

## WORK LIFE BALANCE OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES ACROSS GENERATIONS IN INDONESIA

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### Abstract

*This study explores work-life balance among female government employees across generations, with a focus on gender-related challenges. Women are hypothesised to face imbalances due to dual roles at work and home. Using a phenomenological approach and descriptive quantitative analysis, the study finds that Indonesian women across generations generally experience moderate work-life balance. Notably, Baby Boomers (60–78 years) and Generation Z (12–27 years) report higher balance, while Generation X (44–59 years) and Millennials (28–43 years) face lower balance due to simultaneous career and family responsibilities. The study offers generationally tailored suggestions, although results may not generalise to women in sectors like banking or private industry. Implications include the need for organisations to act as facilitators, supporting female employees to ensure psychological well-being and sustained performance.*

**Keywords:** *work-life balance, individual work behaviour, women, generation.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Work-life balance (WLB) is a fundamental pillar of occupational health and organisational psychological well-being. It encompasses the dynamic interplay between professional priorities such as achievement, career advancement, and productivity—and personal dimensions, including leisure, family commitments, spiritual fulfilment, health, and overall life satisfaction (Daverth, 2016; Fischlmayr, 2010; Pradhan, 2016; Starmer, 2016). A sustainable work environment depends on how well organisations support their employees, especially women, in harmonising these dimensions (Clark, 2000; Lockwood, 2003; Tahir, 2023).

Modern organisations are increasingly aware that creating a supportive work culture for female employees is not only a matter of equity, but also essential to maintaining engagement and productivity. Over the past two decades, WLB has gained significant attention in both academic discourse and human resource practices (Elliot et al., 2015), especially as societal expectations around gender roles and family involvement continue to evolve (Clark, 2000). Improvements in WLB require structural and technological

adjustments, including flexible working arrangements, employee participation, and adaptation to digital work models (Bahrami et al., 2023).

However, WLB remains a complex and multifaceted challenge. Imbalances between work and personal life often stem from excessive work hours, role conflict, and high job demands, particularly for women juggling dual responsibilities at work and home (Fazal et al., 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic significantly accentuated these issues. Many government institutions in Indonesia transitioned to remote work, offering flexible schedules and digital collaboration tools as emergency solutions. Yet, for many women, especially those with caregiving roles, the convergence of domestic and professional duties within the same physical space created a heightened burden and increased psychological stress (Manzoor & Hamid, 2021).

These developments highlight the need to examine WLB from a generational and gendered perspective. Generational differences in work values, career stages, family structures, and digital fluency influence how female employees perceive and manage work-life demands. This study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of work-life balance among female employees in Indonesian government institutions by focusing on gender and generational diversity. It seeks to measure WLB levels across generations—Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z—offering a nuanced understanding of how life stages and socio-cultural shifts shape women's experiences in balancing work and life.

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This study employed a mixed-method approach by integrating phenomenological qualitative inquiry and descriptive quantitative analysis to explore the work-life balance (WLB) of female employees across generational cohorts in Indonesia.

### **Qualitative Phase: Phenomenological Approach**

The qualitative component was grounded in a phenomenological framework aimed at understanding how individuals experience, feel, and interpret WLB in their daily lives (Edgar & Sedgwick, 2007; Downes et al., 2012; Harrison et al., 2020). Phenomenology views phenomena as the essence of lived experience and emphasizes the relational context of these experiences (Blumer, 2012; Harrison et al., 2020).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with twenty female employees from different generations to capture deep insights into their subjective interpretations of WLB. The interview protocol explored themes such as role conflict, coping strategies, personal and professional aspirations, and perceived organisational support. Data collection took place over a twelve-month period, from June 2023 to June 2024.

### **Quantitative Phase: Descriptive Survey**

To complement the qualitative data, the study also employed a quantitative descriptive design. A total of 120 female respondents—comprising 30 participants from each generational group (Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z)—were selected to complete a structured questionnaire. Respondents were based in urban centres within the Greater Jakarta area: Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi.

Importantly, the selection criteria did not control for variables such as educational background, marital status, number of children, religious affiliation, social class, or employment type. This inclusive sampling strategy was designed to foreground shared generational perspectives rather than demographic subgroups, while also respecting ethical considerations around anonymity and psychological safety.

The WLB construct was measured using the framework proposed by Fisher et al. (2009), which includes four dimensions with 16 indicators:

1. Work interference with personal life (WIPL)
2. Personal life interference with work (PLIW)
3. Work enhancement of personal life (WEPL)
4. Personal life enhancement of work (PLEW)

### Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics. The analysis followed these steps:

1. Cumulative Score: Total response value for each item was calculated across all respondents.
2. Percentage Calculation: Each item's cumulative score was divided by the maximum possible score and multiplied by 100.
3. Scoring Interpretation: With 120 respondents and a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree), the maximum score per item was 600 ( $120 \times 5$ ) and the minimum score was 120 ( $120 \times 1$ ).
  - Thus, the percentage range was from 20% ( $120/600 \times 100$ ) to 100%, with a total span of 80%.
  - To classify responses, the percentage scale was divided into five equal intervals of 16% to indicate very low to very high WLB levels.

This dual-method design enabled the triangulation of findings, where rich qualitative insights were supported by broad patterns from the quantitative data.

**Table 1. Score Interpretation Criteria**

Interval	Judging Criteria
20% - 35.99%	Very low
36% - 51.99%	Low
52% - 67.99%	Currently
68% - 83.99%	Tall
84% - 100%	Very high

Source: (Harrison *et al.* ; JW, 2020)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### RESULTS

WLB is influenced by various factors, including work experience, learning, or performing tasks that require time, interaction, and collaboration. In addition, WLB is also influenced by the role of leadership and the influence of other factors, such as resources and services (Shahjahan et al., 2023; Yu, 2022). The practical implications of WLB include encouraging the integration of female employees, fostering empathy and marginalisation, providing opportunities for informal learning, and creating a more harmonious work environment (Shabir & Gani, 2020). The data obtained consisted of interview transcripts, participant observation field notes, journals, documents, internet sites, literature, and so on, which were then analysed with the following results:

#### Work Interference With Personal Life (WIPL).

This dimension will measure how female employees can manage various disturbances, especially work dynamics that can cause personal problems.

**Table 2. Conditions of Work Interference With Personal Life**

Indicator	Generation			
	Baby Boomers	X	Millennials	Z
Coming home from work too tired to do anything else	68.67	47.68	48.8	68.83
Work makes it difficult to maintain the personal life you desire.	68.64	48.04	48.04	68.04
Often neglect personal needs due to work demands	65.86	44.86	44.86	64.86
My personal life is suffering because of my work	69.59	49.50	49.50	69.51
Have to miss important personal activities because they take up too much work time	67.54	41.54	41.54	69.54
<b>Average: 57.27 (moderate category)</b>	<b>68.06</b>	<b>46.32</b>	<b>46.55</b>	<b>68.16</b>
<b>Category</b>	<b>Tall</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Tall</b>

Source: Data Processing (2025)

Work interference with personal life dimensions shows an average value of 57.27% in the moderate category. This can be interpreted as female employees generally managing various disturbances, especially work dynamics, that can cause personal problems. Technological advances have made it easier for female employees to work from anywhere and anytime so that some personal needs and activities can still be managed, controlled and carried out even though female employees also work in the office. The dual role between work and family requires balance, time management, and communication. Female employees who are married and have children are likely to feel tired enough to do other activities outside the home, so it is not easy to achieve self-actualisation. This can be found in Generation X and the millennial generation, who have low WLB levels due to difficulties in managing various disturbances, especially work dynamics that can cause personal problems.

Most informants (n=18) believe that WLB is often caused by emotional changes, such as stress, depression, and lack of focus (Septiani, 25 years old; Wati, 39 years old; Yati, 45 years old). However, those who work with career priorities become more focused, productive and satisfied without being too concerned about disrupting their work (Maria, 37 years old; Yanti, 50 years old; and Ita, 47 years old). WLB also needs to consider changes in life status and women's creative abilities (Ratnasari, 32 years old; Wilda, 33 years old; Septiani, 25 years old). The most crucial aspect of WLB is the ability and intensity of internal communication within the family, especially couples (Maria, 36 years old; Wati, 39 years old) and workgroups that need to be maintained. Employees must understand their position and influence in the organisation, be ready to handle many professional conflicts and provide personal support (Wilda, 33 years old; Sri, 32 years old; Yanti, 50 years old; Ita, 47 years old).

### Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW).

This dimension will measure how capable female employees are in managing their time for work and time for family so that personal life does not interfere with work or personal life dominates.

**Table 3. Conditions of Personal Life Interference With Work**

Indicator	Generation			
	Baby Boomers	X	Millennials	Z
My personal life has drained my energy to do work.	67.67	47.67	47.7	67.7
Work is neglected due to personal life problems	56.04	47.04	47.04	67.04
I would be more focused on work if my personal life were under control.	60.76	44.76	44.76	68.76
Too tired from work due to personal life problems	69.5	49.5	49.5	69.5
While at work, I feel worried about things to do outside of work.	67.5	44.5	46.35	69.4
You need help to complete your work because you are busy with personal matters.	61.54	41.54	41.54	67.54
<b>Average: 56.04 (moderate category)</b>	<b>63.84</b>	<b>45.84</b>	<b>46.15</b>	<b>68.32</b>
<b>Category</b>	<b>Currently</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Currently</b>

Source: Data Processing (2025)

The dimension of personal life interference to work shows that most female employees experience work interference caused by personal life, with an average value of 56.04% in the moderate category. The study revealed that most female employees must feel essential to feel happier, healthier, and fulfilled. To achieve this, female employees must have time for themselves, their families, and their loved ones and positive activities outside of work

and domestic family affairs, such as pursuing additional hobbies (Andin, 37 years old; Tatik, 50 years old). Female employees can still focus on work without being affected by personal life problems. The characteristics of the family, especially the partner, play an essential role in determining whether there is a potential conflict between work and personal life.

Some informants (n=15) viewed emotional maturity and financial stability as critical factors supporting female employees' WLB. "Most *single mothers* often experience feelings of inferiority and worry during the initial period of having to struggle to earn a living amidst gender stereotypes and accusations of ambitious women" (Jessica, 26 years old; Lia, 31 years old; and Septiani, 25 years old). This view can weaken female employees' efforts to build a career to improve their family's economic level (Downes *et al.*, 2012). Female employees are still struggling to achieve the ideal WLB, so they need more time for personal activities to support their psychological health.

#### **Work Enhancement of Personal Life (WEPL)**

This dimension will measure how work can positively impact personal life. The relationship between female employees' work tasks and work life is very close and mutually influential. If one of them is not good, it will usually have an impact on the lives of others. When women choose to work outside the home, the opportunities to improve the quality of personal life of individuals and open families. Women's perspectives, experiences, knowledge, and income will have the opportunity to increase and contribute to personal and family happiness. Good jobs will provide opportunities for women to have better economic capabilities.

**Table 4. Conditions Work Enhancement of Personal Life**

Indicator	Generation			
	Baby Boomers	X	Millennials	Z
Work gives me the energy to do activities outside of housework.	67.67	47.67	38.7	69.07
Things done at work help deal with personal and practical issues at home.	67.04	37.04	47.04	67.04
A better mood at work because of everything you have for your personal life	74.76	34.76	49.76	68.76
<b>Average: 55.78 (moderate category)</b>	<b>69.82</b>	<b>39.82</b>	<b>45.17</b>	<b>68.29</b>
<b>Category</b>	<b>Tall</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Tall</b>

Source: Data Processing (2025)

The results of the study show that the majority of female employees can organise their work so that it can have a positive impact on their personal lives. The calculation of this dimension has an average score of 55.78% in the moderate category. This can be interpreted as most female employees feeling new energy when they leave the house to work. Work can positively impact female employees' lives, providing several benefits such as financial independence, self-development, social interaction, mental and emotional health, community influence, improved quality of life, better quality of life, better psychological needs, and individual creativity. Female employees can become independent, gain knowledge, and gain experience through work, which enhances their professional abilities and allows them to develop professionally. Social interaction with others and professional organisations can also improve health and well-being. Female employees can also contribute

to society by fostering good behaviour and prioritising their rights, improving the quality of life of female employees through better education, health services, and various life experiences, and utilising psychological needs through work to support individual creativity and individuality. This approach not only benefits female employees but also makes a significant contribution to their personal well-being and overall well-being.

#### Personal Life Enhancement of Work (PLEW)

This dimension measures how female employees' ability to manage a positive personal life can improve individual performance in the world of work. When female employees leave home to work with happy personal conditions, a comfortable home, good communication with family members, food availability, and interactive family time, the work atmosphere becomes more enthusiastic and meaningful.

**Table 5. Personal Life Enhancement of Work Conditions**

Indicator	Generation			
	Baby Boomers	X	Millennials	Z
Personal life gives energy to do work	67.67	49.67	41.7	68.7
Personal life helps to relax and prepare for the next day's work.	73.04	57.04	40.04	67.94
<b>Average: 58.22 (moderate category)</b>	<b>70.355</b>	<b>53.355</b>	<b>40.87</b>	<b>68.32</b>
<b>Category</b>	<b>Tall</b>	<b>Currently</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Tall</b>

Source: Data Processing (2025)

The results of the study showed that the majority of female employees could manage their personal lives to improve the quality of their work performance, with an average score of 58.22% in the moderate category. It can be interpreted that most female employees can manage their families well and support women's readiness and enthusiasm to start better work activities. For married female employees, partner support is one of the primary keys to doing the job. "A good mother and wife at home cannot be judged only by the time spent caring for children and doing housework" (Andin, 37 years old; Umay, 45 years old; Tatik, 50 years old). A woman's time management and parenting patterns also affect her smoothness and balance in balancing her dual duties and roles in family and work.

"With this job, I can support my family financially so that we have a greater opportunity to buy healthy and nutritious food, pay for good health facilities for the family, especially children" (Lina, 35 years old; Febri, 39 years old; Wati, 31 years old; and Lia, 50 years old). Carrying out two roles at once is not easy. A woman must be a balanced and professional figure if she chooses to continue her career after marriage. Stress and pressure can arise due to the inability to deal with the situation. If a mother with a dual role cannot balance the needs of her household and work, an internal conflict will flare up in her personality (Mayangsari *et al.*, 2018). Becoming a mother and raising children can shape a successful identity in the future. "Having children is an investment for success; for us, prioritising family life over a career after giving birth is one form of success" (Dara, 38 years old; Yani, 43 years old).

## DISCUSSION

Almost all families need a double income, so many parents, especially mothers, feel they do not have productive time for their children as the next generation. The harsh changes and demands of urban lifestyles make women vulnerable to stress in dividing roles between work and family life. Most families in urban areas need financial support for their children's education and health. Most women sacrifice their desires for the sake of family members so that they are safe and happy. The level achieved and accepted by a woman can be seen differently by different people. Measuring the level of satisfaction for each individual will be different because no individual has the exact needs and demands.

**Table 6. Recapitulation of Work-Life Balance Scoring Across Generations**

Dimensions	Generation			
	Baby Boomers	X	Millennials	Z
Work Interference With Personal Life	68.06	46.32	46.55	68.16
Personal Life Interference With Work	63.84	45.84	46.15	68.32
Work Enhancement of Personal Life	69.82	39.82	45.17	68.29
Personal Life Enhancement of Work	70.355	53.355	40.87	68.32
<b>Average: 56.83 (moderate category)</b>	<b>68.02</b>	<b>46.33</b>	<b>44.68</b>	<b>68.27</b>
<b>Category</b>	<b>Tall</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Tall</b>

Source: Data Processing (2025)

Based on the calculation results of the WLB level of female employees across generations in Indonesia, an average value of 56.83% was obtained with a moderate category level. This can be interpreted as the balance of time, behaviour, tension, and energy spent on work and personal life still being unbalanced. Female employees may work relatively regular working hours but sometimes need to work overtime or take work home so that it impacts moderate stress levels but can still be managed. Some female employees feel they have enough personal time but cannot always be wholly separated from work, which causes feelings of lack of rest or feeling "connected" to work even outside of working hours. This condition requires female employees to be able to compromise in social or family activities to meet work demands, which can cause feelings of guilt or stress from not being able to meet expectations in both roles.

## Work-Life Balance Across Generations

Baby Boomers (1946-1964) 60-78 years old. Female *Baby Boomers employees* are entering retirement age and have a WLB with an average score of 68.02 with a high category. This generation has quite a long work experience and currently has a stable position in the world of work. Most of this generation have entered retirement age, except for specific functionalities. This generation has had much flexibility in arranging working hours and responsibilities compared to the younger generation, who are still ambitious and pursuing a career. Traditional family and work roles emphasise the importance of family and work in the workplace for this generation. Technology and adaptation have made it easier for this

generation to use technology to maintain work-life balance. Although not all *Baby Boomers* have good WLB, various factors can help them achieve better WLB than other generations.

Generation X (1965-1980) 44-59 years. This generation has gone through a critical period in women's productive age (pregnancy, breastfeeding, childcare). However, this generation has a WLB with an average score of 46.34, a low category. Their time tends to be busier to build a career. Some are entering the productive age stage to get a promotion to a higher level. This generation often needs to work harder to maintain financial stability and care for children and ageing parents. Dual responsibilities can burden them, making WLB more challenging to achieve. They are trying to adapt to technological developments such as email, *zoom meetings*, and various other applications. This generation has high expectations for professional success while maintaining a balanced family life. The combination of these high expectations increases work stress. A challenging culture with a strict ethos and often seeing their parents working tends to lead them to spend more time working than other generations who may be more focused on life balance. Economic and social transitions and shifts from traditional manufacturing jobs and long-term careers bring a new perspective that uncertainty and high needs make this generation increase the demanding workload and reduce the time for personal life so that WLB is low.

Millennial Generation (1981-1996) 28-43 years old. Female employees of this generation are in a critical position of productive age (marriage, pregnancy, breastfeeding, childcare). Nationally, their number dominates the total number of female employees. This generation has a WLB with an average score of 44.68, a low category. Work-life balance is essential for the younger generation, involving various factors such as work culture, digital technology, and social media. Technology, such as email and social media, makes many young people responsible for their work needs, especially in remote work. The economic conditions of this generation require more work to maintain their position and financial stability, which can impact their work-life balance. The new view of long working hours and high productivity as the means to success encourages this generation to work hard, often sacrificing their need for rest and relationships.

Generation Z (1997-2012) 12-27 years old. Female employees of this generation are not in critical positions but are entering productive age (married, pregnant, breastfeeding, raising children). This generation has WLB with an average score of 68.27, a high category. Generation Z is still free for work and family activities (dual roles). Generation Z has a good WLB compared to before because of this generation's high awareness of mental health, growing up in an era where mental health is an open topic to discuss and appreciate. They are more aware of the importance of maintaining mental health and tend to prioritise their well-being outside of work. Expectations of flexibility from the workplace have expectations of flexibility compared to previous generations. This generation grows up with digital technology, so there is potential to increase productivity, enable more efficient work, and still integrate it with personal life (Mahmudah & Asnawi, 2022).

This study supports previous studies that state that WLB positively impacts personal life, productivity, and work commitment (Sulphay & Faisal, 2020; Uddin., 2023). This study also highlights the importance of WLB in increasing intrinsic motivation, psychological well-being, and career satisfaction (Pan & Sun, 2022; Nath & Dwivedi, 2020; Yu, 2022). In addition to individual female employees, organisations also need to prioritise WLB in the

workplace to support productivity and reduce work stress. The results of this study support WLB is significant for personal and professional development (Sultana et al., 2023; Lendák-Kabók, 2022; Dapiton et al., 2023; Munyeka & Maharaj, 2022) in previous studies.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The results of the study indicate differences in the levels of work-life balance (WLB) among female employees across generations in Indonesia. The Baby Boomer generation (1946–1964), currently aged 60–78 years, and Generation Z (1997–2012), aged 12–27 years, tend to have high levels of WLB. In contrast, Generation X (1965–1980), aged 44–59 years, and the Millennial generation (1981–1996), aged 28–43 years, experience lower WLB. This imbalance is largely due to the burden of dual roles, as many women in these generations are simultaneously managing work responsibilities and family obligations. Baby Boomer women generally enjoy better WLB as they are approaching or have entered retirement, are no longer pursuing intensive career goals, and their children are typically grown and independent. They are advised to engage in positive activities such as retirement planning, social involvement, and health maintenance to prevent isolation and ensure continued well-being. Generation X women, while still active in both family and professional life, may benefit from engaging in leisure and self-care activities, as well as receiving organizational support to reduce stress. Millennial women face the most pressure, as they are in a critical stage of life that involves marriage, pregnancy, child-rearing, and peak career demands. To improve their WLB, they need both personal coping strategies and institutional support through flexible work policies and family-friendly environments. Meanwhile, Generation Z women generally have fewer family responsibilities and are still building their careers, allowing them greater flexibility and a more balanced lifestyle. However, as they transition into more demanding life phases, they are encouraged to cultivate time management, emotional resilience, and future planning skills.

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