Employee Perceptions of Work-Life Balance and Its Implications for Decision-Making and Performance: A Study at PT Roti Dewi Bandung in Mbawi Village, Dompu Regency

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Abstract. This study aims to explore employees' perceptions of work-life balance and its implications for decision-making and performance at PT Roti Dewi Bandung. The research employed a descriptive qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews with three key informants. The results indicate that work-life balance is not yet optimal due to high workloads, long working hours, and limited flexibility. This imbalance negatively affects decision-making leading to hasty and unfocused actions and decreases performance due to fatigue and emotional strain. Although the company provides support such as leave flexibility, it is insufficient to ensure a holistic balance. This study contributes to understanding work-life dynamics in small rural enterprises and suggests more humane and adaptive workplace policy reform.

Keywords: *Work-Life Balance, Decision-Making, Performance, Employee Perception, PT Roti Dewi Bandung.*

INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of the contemporary workplace demonstrate significant transformations characterized by increased productivity demands, massive technology penetration, and increasingly high company expectations for performance. In this context, work-life balance (WLB) has become a central issue in human resource management, as it is closely related to the psychological well-being, well-being, and sustainability of employees' work activities (Putri & Sari, 2023). When the boundaries between professional and personal roles become blurred, this can lead to emotional exhaustion, chronic stress, and ongoing role conflict, disrupting organizational dynamics (Rahmawati, 2022).

In Indonesia, the discourse on WLB is growing, particularly in the context of the post-pandemic workplace and changing values in urban and semi-urban communities. A national study by Siregar et al. (2023) found that nearly half of industrial workers experience work stress due to unclear working hours and a mismatch between workload and individual capacity. This highlights a profound need to understand how individuals perceive and construct meaning around their work-life balance.

A similar reality emerges in the context of small and medium-sized companies operating in rural areas, such as PT Roti Bandung, located in Mbawi Village, Dompu Regency. Initial observations indicate that most employees face challenges in separating work time from personal time, influenced by work patterns that require long hours, a daily target-based system, and minimal flexibility in work policies. The tension that arises between these two life roles then becomes a major source of disruption to work well-being, both psychologically and socially.

In organizational settings, employees' experiences in establishing work-life balance are not only related to time management but also to how they understand the roles of work and family as part of their identity. Gunawan and Permana (2021) note that personal perceptions of work-life balance are often subjective and shaped by social context, work culture, and individual values. Therefore, an approach that explores employees' subjective meanings and direct experiences is crucial in understanding how they approach work-life balance in their daily work.

Furthermore, narratives about WLB demonstrate a close relationship with how employees respond to work situations, manage the burden of responsibility, and make decisions in challenging situations. Fauziah and Hartono (2023) found that employees who experience stable balance tend to demonstrate a more reflective, self-aware, and cooperative approach to work in interactions with coworkers and superiors. In a small business environment like PT Roti Bandung, where communication and interpersonal relationships are crucial for the continuity of daily operations, this experience is important to explore further.

However, most studies on WLB still focus on large companies and urban areas, while the socio-cultural dimensions of WLB in the context of small work communities in areas like Dompu have not received much in-depth study. Lestari and Kurniawan (2020) emphasize the need for a research approach that captures local dynamics and individual experiences in a more inclusive and participatory context. This indicates an under-explored research gap and serves as the primary foundation for this study.

This research was designed to provide new insights into how employees construct perceptions and experiences of work-life balance, particularly within the context of local organizations. Using a qualitative approach, this research seeks to explore employees' narrative experiences in depth and understand the dynamics of work-life balance as a construct of meaning shaped by the interaction between the individual, the work environment, and local social conditions.

The urgency of this research lies not only in its contribution to expanding the academic discourse on WLB, but also in providing practical input for company managers, such as PT Roti Bandung, in creating a more humane work system. By recognizing the authentic perceptions and experiences of employees, companies can design work management strategies that align with the well-being and values of their employees in a contextual manner.

Based on the description, this study aims to explore employees' perceptions and experiences in building a balance between work life and personal life, and to understand how these experiences shape the way they make decisions and carry out work roles in the PT Roti Bandung environment, Mbawi Village, Dompu Regency.

LIBRARY STUDY
Employee perception

Perception is the process by which individuals capture, interpret, and give meaning to information and their environment (Robbins & Judge, 2017). In an organizational context, employee perception greatly influences how they understand company policies, work situations, and work-life balance. Employees' perceptions of this balance will influence their attitudes, motivation, and performance at work.

Work-life balance and personal life
(work-life balance)

Work-life balance and personal life *(Work-life balance)* is defined as the degree to which an individual is able to meet the demands of work and personal life in a balanced manner (Clark, 2017). Imbalance can occur when work demands interfere with personal life. *(Work-to-family conflict)* or vice versa *(family-to-work conflict)* (Frone, 2003). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) stated that work-life balance has three main dimensions: time, pressure, and behavior. Employees who are able to maintain this balance tend to have lower stress, higher loyalty, and better productivity.

Implications of work balance on decision making

Decision making is a cognitive process in choosing an action among several alternatives. When work-life balance is disturbed, employees tend to experience

mental fatigue, stress, and decreased focus which impacts the quality of decision making (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2020). According to Drucker (2018), the quality of decisions is greatly influenced by the psychological condition of decision making. Thus, a good work-personal balance can be a foundation in sharpening employees' intuition, logic, and consideration in making effective decisions in the workplace.

Implications of work-life balance on employee performance

Employee performance refers to the achievement of tasks or work that meets the standards set by the organization (Mangkunegara, 2016). Balance between work and personal life contributes to increased job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and work morale (Hill et al., 2018). A study by Haar et al. (2017) showed that employees who experience work-life balance have higher performance compared to those who are emotionally and mentally unbalanced and can work more focused and productively.

Indicator

The main reference source supporting this indicator is Greenhaus, J. H., & Allen, T. D. (2011) in Work-family balance: A review and extension of the literature which emphasizes the importance of balance between work and personal life demands in influencing employee decisions and performance, namely: perception of work-life balance which includes understanding the meaning of balance, assessment of current conditions, and supporting and inhibiting factors; implications of balance on decision making which include the impact of balance or imbalance on the accuracy and quality of work decisions; implications on performance which include the influence of balance on productivity, the impact of personal stress, and company support in maintaining balance; and employee suggestions and expectations which include proposed programs or policies to improve the balance.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to describe and understand in depth the employees' perceptions of work-life balance and how their meanings shape the dynamics of decision-making and the implementation of daily work roles at PT Roti Bandung, Mbawi Village, Dompu Regency. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to capture the subjective meaning of employees' experiences within a specific social and cultural work context (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This study aims to answer questions about how employees construct meaning around work-life balance, how these experiences are personally understood, and how they are reflected in work practices and decision-making. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this study focused on gathering actual field data, based on direct insights from participants (Sugiyono, 2017).

Participants in this study were permanent employees of PT Roti Bandung who had worked for at least one year and were directly involved in the company's operations. They were selected using a purposive sampling technique, taking into account active involvement in the work process, sufficient work experience, and willingness to share narratives and reflections. This selection was based on the principle that purposively selected informants possess relevant knowledge and direct experience related to the phenomenon under study (Moleong, 2019).

A case study approach was used to answer the research question regarding employees' perceptions and experiences in establishing work-life balance. Case studies are considered appropriate because they can explore the social context in depth and capture the complexity of individual experiences within a specific social space.

As explained by Parker & Northcott (2016), case studies are well-suited to understanding the subjective meanings formed in everyday practices, particularly in small-scale, local, and homogeneous work environments.

Non-participatory observation techniques are used to observe work dynamics, interactions between employees, and behavioral responses that emerge during operational activities. This aims to obtain a realistic picture of work practices that reflect the balance or imbalance between work and personal matters.

Semi-structured interviews were used as the primary data collection technique. These interviews were conducted directly with selected employees to explore their perceptions of work-life balance, experiences managing work-life time, and how they navigate their roles and make decisions in dynamic work environments. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they provide researchers with the flexibility to explore in-depth information without limiting the informants' spontaneity (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

Documentation was used to supplement qualitative data by reviewing internal company documents such as work schedules, attendance records, shift allocations, and operational policies related to work systems and time management. Documentation data served as supporting evidence to strengthen the interpretation of interview and observation results.

Data analysis was carried out following the stages in the thematic analysis method as adapted from Kraus, Kennergren & Unge (2017), namely:

Collection and compilation of data from interviews, observations and documentation.

Read the entire data thoroughly to gain a general understanding of the informant's narrative.

Data reduction and coding, to filter and group information based on relevant key themes

Preparation of thematic descriptions, to display the main themes that emerge from employee experiences.

Interpretation of meaning, by relating each theme to relevant theory and the unique social and cultural conditions of the workplace.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
General description of the research object

This research was conducted at PT Roti Dewi Bandung, a bread production company located in Mbawi Village, Dompu Regency. The company has tight working hours and a work system based on daily production targets, which often affects the work-life balance of its employees. Data were obtained through observation and semi-structured interviews with three informants: Hrs (manager), Ndr (employee), and Nrl (employee).

Research result
1. Description of research results

Table 1: Research Informant Data

no	No	Department	Information
1	HRS	Owner/manager	Informant 1
2	Editor's note	Employee	Informant 2
3	NRL	Employee	Informant 3

How does the balance of work and personal life affect decision making and performance (answer each indicator point and include quotes from interviews and informants) 2. The Influence of the Balance of Work and Personal Life and its Implications on Decision Making and Performance

a. Employee Perceptions of Work-Life Balance

Informants provided diverse but complementary understandings of the meaning of work-life balance.

Informant 2:

> *"Balance is a person's ability to manage time, energy, and attention in a balanced way between work*

demands and personal or family needs."
Informant 3:
"For me, balance means having a clear boundary between work and life outside of work."

From these two opinions, it can be seen that balance is not only a matter of time, but also concerns the quality of an individual's involvement in two different areas of life.

However, both emphasized that their work-life balance has not been achieved optimally. They revealed that they often have to work overtime, even on holidays, to meet sudden production demands. This disrupts personal time, such as rest, hobbies, or family time. This imbalance has the potential to lead to stress, fatigue, and decreased work motivation in the long term.

These findings align with research by Greenhaus and Allen (2011), which states that an imbalance between work and personal life can lead to role conflict, leading to emotional exhaustion and decreased life satisfaction. Furthermore, research by Haar et al. (2014) shows that work-life balance has a positive relationship with employee psychological well-being and organizational commitment. This means that when employees feel fulfilled, they are more likely to feel fulfilled.

b. **Factors Supporting and Inhibiting Balance**
Supporting Factors for Balance

Based on the interview results, several factors support employee work-life balance. One is the company's ease of taking leave for urgent personal matters. This demonstrates management's flexibility in addressing employee needs outside of work. Furthermore, employees perceive superiors as understanding and empathetic toward their subordinates' personal circumstances. This emotional support from superiors contributes to a conducive and non-stressful work environment, allowing employees to feel more comfortable and less mentally burdened.

As one informant stated, the company makes it easy to take time off when urgent matters arise outside of work. This demonstrates the company's commitment to employee work-life balance. A less stressful work environment also helps reduce stress levels and boosts productivity. These factors collectively play a crucial role in creating a more humane work environment that prioritizes employee well-being.

Factors Inhibiting Balance

Despite company support, employees also face several challenges in achieving work-life balance. The primary perceived obstacle is long and inconsistent working hours. This irregular schedule makes it difficult for employees to plan activities outside of work. Furthermore, unexpected, unplanned overtime presents a challenge, especially when production loads increase. This not only interferes with personal time but can also impact employees' physical and mental exhaustion.

One informant stated that overtime is often required without prior planning, especially during peak production times. This situation creates uncertainty and limits employees' ability to manage time with family or for personal interests. In addition to overtime, a high workload without flexible time management also poses a challenge to maintaining balance. Employees are required to complete work within

tight deadlines without any flexibility in setting working hours, which can ultimately reduce job satisfaction and overall quality of life.

c. Implications for Decision Making

Work-life imbalance can lead to decreased decision-making quality for employees. Employees become easily distracted by problems at home, fatigue, or work pressures.

If the Condition is Balanced: Explanation of Informant 2's Answer

In situations where work and personal life are balanced, Informant 2 stated that he was able to make decisions in a calmer, more rational, and less hasty manner. This illustrates that when there are no external pressures from work such as household problems, fatigue, or lack of rest time, the mind becomes clearer and more focused. This inner calm allows employees to better process information, consider various alternatives, and choose the most appropriate action according to the work situation.

Informant 2 stated that when he has sufficient time for family, adequate rest, and does not feel pressured by personal matters, he is better able to assess risks, prioritize, and make work decisions with greater confidence. He also added that a stable mental state makes him more patient when facing pressure from colleagues or management. Thus, work-life balance directly strengthens the quality of his decisions, as they are made in a calm, deliberate, and non-reactive emotional state. For Informant 2, work-life balance is key to maintaining professionalism and prudence in a dynamic work environment.

If Conditions Are Unbalanced: Explanation of Informant 3's Answer

Meanwhile, Informant 3 provided a concrete illustration of how an imbalance between personal life and work directly impacts the quality of decision-making. In one of his experiences, Informant 3 recounted that when he was under pressure due to his parents' illness, he felt unfocused during work hours. This emotional situation affected his concentration and thinking skills, leading him to make a mistake at work, namely mislabeling bread packaging. Although this error may seem simple, for a company operating in the food industry, this kind of error can cause serious problems in terms of both product quality and customer satisfaction.

Informant 3 emphasized that when personal matters are unfinished or stressful, work focus is disrupted. He is unable to think logically and often feels the urge to complete work as quickly as possible without double-checking his work. In fact, he realized that in such situations, he tends to make hasty decisions simply to meet targets or avoid reprimands, without considering whether those decisions are truly effective or whether they actually create new problems. This indicates that emotional pressure from outside the workplace not only makes employees prone to errors but also hinders the analytical and reflective skills needed for sound decision-making. This imbalance creates a domino effect that is detrimental both to the individual and to the company. Mental and emotional states significantly affect analytical skills, judgment, and the accuracy of decisions made in daily work.

d. Implications for Performance

Employee performance has been shown to be significantly influenced by work-life balance. Employees who feel balanced in their lives exhibit higher work morale, increased

productivity, and improved work quality.

Informant 2:

emphasized that stability in his personal life is the main foundation for maintaining daily work performance. He said that when there is no conflict at home, he gets enough rest, and his social and family life is going well, he automatically feels calmer and ready to face the workday. A stable personal state helps him start work with high spirits, as he doesn't feel burdened by external issues that could disrupt his concentration. He said, *"When my personal life is stable, I can work more focused, productively, and enthusiastically, "*as evidence that emotional balance and good time management have a direct impact on work quality.

Informant 3:

revealed that the quality of one's performance at work is greatly influenced by how one uses their time outside of work. According to him, balance isn't just about dividing time between work and home, but rather about giving the body and mind the opportunity to rest thoroughly. He said, *"I feel more refreshed overall* physique and *mentally when returning to work if I use my time outside of work to rest,* "This demonstrates the importance of recovery time for maintaining stamina and work enthusiasm. When they can get enough rest, sleep well, or spend time with their families without work interruptions, they feel physically stronger and emotionally more stable upon returning to work.

In addition, company support such as leave for family matters is also a form of appreciation for employee welfare, which ultimately has a positive impact on their performance.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study as a whole strengthen the fact that there is a close relationship between employee perceptions of work-life balance with decision making and work performance. They work at PT Roti Dewi Bandung. In the context of a company operating in a rural area with intensive work patterns and daily targets, most employees find it difficult to clearly separate work time from personal life. When personal life is disrupted by work pressures, psychological impacts such as stress, fatigue, and impaired concentration arise, ultimately impacting the quality of decisions and overall work productivity.

An ideal balance in work and personal life can truly create emotional stability which is crucial for work effectiveness. This was confirmed through in-depth interviews with employees, who stated that in a stable personal state, they are better able to work with focus, enthusiasm, and high precision. Conversely, in an unbalanced state, they tend to rush, make mistakes easily, and have difficulty making sound decisions. As one informant explained, when workloads combine with pressure from home, their mental quality is impaired and has a direct impact on decision-making at work.

However, based on field findings, it can be concluded that work-life balance at PT Roti Dewi Bandung is still suboptimal. This is characterized by high workloads, long working hours, and minimal work flexibility, which makes it difficult for employees to manage their personal time. Frequent, unplanned overtime, coupled with high daily production pressure, pose major challenges for employees in getting adequate rest or having a decent life outside of work.

Despite this, the company has demonstrated some support, such as facilitating leave for urgent personal needs and being tolerant of employee needs from superiors. This support has been found to be quite helpful in emergencies or when there are urgent matters outside the office.

However, employees believe that this form of support is not enough to create a comprehensive balance. The company still needs to make structural improvements to its work system to be more systematic, flexible, and oriented towards employee well-being holistically.

The results of this study also align with findings from Fauziah & Hartono (2023), who stated that work-life balance significantly impacts performance and job satisfaction, especially for millennials. The study confirmed that employees who feel their work-life balance exhibits higher levels of job satisfaction, greater productivity, and are better able to make informed decisions in the face of work dynamics. This is also reflected in the context of PT Roti Dewi Bandung, where employees who feel they have sufficient space for their personal lives demonstrate more stable performance and higher work morale.

Therefore, companies are advised to review their existing work systems, particularly regarding work time arrangements, shift scheduling, and overtime systems. Furthermore, employee wellness programs such as counseling, stress management training, and adequate rest areas are also crucial to maintain workers' mental and physical balance. Finally, establishing healthy two-way communication between management and employees is key to creating a more humane and sustainable work culture, one that values employees not only as workers but also as individuals with personal lives that need to be maintained.

CONCLUSION

Based on findings in the field, it can be concluded that:

Based on research conducted at PT Roti Dewi Bandung, it can be concluded that employees' work-life balance is still not optimal. This is reflected in high workloads, long working hours, and minimal flexibility in work schedules. Many employees struggle to balance work

and personal time, particularly due to the sudden overtime system and strict daily production targets. This situation severely limits rest time and activities outside of work, impacting employees' quality of life.

This imbalance significantly negatively impacts the decision-making process in the workplace. Employees who feel stressed, fatigued, or experiencing psychological pressure from their personal lives tend to lose focus, make hasty decisions, and are more prone to technical errors. Under these conditions, work quality declines because decisions are made without careful consideration and are often reactive. This suggests that impaired emotional and mental stability will weaken employees' analytical abilities and carefulness in carrying out their duties.

Beyond decision-making, employee performance is also significantly influenced by their personal life circumstances. When employees perceive a balance in their lives, they demonstrate better work performance—they work with greater focus, productivity, and enthusiasm. This balance positively impacts their mood and physical well-being, which in turn is reflected in the quality of their work output and healthier work relationships. Therefore, it is crucial for companies to foster conditions that support this balance.

While companies have provided some support, such as ease of taking leave or permits and tolerance from superiors for employees' personal needs, this support is not enough to create a work system that is truly responsive to work-life balance. Many employees still feel that this support is temporary and not yet integrated into structural and long-term work management policies.

As a recommendation, companies should consider implementing more flexible work arrangements, such as a more planned shift system or the option to swap schedules between employees. Furthermore, companies are expected to provide employee wellness programs, such as comfortable break rooms, relaxation

activities, psychological counseling, and stress management training. Equally important, open two-way communication between management and employees is needed so that employees' voices and needs can be heard and incorporated into organizational decision-making. These efforts aim to create a work culture that is not only oriented towards productivity but also values the well-being and well-being of its employees in a more humane and sustainable manner.

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