



Antecedent of Work-Life Balance on Employee: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

Work-life balance is a state where employees choose to equally prioritize the demands of work and their personal life. Work-life balance still becomes an important research topic due to its developing issue. This study aims to identify the antecedents of work-life balance in employees. This qualitative study used a literature study method by collecting literature related to the antecedent of work-life balance from various sources of international journals. The researcher obtained 40 journals and filtered them based on the research topic. Then, it resulted in a total of 26 journals grouped into some sub-themes for further review. The results of this literature study showed that there were four categories of antecedents of work-life balance, namely demographic, individual, organizational, and environmental factors. The demographic factor came from the employee's demographic characteristics, while the individual factor came from within the employee. Meanwhile, the organizational factor is from the workplace's internal and external organizations, and the environmental factors are from the environment around the employee.

Keywords: work-life balance, antecedent, employee

Introduction

Hays Group (2022) reports that the problem of work-life balance becomes one of the reasons for employees to resign from their jobs during the Covid-19 pandemic. Indeed, this causes decreased employee performance and eventually affects the companies. The Covid-19 pandemic has combined personal life and work life into the same physical space. This can divide the focus of employees on their perception of work and life as a whole. Therefore, they start to re-evaluate work factors that can balance their work and personal life.

The implementation of work from home policy during the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the work-life balance of employees. This policy leads to a positive impact by increasing organizational productivity (Irawanto, Novianti, & Roz, 2021) and a negative impact considering the increasing number of challenges experienced by workers including managing the work-life balance (Palumbo, 2020). This global pandemic has forced both male and female employees to be able to manage changes in work patterns and find the right strategy to divide their time between work and family during the implementation of work from home policy (Rodríguez-Rivero, Yanez, Fernandez-Aller, & Carrasco-Gallego, 2020).

The term 'work-life balance' was found in 1986 and its use in daily life remained sporadic over the years. Interestingly, work-life programs have existed since the 1930s, as stated in a book by Rosabeth Moss Kanter entitled "Work and Family in the United States: A Critical Review and Agenda for Research and Policy". Then, researchers and organizations highlighted this work-life balance issue. Until the 1980s and 1990s, companies began to introduce work-life balance programs which first aimed to support women with children and have developed to the present (Kaur, 2013).

Currently, work-life balance is often aimed at work and family. Trying to balance family and work responsibilities has become a challenge for people of various backgrounds. Felstead, Jewishon, Phizcklea, and Walters (2006) define work-life balance as a strategy to increase employee independence in coordination with work and non-work aspects of their lives. Conflict in work life is a form of conflict between roles (role conflict), where the demands of a work role can interfere with the demands of the home role or free time with family (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). This further triggers the tensions because there is no agreement regarding the domain of home and work, which has unknowingly increased among employees in most economic sectors (Lewis, Gambles, and Rapoport (2007). In other words, the issue of work-life balance is highly considered by employees, particularly to manage conflicts between work and family responsibilities. Therefore, this issue becomes a serious challenge for organizations.

Based on the description above, employees and organizations need to know the causes of work-life balance issues. Many studies have explained the causes of work-life balance but it is necessary to conceptualize this issue to be more easily understood. Therefore, this literature study focuses on antecedents of work-life balance in employees. This study is expected to provide an overview and information for related parties.

Method

This quantitative study used a literature study method. The author searched for literature about work-life balance published from 2010 to 2022. The keywords used for the search were work-life balance, the antecedent of work-life balance, a predictor of work-life balance, influencing factors of work-life balance, factors of work-life balance, and meta-analysis of work-life balance. The author obtained the literature from the following sources:

www.elsevier.com

www.researchgate.net

www.psycnet.apa.org

www.sciencedirect.com

www.journals.sagepub.com

www.mdpi.com

www.semantic scholar.org

www.emerald.com

www.link.springer.com

www.onlinelibrary.com

www.tandfonline.com

www.proquest.com

Of all the sources, the author obtained 40 articles discussing work-life balance. Then, the articles obtained were filtered to match the topic of this recent study, namely the antecedents or predictors of work-life balance. Finally, a total of 26 articles were grouped based on certain sub-themes for further review.

Results

The author reviewed 26 articles related to the work-life balance issue published from 2010 to 2022 consisting of 3 articles published in 2022, 1 article published in 2021, 2 articles published in 2020, 3 articles published in 2017, 2 articles published in 2016, 3 articles published in 2015, 5 articles published in 2013, 3 articles published in 2012, 2 articles published in 2011, and 2 articles published in 2010. The antecedent variables of work-life balance found in the 26 articles are quite diverse as presented in the following table:

Table 1 – Antecedent of work-life balance

No.	Author	Year	Antecedent/Predictor	Subject
1.	Anushi, Priyanath, & Tennakoon	2022	Psychological Capital: Hope, Resilience, & Self-efficacy	162 employees
2.	Pace & Sciotto	2022	Gender Career Opportunity	1056 employees in di Italy
3.	Begum, Shafaghi, & Adeel	2022	Job Insecurity	413 employees in India
4.	Naz, Ahmad, & Batool	2021	Emotional Intelligence	350 female employees
5.	Dikshit & Panda	2020	Demographic: Age, Gender, Marital Status	150 police officers
6.	Uddin, Ali, & Khan	2020	Perceived Social Support	559 female employees in private banks
7.	Yawalkar & Sonawane	2017	Demographic: Age, Number of Family Dependents, and Working Place	500 Police officers
8.	Wong, Bandar, & Saili	2017	Supervisor Support Co-worker Support Flexible Working Arrangements	98 employees

9.	Badri & Khadijah	2017	Job Characteristic: Skill Variety, Job Autonomy, Task Identity, Taskcampus in Malaysia Significance, and Feedback.	307 academic staff in five research
10.	Mas-Machuca et al.	2016	Supervisor Support	374 employees of pharmaceutical companies
11.	Richert-Kamierska & Stankiewicz	2016	Age	500 employees
12.	Russo, Shteigman, & Carmeli	2015	Perceived Workplace Support & Perceived Family Support	216 students and 238 employees
13.	Kumarasamy, Pangil, & Isa	2015	Emotional Intelligence Job Engagement Organizational Support Workload Technological Advancement	1,566 police officers
14.	Shiels	2015	Work Hours Work Demands Flexibility Time	665 teaching staff
15.	Wu, Rusyidi, Claiborne, & Mccarthy	2013	Organizational Support Job value, Work time, and Income	573 Children welfare officers
16.	Huffman, Culbertson, Henning, & Goh	2013	Age (Youngest and Oldest Worker) Family satisfaction Age of Youngest Child	6.134 employees
17.	Devadson & Minnie	2013	Personality: Big Five	-
18.	Kaur	2013	Big Five Personality	70 lecturers
19.	Wilkinson	2013	Psychological Well-being	98 employees
20.	Bell, Rajendran, & Theiler	2012	Job Stress Well-being	139 academician
21.	Fatima & Sahibzada	2012	Colleague Support and Job Resources	146 lecturers
22.	Thriveri & Rama	2012	Demography: Age, Experience, Marital status, income, type of family, number of dependents	340 female employees
23.	Tremblay, Genin, & Loreto	2011	Organizational Support	200 employees
24.	Julien, Somerville, & Culp	2011	Alternative Work Arrangements (Flexible hours, compressed work weeks, and telework)	Employees in 57 companies with a total 22-23,214 people
25.	Hill et al.	2010	Workplace Flexibility Work Hours	59,052 invitees & 24,436 respondents
26.	Lingard, Francis, & Turner	2010	Hours Worked and Satisfaction	45 employees

Based on the table above, the antecedents of work-life balance in articles published in the last 12 years are quite diverse. This proves that work-life balance is still seen as an important topic considering the increasing concern for work and family life concerning human resource management in companies. The concern specifically addresses the issue of sources and conflicts between these two scopes. Generally, an employee does not only act as part of the company alone but also as one of the most important parts of his/her family and social environment. Therefore, it is necessary to build a balance between work and family life, not prioritizing one role only (Otuya & Andeyo, 2020).

Khairunneezam, Suriani, and Nadirah (2017) state that work-life balance is an idea that functions to bind employees' energies to divide the focus of attention, time, and dynamism between work and other important aspects of their personal lives. Companies are expected to support this balance issue, with a record of continuing to monitor and assist employees to maintain high performance and productivity (Akpa, Asikhia, Nneji, 2021). Therefore, it is necessary to the antecedents of work-life balance. The results of a literature review regarding the antecedents of work-life balance have been grouped into 4 antecedent categories, namely demographic, individual, organizational, and environmental factors as presented in the following table.

Table 2 – A summary of antecedent of work-life balance

No.	Factor	Description
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1.	Demographic	Age, gender, experience, marital status, income, type of family, number of dependents, and working place.
2.	Individual	Job insecurity, psychological capital (hope, resilience, & self-efficacy), personality (big five personality), psychological well-being, emotional intelligence, job stress, job satisfaction, job engagement.
3.	Organizational	Workplace flexibility, work hours, workload, alternative work arrangement (flexible hours, compressed work weeks, and telework), organizational support, perceived social support, colleague support, supervisor support, co-worker support, perceived workplace support, perceived family support, work-life balance police.
4.	Environmental	Job characteristics (skill variety, job autonomy, task identity, task significance, feedback), career opportunity, and technological advancement.

Discussion

Based on the results of the study, the antecedents of work-life balance can be grouped into four categories. The first factor is demographic factor covering age, gender, marital status, salary/income, type of family, number of dependents, and location of the workplace. Most researchers found age as one of the work-life balance antecedent variables (Huffman et al., 2013; Richert-Kaźmierska & Stankiewicz, 2016; Dikshit & Panda, 2020). Besides, gender is also the cause of differences in work-life balance patterns between men and women (Pace & Sciotto, 2022).

The second factor is the individual factor that comes from within the employee. This factor includes personality, emotional intelligence, psychological well-being, psychological capital (including hope, resilience, and self-efficacy), job insecurity, job stress, job satisfaction, and job engagement. Devadoss and Minnie (2013) reveal clear evidence that employees with an openness personality type can achieve the right balance between work and family life. It is because of the positive impact of personality in the workplace and family. On the other hand, employees with neuroticism personalities poorly maintain work-life balance.

Moreover, Kundnani and Pallavi (2014) show that employees with openness can achieve work-life balance first and then be followed by employees with conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism personalities respectively. Employees with neuroticism and conscientiousness personalities experience more significant conflicts in their personal and work lives than the other three personality types (Wayne, Nicholas, & William, 2004). Besides personality, emotional intelligence leads to employee productivity and work-life balance. Thorat (2015) states that emotional intelligence affects the quality of work-life in banks, where emotionally intelligent employees can achieve more optimal productivity and help achieve organizational goals.

Work-life balance is also influenced by other individual factors such as psychological capital including hope, resilience, and self-efficacy, except optimism (Anushi, Priyanath, & Tennakoon, 2022); job insecurity (Begum, Shafaghi, & Adeel, 2022); job stress (Bell, Rajendran, & Theiler, 2012); and job engagement or employees' sense of attachment to the company (Kumarasamy, Pangil, & Isa, 2015). Moreover, job satisfaction is significantly embedded in employees due to the support of supervisors, subordinates, and co-workers. When job satisfaction is associated with work-life balance, it tends to have a greater influence on the psychological well-being of employees (Kim, Lee, & Wong, 2016).

The third is the organizational factor which comes from both internal and external organizations. The organizational factor includes workplace flexibility, working hours, workload, organizational support, social support, colleague support, and workplace support, either from supervisors (supervisor support), co-workers (co-worker support), or family (family support). Russo, Shteigman, and Carmeli (2015) and Mas-Machuca et al. (2016) found that social support at work including that from supervisors is a powerful tool for monitoring employees' personal and work life. Pressure from supervisors is one of the main causes of work-life balance failure. Moreover, Wu et al (2013) claim that supervisors play less of a role in realizing work-life balance in employees. Instead, they proposed a positive work environment to promote work-life balance.

The positive effect of co-worker support becomes one of the reasons for employees to achieve a better work-life balance (Wong, Bandar, & Sali, 2017). Both superiors and co-workers contribute to work-life balance by providing emotional support to reduce negative work outcomes such as stress (Russo, Shteigman & Carmeli, 2015; Wong, Bandar & Sali, 2017). Omar, Mohd, and Ariffin (2015) reveal that workload is the most dominant factor affecting work-life balance, followed by role conflict. The number of worker hours, work demands, and expectations of flexibility time have a relationship with greater conflict and less perceived work-life balance (Shiels, 2015). Other studies also found that work-life balance is negatively related to job insecurity (Begum, Shafaghi, & Adeel, 2022), job stress (Bell, Rajendran, & Theiler, 2012), and positively related to work flexibility (Wong et al., 2017; Julien, Somerville, & Culp, 2011).

The last is environmental factors including job characteristics, career opportunities, and technological advances. Job characteristics cover five aspects, namely skill variety, job autonomy, task identity, task significance, and feedback that have a significant effect on work-life balance (Badri, 2017). The relationship between career opportunities and work-life balance for female employees has a much lower value than for male employees. Besides, technological advances are one of the main reasons for increasing concern for work-life balance as it affects employees' work and personal lives. However, a study supports the fact that technological advances are important in the workplace, but uncontrolled use of technology can damage the work-life balance so organizations need to carry out monitoring for prevention (Kumarasamy, Pangil, & Isa, 2015).

Conclusion

Based on the results of the literature study, it can be concluded that the antecedents of work-life balance in employees are grouped into four, namely demographic, individual, organizational, and environmental factors. Demographic factors come from the employee's demographic characteristics, while individual factors come from within the employees. Organizational factors come from internal and external organizations, while environmental factors come from the environment around the employee.

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