

THE MEDIATING ROLE OF JOB SATISFACTION IN THE EFFECT OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AT THE REGIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY TIRTA TOHLANGKIR

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Abstract: Regional Public Company Tirta Tohlangkir is currently experiencing difficulties in fostering optimal employee engagement, which stem from factors such as excessive workloads, limited participation in organizational decision-making, and a workplace atmosphere that impedes productivity. This study seeks to examine the mediating function of job satisfaction in the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement within the organization. Employing a purposive sampling method, the study involved 92 employees as research participants. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews, then analyzed using both descriptive statistics and inferential analysis through Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The empirical results reveal that work-life balance significantly and positively influences employee engagement. Furthermore, a well-maintained work-life balance also enhances job satisfaction, which in turn significantly boosts employee engagement. The analysis confirms that job satisfaction plays a mediating role in the linkage between work-life balance and employee engagement. From a theoretical standpoint, this research supports the relevance of social exchange theory in the field of organizational behavior. Practically, the findings provide valuable insights for developing strategies to improve employee engagement, particularly through enhancing job satisfaction and achieving a better balance between professional and personal life.

Keywords: work-life balance, job satisfaction, employee engagement

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, organizations are required to maintain a competitive edge in order to sustain their operations. Achieving this requires effective management of human resources (HR), as companies that successfully cultivate competitive advantages and outperform their rivals are typically those with strong HR practices (Asjari & Gunawan, 2022). As noted by Darmadi (2022), the strategic management of human capital is a fundamental component in enhancing competitiveness and securing long-term organizational success.

Human resources represent productive individuals who serve as the engine behind organizational performance. As valuable organizational assets, they necessitate ongoing training and development to optimize their potential (Yanwar

et al., 2024). The extent to which an organization can accomplish its objectives is largely dependent on the effectiveness of its human resources, whose contributions are central to driving performance outcomes.

While sufficient infrastructure and financial capital are important, they are not adequate on their own without skilled and capable human capital. As organizations grow, the need for maximizing HR efficiency becomes even more critical (Kamela et al., 2022). Hence, continuous development of human resources is essential to improving both individual and collective effectiveness within the organization (Yaqien et al., 2022; Rahayu & Sutrischastini, 2022).

High-quality human resources are closely linked to organizational achievement. Employees who are engaged tend to exhibit a strong sense of awareness, enthusiasm, collaboration, and loyalty, which in turn enhances overall productivity and commitment to organizational goals (Erwina & Amri, 2020; Aprilianingsih & Frianto, 2022).

In recent years, employee engagement has emerged as a focal point in HR management due to its direct correlation with organizational productivity and sustainability (Chairunnisa et al., 2023). Modern organizations require employees who are proactive, responsible, and dedicated to maintaining high performance standards (Kharismawan & Hayati, 2022). However, research indicates that only a small segment of the workforce consistently demonstrates genuine enthusiasm for their jobs (Antony & Nainggolan, 2021), highlighting the need to explore key drivers of engagement.

Employee engagement is conceptualized as a positive psychological attachment to the organization, reflected in commitment, involvement, and loyalty toward colleagues, leaders, and the organization as a whole (Chandra et al., 2024). It represents a motivational state in which employees are driven to perform beyond the minimum requirements (Tiong et al., 2023).

Grounded in Social Exchange Theory, the dynamic between employees and their organizations is viewed as reciprocal. Employees who perceive that they are supported and appreciated by their organization are more inclined to demonstrate higher levels of engagement (Widyantari & Wibawa, 2024). Factors such as a well-maintained work-life balance and elevated job satisfaction significantly strengthen this relationship (Novitasari & Dessyarti, 2022).

Work-life balance, defined as an individual's perceived equilibrium between work and personal life roles, has been recognized as a significant determinant of

employee engagement (Ramdhani & Rasto, 2021; Anjani & Murniyati, 2024). When this balance is disrupted, employees may experience decreased focus and reduced engagement (Yunandi, 2023; Siregar et al., 2022; Sopian et al., 2022; Wijayanto et al., 2022).

Job satisfaction, meanwhile, refers to the level of contentment individuals feel with their job roles (Baxi & Atre, 2024). Numerous studies have shown that job satisfaction has a close relationship with engagement; satisfied employees are more likely to adopt constructive work behaviors and contribute positively to organizational outcomes (Arianti et al., 2020; Syafitri & Irayanti, 2022).

Regional Public Company Tirta Tohlangkir, a water service provider in Karangasem Regency operating since 1976, currently serves more than 34,000 customers across eight service units with a workforce of 130 employees. The majority of these employees work in field units and engage directly with the public. This organizational structure significantly shapes levels of employee engagement.

Despite its vital public service role, Tirta Tohlangkir is confronted with issues affecting employee engagement. High job demands, restricted opportunities for employee participation in decision-making, and a workplace environment perceived as unsupportive have negatively impacted key engagement dimensions, namely vigor, dedication, and absorption.

Initial interviews suggest that current workplace conditions are not yet conducive to fostering high engagement. This underlines the urgency of investigating the factors that influence employee motivation, emotional investment, and involvement. Accordingly, this research is designed to explore the relationships between work-life balance, job satisfaction, and employee engagement in the context of Tirta Tohlangkir.

To address these challenges, this study is titled: “The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction in the Effect of Work-Life Balance on Employee Engagement at the Regional Public Company Tirta Tohlangkir.”

METHOD

This research adopts a **quantitative causal-associative approach** to investigate the influence of work-life balance on employee engagement, with job satisfaction positioned as a mediating variable, at Perumda Tirta Tohlangkir in Karangasem Regency. This methodological framework was selected due to its capacity to explain causal relationships among variables using quantitative data. The study focuses on three core constructs: work-life balance as the independent

variable, employee engagement as the dependent variable, and job satisfaction as the mediating variable. Each variable was operationalized through indicators adapted from prior empirical studies (Sugiyono, 2019; Irawan & Bagyo, 2022; Cahyadi, 2024).

The research population comprises all 130 employees of Perumda Tirta Tohlangkir, from which a sample of 92 individuals was selected using purposive sampling. Data collection was carried out through structured questionnaires and interviews, employing a Likert scale to measure responses. Instrument validity was assessed using Pearson correlation analysis, with all items demonstrating acceptable validity. Reliability testing, conducted using Cronbach's Alpha, revealed coefficient values exceeding 0.60 for all variables—indicating that the instruments used are both reliable and appropriate for data collection (Sugiyono, 2019).

To analyze the data, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach. This technique was used to assess both direct and indirect relationships among the variables. The measurement model was evaluated through tests of convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability. The structural (inner) model was further analyzed to assess path coefficients, and bootstrapping procedures were applied to evaluate the significance of the hypothesized relationships. Additionally, a mediation analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which job satisfaction significantly mediates the effect of work-life balance on employee engagement (Hair et al., 2017; Ghozali, 2021; Rahadi, 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

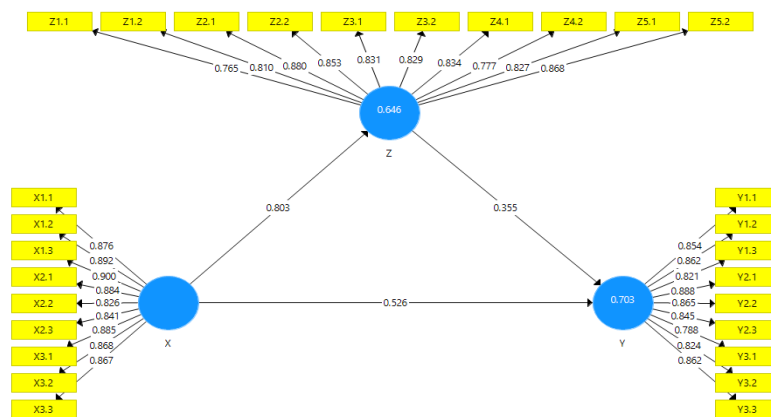
Inferential Analysis Results

Inferential statistics, also known as inductive or probability statistics, refer to analytical techniques used to evaluate the extent to which sample-based findings can be generalized to a broader population. In alignment with the research hypotheses, this study utilized inferential statistical analysis through the SmartPLS 3.0 software to test the proposed model and assess relationships among variables.

Inferential statistics served to interpret the data collected from a sample and draw conclusions applicable to the entire population. Specifically, this analysis aimed to validate hypotheses concerning the influence and mediation effects among the study variables. To achieve this, the study employed Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach, which is particularly effective for handling complex models with latent constructs and relatively small sample sizes.

Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS)

Figure 1. Structural Equation Model of the Research



Source: Data processed in 2025

1) Evaluation of Measurement Model or Outer Model

(1) Convergent Validity

Table 1. Outer Loadings

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values
X1. <- Work Life Balance	0.876	37,765	0.000
X2 <- Work Life Balance	0.892	28,275	0.000
X3 <- Work Life Balance	0.900	35,260	0.000
X4 <- Work Life Balance	0.884	41,172	0.000
X5 <- Work Life Balance	0.826	22,082	0.000
X6 <- Work Life Balance	0.841	23,252	0.000
X7 <- Work Life Balance	0.885	35,191	0.000
X8 <- Work Life Balance	0.868	29,179	0.000
X9 <- Work Life Balance	0.867	22,793	0.000
Y1 <- Employee Engagement	0.854	26,053	0.000
Y2 <- Employee Engagement	0.862	25,057	0.000
Y3 <- Employee Engagement	0.821	22,841	0.000
Y4 <- Employee Engagement	0.888	31,151	0.000
Y5 <- Employee Engagement	0.865	28,638	0.000
Y6 <- Employee Engagement	0.845	29,265	0.000
Y7 <- Employee Engagement	0.788	20,895	0.000
Y8 <- Employee Engagement	0.824	19,079	0.000
Y9 <- Employee Engagement	0.862	31,309	0.000
Z1 <- Job Satisfaction	0.765	15,233	0.000
Z2 <- Job Satisfaction	0.810	17,360	0.000
Z3 <- Job Satisfaction	0.880	26,170	0.000

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values
Z4 <- Job Satisfaction	0.853	24,724	0.000
Z5 <- Job Satisfaction	0.831	18,139	0.000
Z6 <- Job Satisfaction	0.829	19,357	0.000
Z7 <- Job Satisfaction	0.834	17,404	0.000
Z8 <- Job Satisfaction	0.777	17,201	0.000
Z9 <- Job Satisfaction	0.827	20,100	0.000
Z10 <- Job Satisfaction	0.868	22,768	0.000

Source: Data processed in 2025

Referring to Table 1, the output indicates that all variables—work-life balance, employee engagement, and job satisfaction have outer loading values exceeding the threshold of 0.70. This confirms that each indicator strongly reflects its respective latent construct. Therefore, it can be concluded that the model satisfies the requirements of convergent validity, and all three variables are considered valid in measuring the intended constructs.

(2) Discriminant Validity Using Cross Loading

Table 2. Cross Loading Results

	Work Life Balance	Employee Engagement	Job satisfaction
X1	0.876	0.745	0.663
X2	0.892	0.721	0.688
X3	0.900	0.739	0.720
X4	0.884	0.715	0.683
X5	0.826	0.643	0.660
X6	0.841	0.685	0.678
X7	0.885	0.689	0.706
X8	0.868	0.684	0.753
X9	0.867	0.736	0.743
Y1	0.675	0.854	0.661
Y2	0.645	0.862	0.650
Y3	0.730	0.821	0.665
Y4	0.755	0.888	0.709
Y5	0.687	0.865	0.637
Y6	0.683	0.845	0.689
Y7	0.650	0.788	0.623
Y8	0.660	0.824	0.645
Y9	0.680	0.862	0.635

	Work Life Balance	Employee Engagement	Job satisfaction
Z1	0.635	0.561	0.765
Z2	0.646	0.633	0.810
Z3	0.665	0.642	0.880
Z4	0.697	0.673	0.853
Z5	0.724	0.676	0.831
Z6	0.689	0.668	0.829
Z7	0.631	0.660	0.834
Z8	0.610	0.600	0.777
Z9	0.658	0.620	0.827
Z10	0.688	0.695	0.868

Source: Data processed in 2024

As presented in Table 2, the correlation values between each variable and its respective indicators are greater than their correlations with other constructs. Specifically, the indicators for work-life balance show stronger correlations with the work-life balance construct than with the constructs of employee engagement or job satisfaction. Similarly, the indicators for employee engagement correlate more strongly with their intended construct than with work-life balance or job satisfaction. The same pattern is observed for job satisfaction, whose indicators exhibit the highest correlation with the job satisfaction variable itself. These results confirm that each indicator has the highest loading on its corresponding latent construct, thereby supporting the discriminant validity of all variables in the model.

(3) Discriminant Validity Using Average Variance Extracted

Table 3. Average Variance Extracted Value

Research Variables	AVE
Work-life balance	0.759
Employee engagement	0.716
Job satisfaction	0.686

Source: Data processed in 2024

Referring to Table 3, it can be observed that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for the variables work-life balance, employee engagement, and job satisfaction all exceed the threshold of 0.50. This indicates that each construct possesses an acceptable level of convergent validity, thereby affirming that the measurement model demonstrates a good level of construct validity.

(4) Composite Reliability

Table 4 Composite reliability results

Variables	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	Information
Work-life balance	0.966	0.960	Reliable
Employee engagement	0.958	0.950	Reliable
Job satisfaction	0.956	0.949	Reliable

Source: Data processed in 2024

The composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values for the variables of work-life balance, employee engagement, and job satisfaction all exceeded the threshold of 0.70, indicating that the measurement instruments used in this study possess high internal consistency. Consequently, it can be concluded that the constructs demonstrate strong reliability and are deemed appropriate for further analysis.

2) Structural Model or Inner Model Evaluation

Table 5. R-square

Variables	R Square
Employee engagement	0.703
Job satisfaction	0.646

Source: Data processed in 2024

$$\begin{aligned} Q^2 &= 1 - (1 - R_{21})(1 - R_{22}) \\ &= 1 - (1 - 0.703)(1 - 0.646) \\ &= 1 - 0.105 = 0.895 \end{aligned}$$

The R-square value for employee engagement, which stands at 0.703, indicates that 70.3% of the variance in employee engagement can be explained by the combined influence of work-life balance and job satisfaction. The remaining 29.7% is attributed to other variables not included in the model. Similarly, the R-square value for job satisfaction is 0.646, signifying that 64.6% of the variation in job satisfaction is accounted for by work-life balance, while the other 35.4% is influenced by factors outside the scope of this study.

Based on the Q-Square Predictive Relevance (Q^2) criteria proposed by Latan and Ghazali (2015: 80), which assess the predictive power of the structural model, these values fall under the "very strong" category. This suggests that the model possesses robust explanatory capability and high predictive relevance for the studied constructs.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Original Sample	T Statistics	p values	Information
Direct Influence				
Work Life Balance-> Employee engagement	0.526	4,249	0.000	Accepted
Work-life balance-> Job satisfaction	0.803	15,353	0.000	Accepted
Job satisfaction -> Employee engagement	0.355	3,107	0.002	Accepted
Indirect Influence				
Work-life balance-> Job satisfaction -> Employee engagement	0.285	2,726	0.007	Accepted

Source: Data processed in 2024

The Effect of Work-Life Balance on Employee Engagement

Based on the analysis presented in Table 6, the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement yields a path coefficient of 0.526, with a t-value of 4.249 (greater than the critical value of 1.96) and a p-value of 0.000 (less than 0.05). These results confirm the acceptance of the hypothesis, indicating that a well-maintained work-life balance significantly enhances employee engagement at Perumda Tirta Tohlangkir.

The Effect of Work-Life Balance on Job Satisfaction

The influence of work-life balance on job satisfaction also shows a strong positive result, with a coefficient of 0.803, a t-statistic of 15.353, and a p-value of 0.000—well below the significance threshold. These values support the hypothesis that employees with a better work-life balance experience greater job satisfaction at Perumda Tirta Tohlangkir.

The Effect of Job Satisfaction on Employee Engagement

Furthermore, the analysis demonstrates that job satisfaction positively impacts employee engagement, with a coefficient of 0.355, a t-statistic of 3.107, and a p-value of 0.002. These findings validate the hypothesis, suggesting that higher job satisfaction contributes to increased employee engagement within the organization.

The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

As shown in Table 6, job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement with a coefficient of 0.285, a t-statistic of 2.726, and a p-value of 0.007. This mediation is statistically significant and

classified as partial mediation, indicating that job satisfaction serves as an indirect pathway while the direct influence of work-life balance on engagement remains substantial.

Discussion

Work-Life Balance and Employee Engagement

The results affirm that a well-maintained work-life balance plays a crucial role in fostering employee engagement. Employees who perceive a balance between their professional and personal lives are more likely to exhibit greater commitment and involvement at work. A supportive work-life dynamic allows individuals to maintain their health, rest adequately, and manage social and familial responsibilities. These outcomes enhance focus, efficiency, and organizational performance. This conclusion aligns with previous research by Siregar et al. (2022), Sopian et al. (2022), Wijayanto et al. (2022), Ratnasari et al. (2023), Ambalika et al. (2024), and Priyambodo et al. (2024), all of whom found a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement.

Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction

The study also confirms that work-life balance contributes significantly to job satisfaction. Employees who feel that they can manage their professional duties without compromising personal life report higher satisfaction levels. These findings are consistent with those of Silaban & Margaretha (2021), Rony & Yulisyahyanti (2022), Permadi et al. (2023), Indra & Rialmi (2022), Kurniasari & Bahjahtullah (2022), and Suparman & Wirayudha (2023), who highlighted that a balanced lifestyle enhances workplace contentment.

Job Satisfaction and Employee Engagement

Satisfied employees tend to demonstrate stronger emotional and psychological investment in their work. The findings support the notion that job satisfaction leads to increased engagement, resonating with the results of studies by Halias & Prahara (2020), Utami (2021), Rachmawati et al. (2023), Ratnasari et al. (2023), Sukmawati et al. (2024), and Widyantari & Wibawa (2024).

The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction acts as a significant intermediary in the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement. This suggests that while work-life balance has a direct influence, its indirect effect through increased job satisfaction further strengthens employee engagement. These insights are consistent with

findings by Siregar et al. (2022), Rachmawati et al. (2023), Sukmawati et al. (2024), Wibowo & Munir (2023), and Atlennur & Arianto (2024).

Mediation Analysis

The use of PLS-SEM in this study enabled the exploration of mediation effects. The direct effect of work-life balance on employee engagement was statistically significant ($t = 4.249$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that engagement can be influenced independently of the mediating variable. However, the indirect effect through job satisfaction ($t = 2.726$, $p = 0.007$) further confirms its role as a **partial mediator**, meaning that job satisfaction complements but does not fully account for the relationship between work-life balance and engagement.

CONCLUSION

From the findings obtained, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Work-life balance has a significant and positive impact on employee engagement, suggesting that employees who perceive better balance between their work and personal lives tend to be more engaged in their roles.
2. Work-life balance significantly enhances job satisfaction, indicating that employees feel more content when their personal and professional lives are in harmony.
3. Job satisfaction positively affects employee engagement, meaning that content and satisfied employees are more likely to exhibit enthusiasm, commitment, and loyalty to the organization.
4. Job satisfaction partially mediates the influence of work-life balance on employee engagement, highlighting that fostering satisfaction through balanced work-life practices can effectively enhance engagement levels.

These findings underscore the importance of integrating work-life initiatives and satisfaction-driven strategies into organizational policies to sustain high employee engagement.

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