this study was analyzed using a statistical inferential approach based on Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which is able to comprehensively test simultaneous relationships between latent variables (Ghasemy et al., 2020). The main instrument in this study was a questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale (1–5) developed based on relevant literature. Measurement of variables work-life balance refers to the concept developed by (Zerihun, 2024), which includes the dimensions of work-family conflict, work interference with personal life, and personal life interference with work (Riasnugrahani et al., 2025). Meanwhile, individual performance is measured based on indicators proposed by Robbins (2020), namely work quantity, work quality, timeliness, and work responsibility (Larasati et al., 2022). Other variables such as organizational support, digital skills, and family conditions were compiled based on a review of literature relevant to the research context. To ensure the quality of the instrument, validity and reliability tests were conducted. Content validity was tested through expert judgment, while construct validity was analyzed using factor analysis (Istanti et al., 2021). The reliability of the instrument was tested using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to ensure the internal consistency of each construct (Iskamto et al., 2021). The research data consisted of quantitative

and qualitative data analyzed in an integrated manner. The quantitative data obtained through questionnaires were analyzed using correlation tests, linear regression, and SEM to examine the direct and indirect relationships between variables, including the role of mediating and moderating variables (Ghasemy et al., 2020). Meanwhile, qualitative data was obtained through in-depth interviews with key informants, such as organizational officials, superiors, and female employees, to explore the organizational context, the dynamics of digital transformation, and subjective experiences in managing work-life balance. Qualitative data analysis was conducted using a thematic approach to identify key relevant patterns. Furthermore, data triangulation was conducted between quantitative and qualitative findings to increase the validity of the research results and strengthen the overall interpretation with this approach, the research is expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of the influence of work-life balance on the performance of female workers in the public sector in the digital era.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study involved 210 female workers in the public sector which aimed to analyze the influence of work-life balance on performance in the context of digital transformation, and examines the role of organizational support, digital capabilities, and family conditions as contextual variables.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics by Indicator

Variables	Indicators	Mean	Category
Work Life Balance	Work-family conflict	3,61	High
	Work - personal life interference	3,55	High
	Personal life - work interference	3,10	Currently
Performance	Quantity of work	3,85	High
	Quality of work	3,92	High
	Punctuality	3,78	High
	Responsibility	3,95	High
Organizational support	Superior support	3,68	High
	Work flexibility policy	3,62	High
Digital capabilities	Mastery of technology	3,81	High
	Adaptation of digital systems	3,75	High
Family conditions	Family support	3,64	High
	Division of domestic roles	3,54	High

Source: processed from primary data 2026

Work Life Balance

Based on Table 1, the work-family conflict indicator has the highest value (mean = 3.61). This indicates that work remains a major source of disruption to family life. In the context of digital transformation, this condition is closely related to the increasing demands of flexible work without clear time boundaries. Women's work tends to remain connected to work even within the domestic environment, increasing the potential for role conflict.

The indicator of work interference with personal life (mean = 3.55) also showed a high value. This indicates that work not only takes up time but also affects an individual's psychological well-being. Female workers often have difficulty separating work from their personal lives, which can ultimately reduce the quality of time spent with their families.

In contrast, the indicator of personal life interference with work had a lower value (mean = 3.10). This indicates that respondents are relatively capable of maintaining professionalism at work. Despite having domestic responsibilities, female workers still strive to avoid personal matters interfering with their work. However, this condition may also indicate a tendency to prioritize work over personal life.

Employee Performance

Performance indicators show relatively high results across all aspects. Job responsibility scored highest (mean = 3.95), indicating that female workers have a strong commitment to their tasks and the organization. This high level of responsibility is a key factor in maintaining stable performance, even though work-life balance is less than optimal. Work quality (mean = 3.92) also showed high results, indicating that female workers are still capable of producing good output. This suggests that the pressure of dual roles does not directly reduce work quality but rather encourages individuals to maintain professional standards. Work quantity (mean = 3.85) indicates that work targets are being met. However, this achievement needs to be examined critically as it may be related to an increased workload. Meanwhile, punctuality (mean = 3.78) scored the lowest among the performance indicators, indicating challenges in time management, particularly in digital work environments that require multitasking.

Organizational Support

Organizational support showed high scores for both indicators: superior support (mean = 3.68) and flexible work policies (mean = 3.62). This indicates that the organization has made efforts to provide a supportive work environment. Superior support is a crucial factor in helping female workers manage work pressure. Superiors who understand their employees' circumstances will be more flexible in assigning tasks and working hours. Meanwhile, flexible

work policies allow employees to adjust their work hours to suit their personal needs. However, without proper management, this flexibility can actually increase the workload.

Digital Capabilities

Digital skills showed high scores on the technology mastery (mean = 3.81) and digital system adaptation (mean = 3.75) indicators. This indicates that respondents have good abilities in utilizing technology to support their work. Digital skills are a crucial factor in the era of bureaucratic transformation. Employees with high digital literacy tend to be more efficient in completing tasks and are able to reduce work stress. This also strengthens the role of digital skills as a variable that strengthens the relationship between work-life balance and performance.

Family Conditions

Family conditions also showed high scores, particularly for the family support indicator (mean = 3.64). This indicates that most respondents received support from their families in carrying out their dual roles. However, the indicator for the division of domestic roles had a slightly lower score (mean = 3.54), indicating that household responsibilities still tend to fall on women. This is one factor influencing work-life balance.

The quantitative analysis results, as shown in Table 1, are supported by qualitative findings obtained through in-depth interviews and direct observations in the respondents' work environments. Based on the interviews, most informants stated that the use of digital technology in their work provides flexibility, but also increases work intensity. One informant stated that "work can now be completed from anywhere, but there is no clear boundary between work and home." Observations also show that some employees still access work outside of formal working hours, such as responding to work messages at night or while at home. This situation reinforces the findings of the work-family conflict indicator, which scored high.

Furthermore, interviews with several respondents revealed that superior support plays a crucial role in maintaining work-life balance. Informants with flexible superiors tended to feel better able to manage work and family time. Conversely, respondents with high workloads and a lack of organizational support tended to experience greater stress.

In the context of digital skills, interview results indicate that employees with strong technological skills are more able to complete work efficiently, allowing for more flexible time for personal life. This aligns with quantitative findings showing high digital skills scores. Meanwhile, in terms of family circumstances, observations and interviews indicate that family support, particularly in the division of household duties, significantly assists female workers in managing

their dual roles. However, it was still found that the majority of domestic responsibilities remain the responsibility of women, potentially impacting their work-life balance.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that work-life balance is an important factor influencing the performance of female workers, but its influence is indirect and influenced by various contextual factors. This finding aligns with the perspective of Job Demands Resources Theory, which states that the balance between work demands(job demands) and the resources that individuals have (job resources) will determine the level of employee performance and welfare Bakker Demerouti (2007). In the context of this research, work-life balance can be viewed as the result of the interaction between high digital work demands and resources such as organizational support and individual capabilities.

Digital transformation has created work flexibility, but it has also presented new challenges in the form of increased work intensity and a blurring of boundaries between work and personal life. This phenomenon can be explained through the concept of boundary theory, which emphasizes that the boundaries between the domains of work and personal life are becoming increasingly permeable in the digital work environment (Navick, 2025). This condition is reinforced by the emergence of culture always on, where individuals are required to always be connected to work, thus potentially increasing role conflict and emotional exhaustion.

In such circumstances, organizational support and digital capabilities are key factors in determining an individual's success in maintaining work-life balance while maintaining performance. This is in line with Social Exchange Theory, which states that when an organization provides support to employees, employees will respond by increasing their commitment and performance as a form of reciprocity (Blue, 1964). In addition, digital capabilities as a form of personal resources also play an important role in increasing work efficiency and reducing work pressure, as explained in the development of the Job Demands Resources Theory.

These findings also confirm that improving the performance of female workers in the public sector is not sufficient through individual competency enhancement alone, but also requires systematic organizational intervention and gender-responsive policies. This is in line with the perspective of Gender Role Theory, which states that women tend to face dual social expectations, both in domestic and professional roles (Eagly & Kite, 1987). Therefore, organizations need to develop policies that accommodate the specific needs of female workers, such as structured work flexibility and support for role balance.

Without such support, work flexibility in the digital age has the potential to become an additional burden that undermines work-life balance. This condition aligns with findings in the Conservation of Resources Theory, which states that individuals who continuously experience stress without adequate resource support will experience fatigue and decreased performance (Hobfoll, 1989). Thus, the success of digital transformation in improving performance depends not only on technology, but also on the organization's ability to manage the balance between work demands and employee well-being holistically.

CONCLUSION

Based This study concludes that work-life balance plays a significant role in improving the performance of female workers in the public sector, thus the research hypothesis is accepted. This relationship is not solely direct, but is influenced by contextual factors, with organizational support playing a role in strengthening the relationship, while digital capabilities and family circumstances determine its effectiveness. In the context of digital transformation, work flexibility does not automatically create work-life balance, but can actually increase stress if not supported by clear organizational policies and adequate individual capabilities. Therefore, improving the performance of female workers requires not only strengthening individual competencies, but also systematic organizational interventions and gender-responsive policies. Based on these findings, it is recommended that public sector organizations develop adaptive and inclusive work systems, enhance employee digital capacity, and encourage more balanced family support. Further research is expected to develop a more comprehensive model that considers other variables and a longitudinal approach.

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