

The Influence of Work Life Balance on Employee Performance through Employee Engagement of ASN of the Kebumen Regional Secretariat

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effect of Work Life Balance on employee performance and the role of Employee Engagement as a mediating variable among civil servants at the Regional Secretariat of Kebumen Regency. A quantitative approach with a survey method was employed involving 135 respondents. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS. The results show that Work Life Balance has a positive and significant effect on Employee Engagement, while Employee Engagement has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. However, Work Life Balance does not significantly affect employee performance. Furthermore, Employee Engagement does not significantly mediate the relationship between Work Life Balance and employee performance. These findings indicate that work-life balance is important for strengthening employee engagement, but it has not become a mechanism for improving employee performance.

INTRODUCTION

Human resources are a crucial element in achieving organizational goals (Mangkunegara, 2021). In public organizations, employees are not only required to complete official duties but also to provide excellent service and adapt to the demands of a constantly evolving organizational environment (Bekun & Fina, 2024). This situation makes *Work-Life Balance* crucial, as harmony between work and personal life demands helps employees maintain their psychological energy and active engagement in their work (Nazneen, 2023; Saks, 2022).

This condition is very relevant to the characteristics of the tasks in the Regional Secretariat of Kebumen Regency which has the function of administrative coordination, policy formulation, and administrative services (Kebumen, 2025). The cross-sectoral and coordinative nature of the work requires consistency, flexibility, and continuous employee involvement in carrying out organizational tasks. In this context, *Employee Engagement*

(work engagement) is a vital element because it reflects the willingness of employees to devote physical energy, emotional dedication, and full cognitive concentration to their work (Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Theoretically, the dynamic relationship between *Work-Life Balance*, *Employee Engagement*, and *employee performance* can be explained through the *Job Demands-Resources* (JD-R) Theory framework. (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Work-life balance acts as a form of contextual resource that helps employees manage the pressure of job demands, while *Employee Engagement* reflects the positive psychological condition of employees in dedication to (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Saks, 2022). Optimal psychological engagement is ultimately expected to act as a motivational stimulus that supports the achievement of high employee performance (Ahmed et al., 2025; Sutanto et al., 2024).

However, previous research has shown that the direct relationship between *work-life balance* and performance, as well as the psychological mechanisms that mediate this relationship, has not always been consistent. A study by Setiadi et al. (2024) shows that *Work-Life Balance* has a significant positive correlation in triggering *Employee Engagement*. On the other hand, other studies found that although *Work-Life Balance* is correlated with organizational commitment, this variable does not have a significant positive influence directly on performance without the role of appropriate psychological mediating variables (Lazuardi et al., 2024; Murniawati & Achmad, 2024). This research gap indicates that there is a broad academic space to test whether *Employee Engagement* truly acts as an effective mediating mechanism in linking *Work-Life Balance* with employee performance.

This study attempts to fill this gap by examining the direct effect of *Work-Life Balance* on *Employee Engagement* and performance, as well as the indirect effect through *Employee Engagement* mediation on ASN in the Regional Secretariat of Kebumen Regency. Thus, this study not only analyzes the static correlation between these variables, but also examines the psychological processes underlying their causal relationship. Specifically, this study aims to analyze the effect of *Work-Life Balance* on employee performance and empirically test the role of *Employee Engagement* as a mediating variable on ASN in the Regional Secretariat of Kebumen Regency.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method on 135 ASN of the Kebumen Regency Regional Secretariat. Primary data were collected through the distribution of questionnaire instruments with Likert scale measurements (Sugiyono, 2023). The research data were then analyzed using the *Variance-based Structural Equation Modeling* or *Partial Least Squares* (PLS-SEM) method with the help of SmartPLS 3 software. The data analysis tests include evaluation of *the outer model* (measurement model), evaluation of *the inner model* (structural model), path coefficient significance tests, and mediation tests to analyze the

effect of *Work-Life Balance* on *Employee Engagement* and *Employee Performance* (Hair et al., 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Structural model testing was conducted to determine the direct influence between research variables. The decision-making criteria used a 5% significance level, with *t-statistics* > 1.96 and *p-value* < 0.05 indicating a significant influence (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 1. Results of Direct Effect Testing

Construct	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Information
<i>Employee Engagement</i> -> <i>Employee Performance</i>	0.193	2,052	0.041	Significant
<i>Work Life Balance</i> -> <i>Employee Engagement</i>	0.506	5,685	0,000	Significant
<i>Work Life Balance</i> -> <i>Employee Performance</i>	0.054	0.649	0.517	Not Significant

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

Based on Table 1, *Work Life Balance* has a positive and significant effect on *Employee Engagement*, with a path coefficient of 0.506, *t-statistics* of 5.685, and a *p-value* of 0.000. *Employee Engagement* also has a positive and significant effect on *Employee Performance* with a path coefficient of 0.193, *t-statistics* of 2.052, and a *p-value* of 0.041. Conversely, *Work Life Balance* does not have a significant effect on *Employee Performance*. This is indicated by a path coefficient of 0.054, *t-statistics* of 0.649, and a *p-value* of 0.517.

Indirect effect testing was conducted to determine whether *Employee Engagement* was able to continue the influence of *Work Life Balance* on *Employee Performance*.

Table 2. Results of indirect effect testing

Construct	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Information
<i>Work Life Balance</i> -> <i>Employee Engagement</i> -> <i>Employee Performance</i>	0.097	1,822	0.069	Not Significant

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

The results in Table 2 indicate that the indirect effect of *Work-Life Balance* on *Employee Performance* through *Employee Engagement* is insignificant. The *t-statistic* value of 1.822 is still below 1.96, and the *p-value* of 0.069 is greater than 0.05. Thus, *Employee Engagement* is not proven to mediate the effect of *Work-Life Balance* on *Employee Performance*.

Discussion

The Influence of Work-Life Balance on Employee Engagement

The research results show that *work-life balance* has a positive and significant effect on *employee engagement* among employees at the Kebumen Regency Regional Secretariat. This means that the better the balance between work and personal life perceived by employees, the higher their engagement in their work (Nazneen, 2023).

These findings suggest that work-life balance is not only related to employee well-being outside of work but can also influence how employees perform their jobs (Saks, 2022). When work and personal life demands are well-managed, employees' energy and attention are more easily maintained, increasing commitment, loyalty, and productivity (Nazneen, 2023; Saks, 2022).

These results are in line with research (Setiadi et al., 2024) who found a partial effect of *Work-Life Balance* on *Employee Engagement*. This finding can also be explained through *Job Demands-Resources* (JD-R) Theory. Work-life balance acts as a form of contextual resource that helps employees manage job demands, so that their personal resources can be used more optimally to encourage motivation, dedication, and work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Saks, 2022). In addition, other empirical studies also confirm that work-life balance is an important predictor that significantly influences the level of employee work engagement in various organizations (Sudjati & Siddiq, 2025; Supriatna et al., 2025).

The Influence of Work-Life Balance on Employee Performance

In contrast to its influence on *Employee Engagement*, *Work-Life Balance* was not proven to have a significant effect on Employee Performance. A *p-value* of 0.517 indicates that work-life balance is not directly related to increased employee performance in the structural model.

These findings suggest that having a balance between work and personal life does not necessarily directly increase employee performance. (Erwina et al., 2024). In the context of the Regional Secretariat, the performance of regional apparatus remains closely related to the consistent implementation of tasks, fulfillment of operational responsibilities, and the completion of official work targets. Therefore, a good *work-life balance* does not automatically result in higher performance if it is not supported by adequate work skills and competencies (Setyorini et al., 2026; Siregar et al., 2026).

These results align with previous research empirically demonstrating that *Work-Life Balance* independently has no significant effect on individual performance (Erwina et al., 2024; Murniawati & Achmad, 2024; Syarif & Hasan, 2025). The discrepancy between these findings and other studies that found a direct positive effect is due to differences in organizational operational characteristics and the demands of the work tasks faced. Previous research also demonstrates that the effect of *Work-Life Balance* on employee performance is often indirect but must first be interpreted through psychological mediating variables or specific organizational commitments (Lazuardi et al., 2024; Murniawati & Achmad, 2024).

The Influence of Employee Engagement on Employee Performance

Employee Engagement has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance. These results indicate that employee involvement in work has a significant direct relationship with achieving optimal performance (Susanto et al., 2025). Employees who have affective energy, social dedication, and intellectual attention to their work tend to be more resilient and consistent in completing organizational tasks (Kahn, 1990; Nursanti & Guna, 2025).

These findings are highly relevant to the dynamic nature of work within the Kebumen Regency Regional Secretariat, which requires intensive coordination and full consistency in task execution. The Regional Secretariat's function is to coordinate the administrative implementation of regional apparatus tasks, formulate regional policies, and provide administrative services. Therefore, employee emotional and cognitive engagement are crucial in supporting the smooth and effective implementation of the organization's public services.

However, the contribution of this relationship is relatively low, which indicates that work engagement is important but performance improvement cannot rely solely on psychological factors of employee engagement (Kurniasari et al., 2024). Performance improvement in the public sector needs to be studied comprehensively by involving aspects of employees' actual work competency skills in the field (Rony et al., 2024; Setyorini et al., 2026; Siregar et al., 2026).

The Role of Employee Engagement in Mediating the Effect of Work-Life Balance on Employee Performance

The test results show that *Employee Engagement* does not mediate the effect of *Work-Life Balance* on Employee Performance. Although *Work-Life Balance* is proven to have a significant effect on *Employee Engagement* and *Employee Engagement* has a significant effect on Employee Performance, the indirect influence path has not been proven statistically significant.

This finding is very important because it proves that the relationship between variables in the structural model does not always form a significant mediation path even though each direct path is proven significant (Hair et al., 2017; Setyorini et al., 2026). In this study, *Work-Life Balance* was shown to play a more dominant role in maintaining psychological well-being and emotional attachment of employees to their work (Nazneen, 2023), while the increase in the actual performance achievement of the apparatus cannot be explained through this psychological mechanism (Lazuardi et al., 2024; Murniawati & Achmad, 2024). This condition shows a difference in dynamics with business sectors such as private banking, where *employee engagement* has been proven to be successful in acting as a mediator that significantly links the influence of *work-life balance* on job performance (Ahmed et al., 2025; Kurniawati & Mulyanto, 2024).

Thus, in the context of public sector bureaucracies such as the Regional Secretariat, *Employee Engagement* has not been proven to be a mechanism linking *Work-Life Balance* to Employee Performance. This means that work-life balance can increase employee

engagement, but it is not sufficient to drive performance improvements through such engagement (Seriadnyani et al., 2026) .

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research results, *Work Life Balance* has a positive and significant effect on *Employee Engagement*, which in turn also has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance. However, *Work Life Balance* does not show a significant effect on Employee Performance, either directly or through *Employee Engagement*. This finding indicates that work life balance is more visible in its contribution to maintaining psychological conditions and employee engagement to their roles rather than having a direct impact on actual performance achievements in the workplace (Nazneen, 2023; Saks, 2022; Setyawan & Sadana, 2025).

Theoretically, these findings demonstrate that *Job Demands-Resources* (JD-R) Theory remains highly relevant in explaining the role of *Work-Life Balance* as a form of job resources *that* is effective in increasing employee engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Saks, 2022) . However, this relationship is not yet strong enough to explain the formation of employee performance outcomes directly through the mediation mechanism of work engagement. Practically, the Regional Secretariat of Kebumen Regency needs to continue to pay attention to *Work-Life Balance policies* as an important part of efforts to maintain employee engagement, loyalty, and retention. However, efforts to improve the actual performance of the apparatus cannot rely solely on providing personal work-life balance policies. Other factors closer to the implementation of operational tasks, such as the development of employee work competency capacity, need to be optimized to significantly boost work productivity (Setyorini et al., 2026; Siregar et al., 2026).

This study has limitations in the scope of the object which only covers employees within the Regional Secretariat of Kebumen Regency, so the results of the study cannot be generalized widely to all regional apparatus units or other public organization sectors. In addition, this study used a quantitative approach through the distribution of questionnaire instruments, so the analysis results obtained are highly dependent on the subjective perceptions of respondents at the time of data collection (Sugiyono, 2023). Future research is recommended to expand the research object by involving several regional apparatuses with wider scope, using more varied respondent characteristics, and considering other relevant moderating or mediating variables to explain the complexity of the relationship between *Work-Life Balance* and Employee Performance more comprehensively.

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