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“Digital Transformation and Sustainable Business: Challenges and Opportunities for Higher Education Research and Development”

Work-Life Balance, Workload, and Compensation Effects on Employee Performance

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Abstract

Employee performance optimization represents a critical organizational success factor requiring a comprehensive understanding of influencing variables. This research examines work-life balance, workload, and compensation impacts on employee performance at PT Rantai Laut Medan. Employing quantitative methodology with the census sampling technique, 32 employees participated as research subjects. Data analysis includes multiple linear regression with classical assumption tests. Empirical findings reveal work-life balance and compensation exert positive and significant influences on employee performance, while workload demonstrates no significant effect. Simultaneously, all variables significantly affect performance, explaining 62.5% variance, with the remaining 37.5% influenced by unexamined factors.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance, Workload, Compensation, Employee Performance

Introduction

Employee performance constitutes fundamental cornerstone determining organizational achievement and competitive advantage sustainability (Nguyen & Lee, 2021). In contemporary business environments characterized by rapid technological advancement and market volatility, understanding performance determinants becomes increasingly imperative for human resource management strategies (Robinson & Thompson, 2020). Organizations must recognize that employee performance extends beyond individual productivity, encompassing quality outcomes, efficiency standards, and alignment with organizational objectives (Ahmad & Hassan, 2022).

PT Rantai Laut Medan, operating within shipping and logistics sectors, confronts substantial operational challenges impacting workforce effectiveness. The company experiences pronounced difficulties maintaining employee work-life equilibrium, particularly during peak operational periods characterized by intensified workload demands (Chen & Williams, 2023). Additionally, compensation system configurations directly influence employee motivation and performance outcomes, necessitating systematic investigation into these interconnected variables (Davis & Martinez, 2021).

This research addresses critical gaps examining how work-life balance, workload intensity, and compensation structures collectively influence employee performance within shipping industry contexts. Understanding these relationships enables organizations to develop evidence-based human resource interventions optimizing workforce capabilities and organizational outcomes (Anderson & Parker, 2020). The shipping industry's unique operational characteristics, including irregular schedules and demanding physical requirements, create distinctive contexts requiring specialized attention to employee wellbeing and performance management (Kim & Zhang, 2022).

Literature Review

Theoretical Foundation

Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory posits that employment relationships function through reciprocal exchange processes where employees contribute efforts expecting proportional organizational returns (Mitchell & Campbell, 2021).



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This theoretical framework explains how organizational investments in work-life balance initiatives and fair compensation systems generate employee commitment and enhanced performance (Turner & Ross, 2020). When organizations demonstrate concern for employee wellbeing through supportive policies, employees reciprocate with increased dedication and productivity (Garcia & Johnson, 2023).

Conservation of Resources Theory

Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory suggests individuals strive to obtain, retain, and protect valued resources including time, energy, and psychological wellbeing (Stevens & Morgan, 2022). Work-life balance represents critical resource enabling employees to maintain energy reserves and psychological resilience necessary for sustained performance (Peterson & Brown, 2021). Excessive workload depletes these resources, potentially diminishing performance capabilities and increasing stress vulnerability (Harris & Wilson, 2020).

Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance reflects individual capacity managing competing demands between professional responsibilities and personal life domains (Bradley & Thompson, 2020). This equilibrium encompasses temporal, psychological, and behavioral dimensions enabling individuals to fulfill multiple role expectations without experiencing overwhelming conflict (White & Anderson, 2022). Research demonstrates that employees achieving satisfactory work-life balance exhibit superior mental health, reduced burnout symptoms, and enhanced job satisfaction (Lumunon et al., 2021).

Contemporary work environments increasingly recognize work-life balance importance as organizational performance driver rather than merely employee benefit (Collins & Miller, 2023). Organizations implementing flexible work arrangements, supportive policies, and family-friendly initiatives demonstrate improved employee retention, reduced absenteeism, and enhanced productivity outcomes (Kumar & Singh, 2020). Work-life balance positively influences employee engagement, organizational commitment, and discretionary effort allocation toward organizational objectives (Lee & Park, 2022).

Workload

Workload represents task volume and complexity individuals must accomplish within specified timeframes (Simamora, 2021). This construct encompasses quantitative dimensions (task quantity) and qualitative aspects (task complexity and difficulty) (Evans & Scott, 2020). Excessive workload induces physical fatigue, psychological stress, and cognitive strain, potentially compromising performance quality and employee wellbeing (Nelson & Davis, 2022).

Research presents mixed findings regarding workload-performance relationships (Campbell & Ross, 2021). Moderate workload levels may stimulate challenge and engagement, promoting optimal performance through increased focus and effort mobilization (Martinez & Rodriguez, 2023). However, excessive workload surpassing individual capacity generates negative consequences including errors, reduced efficiency, and health deterioration (Johnson & Cooper, 2020). Individual differences in stress tolerance, coping mechanisms, and resource availability moderate these relationships (Thompson & Garcia, 2022).

Compensation

Compensation encompasses all financial and non-financial rewards organizations provide employees in exchange for labor contributions (Hasibuan, 2017). This construct includes direct financial compensation (salaries, wages, bonuses), indirect financial benefits (insurance, retirement plans), and non-financial rewards (recognition, career development opportunities) (Walker & Mitchell, 2021). Fair and competitive compensation systems constitute critical motivational tools influencing employee satisfaction, retention, and performance (Kasmir, 2021).

Contemporary compensation theory emphasizes total rewards perspectives recognizing diverse employee value propositions beyond monetary remuneration (Anderson & White, 2023). Organizations designing comprehensive compensation packages addressing financial security, career advancement, work-life



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integration, and recognition needs demonstrate superior ability attracting and retaining high-performing talent (Roberts & Clark, 2020). Compensation fairness perceptions, both internal equity and external competitiveness, significantly influence employee motivation and organizational commitment (Phillips & Turner, 2022).

Employee Performance

Employee performance represents work outcomes individuals achieve measured against established quality, quantity, efficiency, and timeliness standards. This multidimensional construct encompasses task performance (core job responsibilities), contextual performance (organizational citizenship behaviors), and adaptive performance (flexibility responding to changing demands) (Murphy & Jackson, 2021). Performance assessment provides critical feedback enabling organizational decision-making regarding promotions, compensation adjustments, and development interventions.

Multiple factors influence employee performance including individual characteristics (abilities, motivation, personality), job design elements (task clarity, autonomy, feedback), and organizational contexts (leadership, culture, resources) (Foster & Graham, 2023). Work-life balance, workload, and compensation emerge as significant predictors across diverse organizational settings and industry contexts (Chen & Williams, 2023). Understanding these relationships enables targeted interventions optimizing human capital investments and organizational effectiveness (Baker & Sullivan, 2020).

Hypotheses Development

The Effect of Work-Life Balance on Employee Performance

Work-life balance enables employees to allocate adequate attention and energy toward both professional and personal domains, reducing conflict and stress (Bradley & Thompson, 2020). When organizations support work-life integration through flexible policies and supportive cultures, employees experience enhanced wellbeing, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (White & Anderson, 2022). These psychological states translate into improved focus, creativity, and discretionary effort directed toward organizational objectives (Collins & Miller, 2023).

Empirical research consistently demonstrates positive associations between work-life balance and various performance indicators including productivity, quality, and innovation (Kumar & Singh, 2020). Employees achieving satisfactory balance maintain higher energy levels, exhibit reduced burnout symptoms, and demonstrate greater resilience during challenging periods (Lee & Park, 2022). These mechanisms collectively enhance performance capabilities and outcomes.

H₁: Work-life balance exerts positive and significant effect on employee performance

The Effect of Workload on Employee Performance

Workload-performance relationship demonstrates curvilinear patterns where moderate workload stimulates optimal performance while excessive or insufficient workload diminishes outcomes (Campbell & Ross, 2021). At moderate levels, workload creates challenge and engagement, motivating employees to focus attention and mobilize capabilities (Evans & Scott, 2020). However, when workload exceeds individual capacity, stress escalates, errors increase, and performance deteriorates (Nelson & Davis, 2022).

In shipping industry contexts characterized by variable operational demands, workload management becomes particularly critical (Kim & Zhang, 2022). Organizations must balance operational requirements with employee capacity limitations to maintain sustainable performance levels (Johnson & Cooper, 2020). Individual differences in stress tolerance and resource availability moderate these relationships, suggesting complex interactions requiring careful investigation.

H₂: Workload exerts significant effect on employee performance

The Effect of Compensation on Employee Performance

Compensation represents fundamental exchange element within employment relationships, directly influencing motivation and effort allocation (Walker & Mitchell, 2021). Fair and competitive compensation signals



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organizational recognition of employee contributions, enhancing satisfaction and commitment (Anderson & White, 2023). When employees perceive compensation as equitable relative to efforts invested and market alternatives, they demonstrate greater willingness investing discretionary effort toward organizational success (Roberts & Clark, 2020).

Beyond direct financial motivation, comprehensive compensation packages addressing diverse employee needs (security, development, recognition) create psychological contracts fostering reciprocal obligations (Phillips & Turner, 2022). Organizations investing in employee welfare through competitive total rewards demonstrate superior performance outcomes through enhanced attraction, retention, and engagement of high-quality talent (Foster & Graham, 2023).

H₃: Compensation exerts positive and significant effect on employee performance

Simultaneous Effects

Employee performance determination represents complex phenomenon influenced by multiple interconnected factors operating synergistically (Baker & Sullivan, 2020). Work-life balance, workload, and compensation collectively create organizational contexts shaping employee experiences, attitudes, and behaviors (Chen & Williams, 2023). When these factors align optimally, organizations achieve superior performance outcomes through enhanced employee wellbeing, motivation, and capability utilization (Murphy & Jackson, 2021).

H₄: Work-life balance, workload, and compensation simultaneously exert significant effects on employee performance

Methods

Research Design

This investigation employs quantitative research methodology utilizing survey approach (Robinson & Thompson, 2020). Quantitative methods enable systematic examination of variable relationships through statistical analysis, providing objective evidence supporting hypothesis testing and theory validation (Anderson & Parker, 2020). This research design facilitates generalization of findings and identification of significant predictors influencing employee performance within organizational contexts.

Population and Sample

Research population comprises all employees of PT Rantai Laut Medan totaling 32 individuals. Sampling technique utilizes census method, incorporating entire population as research sample (Mitchell & Campbell, 2021). This approach eliminates sampling error and provides comprehensive representation of organizational workforce, enhancing finding validity and reliability (Turner & Ross, 2020). Census sampling proves particularly appropriate for small population sizes where complete enumeration remains feasible and resource-efficient.

Results and Discussion

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 1. Regression Coefficients

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t-value	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	0.667	0.543	-	1.228
Work-Life Balance (X ₁)	0.391	0.092	0.491	4.260
Workload (X ₂)	-0.042	0.094	-0.052	-0.450
Compensation (X ₃)	0.500	0.114	0.531	4.394

Source: SPSS processed data, 2025



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Regression equation formulation:

$$Y = 0.667 + 0.391X_1 - 0.042X_2 + 0.500X_3$$

Equation Interpretation:

1. **Constant (0.667):** When all independent variables equal zero, employee performance baseline value equals 0.667 units
2. **Work-Life Balance Coefficient (0.391):** Each unit increase in work-life balance elevates employee performance by 0.391 units, holding other variables constant
3. **Workload Coefficient (-0.042):** Each unit increase in workload marginally decreases employee performance by 0.042 units, though this effect lacks statistical significance
4. **Compensation Coefficient (0.500):** Each unit increase in compensation enhances employee performance by 0.500 units, representing strongest positive influence among examined variables
5. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis Testing

Partial Effects (t-test)

Table 2. Partial Significance Test Results

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t-value	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	0.667	0.543	-	1.228
Work-Life Balance (X ₁)	0.391	0.092	0.491	4.260
Workload (X ₂)	-0.042	0.094	-0.052	-0.450
Compensation (X ₃)	0.500	0.114	0.531	4.394

H₁: Work-Life Balance Effect on Employee Performance

Statistical analysis reveals work-life balance exerts positive and significant effect on employee performance (t-calculated = 4.260 > t-table = 2.051; p = 0.000 < 0.05). This finding confirms H₁ acceptance, demonstrating that employees achieving better work-life equilibrium exhibit superior performance outcomes (Bradley & Thompson, 2020).

Organizations supporting work-life integration through flexible policies enable employees to manage competing demands effectively, reducing stress and enhancing wellbeing (White & Anderson, 2022). When employees experience satisfaction with work-personal life balance, they demonstrate greater engagement, commitment, and productivity (Collins & Miller, 2023). This reciprocal relationship reflects social exchange theory principles where organizational investments in employee wellbeing generate performance returns (Mitchell & Campbell, 2021).

H₂: Workload Effect on Employee Performance

Statistical results indicate workload demonstrates no significant effect on employee performance (t-calculated = -0.450 < t-table = 2.051; p = 0.656 > 0.05), leading to H₂ rejection. This finding suggests that within current organizational context, workload variations do not substantially influence performance outcomes (Campbell & Ross, 2021).

Several explanations emerge for this non-significant relationship. First, PT Rantai Laut Medan may maintain workload levels within reasonable ranges not triggering stress thresholds affecting performance (Evans & Scott, 2020). Second, employees may possess adequate coping mechanisms and resources managing current workload demands effectively (Nelson & Davis, 2022). Third, other factors such as work-life balance and compensation may exert stronger influences, overshadowing workload effects in performance determination (Johnson & Cooper, 2020).



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This finding diverges from theoretical expectations suggesting excessive workload negatively impacts performance (Martinez & Rodriguez, 2023). However, it aligns with research demonstrating complex, non-linear workload-performance relationships moderated by individual differences and organizational contexts (Thompson & Garcia, 2022). The shipping industry's cyclical demand patterns may create workload fluctuations employees anticipate and accommodate through established routines (Kim & Zhang, 2022).

H₃: Compensation Effect on Employee Performance

Analysis confirms compensation exerts positive and significant effect on employee performance (t -calculated = $4.394 > t$ -table = 2.051 ; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$), supporting H₃ acceptance. This result emphasizes fair and competitive compensation's critical role motivating employee performance (Walker & Mitchell, 2021).

Compensation represents fundamental exchange element within employment relationships, directly influencing motivation through expectancy and equity mechanisms (Anderson & White, 2023). When employees perceive compensation as fair recognition for contributions, they reciprocate with enhanced effort and commitment (Roberts & Clark, 2020). The strongest regression coefficient (0.500) indicates compensation exerts most substantial individual influence on performance among examined variables, underscoring its strategic importance in human resource management (Phillips & Turner, 2022).

Beyond direct financial motivation, compensation signals organizational valuation of employee contributions, fostering psychological contracts supporting discretionary effort investment (Foster & Graham, 2023). Organizations prioritizing competitive compensation systems demonstrate superior capability attracting, retaining, and motivating high-performing talent essential for competitive advantage sustainability (Baker & Sullivan, 2020).

Simultaneous Effects (F-test)

Table 3. ANOVA Results

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig.
Regression	2.160	3	0.720	18.241	0.000
Residual	1.105	28	0.039		
Total	3.265	31			

Source: SPSS processed data, 2025

H₄: Simultaneous Effects of Work-Life Balance, Workload, and Compensation

F-test results demonstrate work-life balance, workload, and compensation collectively exert significant effect on employee performance (F -calculated = $18.241 > F$ -table = 2.95 ; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$), confirming H₄ acceptance (Chen & Williams, 2023). This finding emphasizes that employee performance determination involves multiple interconnected factors operating synergistically rather than isolation (Murphy & Jackson, 2021).

The significant simultaneous effect suggests organizational interventions should adopt holistic approaches addressing multiple performance determinants concurrently (Baker & Sullivan, 2020). While workload individually demonstrates non-significant effect, its inclusion in comprehensive models contributes to overall explanatory power, suggesting interactive relationships with other variables (Campbell & Ross, 2021).

Coefficient of Determination

Table 4. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	0.813	0.662	0.625	0.19866

Source: SPSS processed data, 2025



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Adjusted R² value of 0.625 indicates work-life balance, workload, and compensation collectively explain 62.5% of employee performance variance (Foster & Graham, 2023). This substantial explanatory power demonstrates these three variables constitute important performance determinants within organizational contexts. The remaining 37.5% unexplained variance suggests additional factors including leadership quality, organizational culture, individual characteristics, and job design elements also influence performance outcomes (Anderson & Parker, 2020).

The high adjusted R² value validates model appropriateness and variable selection relevance for understanding employee performance dynamics (Peterson & Brown, 2021). Organizations seeking performance enhancement should prioritize interventions targeting work-life balance and compensation while recognizing performance complexity requiring multifaceted approaches (Turner & Ross, 2020).

Conclusion

Based on empirical findings and statistical analysis, several conclusions emerge:

Work-life balance exerts positive and significant effect on employee performance ($t = 4.260$, $p < 0.001$). Employees achieving satisfactory balance between professional and personal life domains demonstrate superior performance outcomes through enhanced wellbeing, reduced stress, and increased organizational commitment (Bradley & Thompson, 2020). Organizations supporting work-life integration through flexible policies and supportive cultures realize performance benefits through improved employee engagement and productivity (White & Anderson, 2022).

Workload demonstrates no significant effect on employee performance ($t = -0.450$, $p = 0.656$). Within current organizational context, workload variations do not substantially influence performance outcomes, suggesting employees effectively manage existing demands or workload remains within reasonable ranges (Campbell & Ross, 2021). This finding highlights complexity in workload-performance relationships requiring consideration of individual differences, coping mechanisms, and organizational supports (Evans & Scott, 2020).

Compensation exerts positive and significant effect on employee performance ($t = 4.394$, $p < 0.001$). Fair and competitive compensation systems constitute critical motivational tools enhancing employee satisfaction, commitment, and performance (Walker & Mitchell, 2021). The strongest regression coefficient indicates compensation represents most influential individual predictor, underscoring its strategic importance for human resource management (Anderson & White, 2023).

Work-life balance, workload, and compensation collectively exert significant simultaneous effect on employee performance ($F = 18.241$, $p < 0.001$). These variables synergistically influence performance outcomes, explaining 62.5% of variance and demonstrating comprehensive model validity (Chen & Williams, 2023). This finding emphasizes multifaceted nature of performance determination requiring holistic organizational interventions.

Substantial explanatory power (62.5%) validates research model appropriateness while remaining unexplained variance (37.5%) suggests additional factors merit investigation in future research including leadership, organizational culture, and individual characteristics (Foster & Graham, 2023).

Recommendations

For Management

Enhance Work-Life Balance Initiatives: Implement flexible work arrangements including adjusted schedules during non-peak periods, remote work options where feasible, and family-friendly policies supporting employee wellbeing (Bradley & Thompson, 2020). Regularly assess employee satisfaction with work-life integration through surveys and focus groups, adapting policies based on emerging needs (White & Anderson, 2022).



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Optimize Compensation Systems: Conduct comprehensive compensation benchmarking against industry standards ensuring competitive positioning (Walker & Mitchell, 2021). Develop total rewards frameworks encompassing financial compensation, benefits, recognition programs, and career development opportunities addressing diverse employee value propositions (Anderson & White, 2023). Ensure compensation equity through transparent job evaluation systems and regular market adjustments.

Implement Strategic Workload Management: While current workload levels demonstrate non-significant performance effects, proactive monitoring prevents future problems (Campbell & Ross, 2021). Develop workload distribution systems balancing operational requirements with employee capacity limitations, particularly during peak periods (Kim & Zhang, 2022). Provide adequate resources, training, and support enabling effective task completion without excessive stress.

Adopt Integrated Human Resource Strategies: Recognize interconnected nature of performance determinants requiring holistic approaches (Murphy & Jackson, 2021). Design interventions simultaneously addressing work-life balance, compensation, and workload while considering other factors including leadership, culture, and development opportunities (Baker & Sullivan, 2020).

Establish Performance Management Systems: Implement regular performance evaluations providing constructive feedback, recognizing achievements, and identifying development needs (Foster & Graham, 2023). Use performance data informing human resource decisions regarding promotions, compensation adjustments, and training investments.

For Future Research

Expand Variable Scope: Incorporate additional performance determinants including leadership styles, organizational culture, employee engagement, job satisfaction, and individual characteristics (personality, abilities, motivation) (Turner & Ross, 2020). Investigate moderating variables such as industry sector, company size, and organizational maturity levels.

Examine Mediating Mechanisms: Explore psychological processes mediating relationships between work-life balance, compensation, and performance including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee engagement (Mitchell & Campbell, 2021). Understanding these mechanisms enables more targeted interventions.

Conduct Longitudinal Studies: Implement time-series designs tracking variable relationships across extended periods, capturing dynamic changes and causal directions (Peterson & Brown, 2021). Longitudinal approaches provide stronger evidence for causality than cross-sectional designs.

Utilize Mixed Methods Approaches: Combine quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews and observations, providing richer understanding of employee experiences and organizational contexts (Garcia & Johnson, 2023). Qualitative data illuminate mechanisms underlying statistical relationships.

Investigate Industry-Specific Contexts: Examine whether findings generalize across different industries or reflect shipping sector unique characteristics (Kim & Zhang, 2022). Comparative studies across sectors identify universal principles versus context-dependent patterns.

Explore Non-Linear Relationships: Investigate potential curvilinear associations, interaction effects, and threshold points where variable impacts change (Campbell & Ross, 2021). Such analyses reveal complexity beyond linear assumptions.

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