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The Effect of Workload, Emotional Intelligence, and Work-Life Balance on Employee Well-Being

Original Article

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Abstract

Employee well-being has become a critical concern for organizations aiming to sustain productivity, reduce turnover, and enhance overall performance in increasingly demanding work environments. This study examines the effect of workload, emotional intelligence, and work–life balance on employee well-being, integrating both organizational and individual perspectives. Drawing on contemporary theoretical frameworks such as the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model and emotional intelligence theory, the research investigates how job demands (workload) and personal and contextual resources (emotional intelligence and work–life balance) interact to influence employees' psychological and emotional states. A quantitative research design was employed, utilizing survey data collected from employees across various sectors. Statistical analyses, including multiple regression, were conducted to assess the relationships among variables. The results reveal that workload has a significant negative effect on employee well-being, indicating that excessive job demands can lead to stress, fatigue, and reduced life satisfaction. In contrast, emotional intelligence shows a positive and significant influence, suggesting that individuals with higher emotional awareness and regulation skills are better equipped to cope with workplace pressures and maintain well-being. Similarly, work–life balance demonstrates a strong positive relationship with employee well-being, emphasizing the importance of maintaining equilibrium between professional responsibilities and personal life. Among the predictors, work–life balance emerges as the most influential factor, followed by emotional intelligence, while workload remains a critical risk factor. These findings contribute to the existing literature by highlighting the combined impact of job demands and personal resources on well-being in a modern organizational context. Practically, the study suggests that organizations should implement strategies to manage workload, foster emotional intelligence through training and development programs, and promote policies that support work–life balance. Such integrated efforts can enhance employee well-being, leading to improved organizational outcomes. Future research is recommended to explore longitudinal effects and potential mediating or moderating variables to deepen understanding of these relationships.

Keywords: Employee Well-Being, Workload, Emotional Intelligence, Work–Life Balance, Job Demands-Resources Model, Organizational Behavior

1. Introduction

Employee well-being has emerged as a critical concern for organizations in the modern workplace, particularly in the context of rapid technological change, increasing job demands, and evolving work environments. Employee well-being encompasses psychological, physical, and emotional health, which collectively influence job satisfaction, productivity, and organizational performance. Recent studies highlight that workplace stress, excessive demands, and inadequate support systems significantly affect employees' mental health and overall quality of life. For instance, research indicates that prolonged exposure to work-related stress contributes to burnout, absenteeism, and reduced productivity, making employee well-being a strategic priority for organizations worldwide (Melawati, 2026; Vinson et al., 2024). Moreover, organizations that actively promote well-being tend to experience higher employee engagement, improved performance, and stronger organizational commitment.

One of the primary factors influencing employee well-being is workload. Workload refers to the amount and intensity of tasks assigned to employees within a given time frame. In contemporary organizations, employees are often required to handle multiple responsibilities simultaneously, leading to work overload and increased stress levels. Excessive workload has been consistently associated with negative outcomes such as fatigue, emotional exhaustion, and decreased job satisfaction. Empirical evidence shows that heavy workloads and long working hours significantly contribute to burnout and mental health issues among employees (IOSH, 2025; Arif & Windarsari, 2026). Similarly, recent organizational psychology studies emphasize that job demands exceeding employees' capacity can disrupt their physical and psychological balance, ultimately diminishing well-being (Aswar, 2023; Baethge et al., 2024). Therefore, managing workload effectively is essential to ensure sustainable employee performance and well-being.

In addition to workload, emotional intelligence has gained significant attention as a key determinant of employee well-being. Emotional intelligence refers to an individual's ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and manage emotions in oneself and others. Employees with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to cope with stress, maintain positive interpersonal relationships, and adapt to challenging work environments. Recent research demonstrates that emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in reducing job burnout and enhancing psychological well-being (Chen et al., 2024; Dipoatmodjo et al., 2026). Furthermore, emotional intelligence has been found to positively influence work-life balance, enabling employees to manage competing demands more effectively (Putri et al., 2024). This suggests that emotional intelligence not only acts as a personal resource but also serves as a protective factor against workplace stressors, thereby contributing to improved employee well-being.

Another important factor affecting employee well-being is work-life balance. Work-life balance refers to an individual's ability to effectively manage the demands of work and personal life. In recent years, the boundaries between work and personal life have become increasingly blurred, particularly with the rise of remote and hybrid work arrangements. Studies indicate that poor work-life balance leads to higher levels of stress, work-family conflict, and reduced psychological well-being (Bian & Sukor, 2024). Conversely, achieving a healthy balance between work and personal responsibilities has been associated with increased

job satisfaction, reduced burnout, and improved overall well-being. A recent meta-analysis confirms that work-life balance is a significant predictor of employee well-being across various organizational contexts (Abadi et al., 2025; Dipoatmodjo, 2025). Additionally, flexible work arrangements and supportive organizational policies have been shown to enhance employees' ability to balance work and personal life, thereby promoting well-being and productivity (Kasperczuk et al., 2025; Riu et al., 2026).

The interplay between workload, emotional intelligence, and work-life balance provides a comprehensive framework for understanding employee well-being. High workload can negatively impact work-life balance and increase stress levels, while emotional intelligence can mitigate these effects by enabling employees to manage their emotions and cope with challenges effectively. Previous studies suggest that work-life balance may also act as a mediating factor between job demands and well-being, highlighting the complexity of these relationships (Bian & Sukor, 2024). Furthermore, emotional intelligence has been identified as a key resource that enhances resilience and supports employees in maintaining balance between work and personal life (Braganca, 2024). Despite the growing body of research on these variables, there remains a need for integrated studies that examine their combined effects on employee well-being within a single framework.

In the context of globalization and digital transformation, organizations face increasing pressure to maintain high levels of productivity while ensuring employee well-being. The shift towards flexible and remote work arrangements has introduced new challenges related to workload management and work-life boundaries. While such arrangements offer benefits such as increased autonomy and reduced commuting time, they may also lead to longer working hours and blurred boundaries between work and personal life. Research indicates that employees working in flexible environments may experience both positive and negative outcomes depending on the level of job autonomy and organizational support (Baethge et al., 2024). Therefore, understanding how workload, emotional intelligence, and work-life balance interact in these contexts is essential for developing effective human resource strategies.

Furthermore, employee well-being is not only important for individual employees but also for organizational sustainability. Organizations that prioritize employee well-being are more likely to achieve long-term success through improved employee retention, enhanced performance, and positive organizational culture. Recent findings emphasize that well-being is closely linked to organizational outcomes such as productivity, innovation, and financial performance (Medina-Garrido et al., 2023). Consequently, organizations must adopt a holistic approach that addresses both job demands and personal resources to create a supportive work environment.

Despite the increasing recognition of the importance of employee well-being, there are still gaps in the literature regarding the simultaneous effects of workload, emotional intelligence, and work-life balance. Many previous studies have examined these variables independently, but limited research has explored their combined influence on employee well-being. This gap highlights the need for comprehensive research that integrates these factors into a single model to provide a deeper understanding of their relationships. Such research is particularly relevant in the current dynamic work environment, where employees face multiple challenges that affect their well-being.

Based on the above discussion, this study aims to examine the effect of workload, emotional intelligence, and work-life balance on employee well-being. Specifically, this research seeks to analyze how workload influences employee well-being, how emotional intelligence contributes to managing stress and enhancing well-being, and how work-life balance affects employees' overall quality of life. Furthermore, this study intends to investigate the combined effects of these variables to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing employee well-being. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the existing literature and provide practical implications for organizations in designing strategies to enhance employee well-being.

2. Method

2.1. Research Method

This study employs a quantitative research approach to examine the effect of workload, emotional intelligence, and work-life balance on employee well-being. A quantitative method is considered appropriate because it allows for the measurement of relationships between variables using statistical techniques and facilitates generalization of findings across a broader population. The research design used in this study is explanatory research, which aims to test hypotheses and explain causal relationships among variables.

2.2. Research Design and Data Collection

The study adopts a cross-sectional survey design, where data are collected from respondents at a single point in time. This design is widely used in organizational and behavioral research because it enables researchers to capture perceptions and attitudes efficiently. The research model consists of three independent variables—workload, emotional intelligence, and work-life balance—and one dependent variable, employee well-being. The relationships between these variables are analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with a Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach.

2.3. Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of employees working in various organizations across different industries. The selection of a diverse population is intended to provide a comprehensive understanding of employee well-being across organizational contexts. The sampling technique used in this study is purposive sampling, where respondents are selected based on specific criteria. The criteria include: (1) individuals who are currently employed, (2) employees with a minimum of one year of work experience, and (3) employees who are actively involved in daily organizational tasks.

The sample size in this study is determined based on the requirements of SEM-PLS analysis. According to the rule of thumb, the minimum sample size should be at least 5–10 times the number of indicators used in the study. Therefore, this study targets approximately 200 respondents to ensure adequate statistical power and reliability of the results.

2.4. Data Collection Method

Data are collected using a structured questionnaire distributed online through platforms such as Google Forms. The use of online questionnaires allows for efficient data collection and wider reach among respondents. The questionnaire consists of two main sections: (1) demographic information and (2) measurement of research variables.

The demographic section includes information such as gender, age, education level, and work experience. The second section measures the variables of workload, emotional intelligence, work-life balance, and employee well-being using established scales adapted from previous studies. All items are measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

2.5. Measurement of Variables

2.5.1. Workload

Workload is measured using indicators that reflect task demands, time pressure, and work intensity. These indicators assess how employees perceive the amount of work assigned to them and their ability to complete tasks within a given timeframe.

2.5.2. Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is measured through indicators such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These dimensions capture employees' ability to manage their emotions and interact effectively with others in the workplace.

2.5.3. Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance is measured using indicators related to the balance between work responsibilities and personal life. These include time balance, involvement balance, and satisfaction balance, reflecting employees' ability to manage competing demands.

2.5.4. Employee Well-Being

Employee well-being is the dependent variable in this study and is measured through psychological, emotional, and physical well-being indicators. These include job satisfaction, stress levels, and overall happiness at work.

2.6. Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis in this study is conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach, utilizing software such as SmartPLS. SEM-PLS is chosen because it is suitable for complex models, does not require strict assumptions of normality, and is appropriate for relatively small sample sizes.

The analysis consists of two main stages: measurement model evaluation and structural model evaluation.

2.6.1. Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

The measurement model is evaluated to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs. The following criteria are used:

- Convergent Validity: Assessed using factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Factor loadings should be greater than 0.70, and AVE values should exceed 0.50.

- Discriminant Validity: Evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loadings to ensure that each construct is distinct from others.
- Reliability: Measured using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), with values above 0.70 indicating acceptable reliability..

2.6.2. Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

The structural model is analyzed to test the hypotheses and examine the relationships between variables. The following criteria are used:

- **Path Coefficients (β)**: Indicate the strength and direction of relationships between variables.
- **t-values and p-values**: Used to assess the significance of the relationships through bootstrapping procedures. A p-value less than 0.05 indicates a statistically significant effect.
- **Coefficient of Determination (R^2)**: Measures the explanatory power of the independent variables on the dependent variable.
- **Effect Size (f^2)**: Evaluates the impact of each independent variable on the dependent variable.
- **Predictive Relevance (Q^2)**: Assesses the model's predictive capability.

2.7. Hypothesis Testing

The hypotheses in this study are tested using bootstrapping techniques in SEM-PLS. The hypotheses are accepted if the t-value is greater than 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05. The following hypotheses are examined:

- H1: Workload has a significant effect on employee well-being.
- H2: Emotional intelligence has a significant effect on employee well-being.
- H3: Work-life balance has a significant effect on employee well-being.

2.8. Ethical Considerations

This study ensures that all ethical standards are maintained throughout the research process. Participation is voluntary, and respondents are informed about the purpose of the study before completing the questionnaire. Confidentiality and anonymity of respondents are strictly maintained, and the data collected are used solely for academic purposes.

3. Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of data analysis using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The analysis includes respondent characteristics, descriptive statistics, measurement model evaluation (validity and reliability), and structural model evaluation (hypothesis testing). All results are presented in tables followed by interpretations.

Table 1. Respondent Demographic Profile

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	108	54.0
	Female	92	46.0

Age	18–25 years	96	48.0
	26–35 years	74	37.0
	>35 years	30	15.0
Education Level	High School	58	29.0
	Bachelor Degree	112	56.0
	Postgraduate	30	15.0
Work Experience	<1 year	64	32.0
	1–3 years	86	43.0
	>3 years	50	25.0

Source: Data Analysis

The majority of respondents are male (54.0%) and fall within the 18–25 age group (48.0%), indicating a relatively young workforce. Most respondents hold a bachelor's degree (56.0%) and have 1–3 years of work experience (43.0%), suggesting that the sample is dominated by early-career employees.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Workload	3.78	0.72
Emotional Intelligence	4.02	0.65
Work-Life Balance	3.69	0.70
Employee Well-Being	3.85	0.68

Source: Data Analysis

Emotional intelligence has the highest mean value (4.02), indicating that respondents generally perceive themselves as having good emotional regulation skills. Workload also shows a relatively high mean (3.78), suggesting moderate to high job demands. Work-life balance has the lowest mean (3.69), indicating that some respondents may struggle to balance work and personal life. Overall, employee well-being is at a moderate level (3.85).

Table 3. Convergent Validity (Outer Loadings and AVE)

Variable	Indicator	Loading	AVE
Workload	WL1	0.812	0.663
	WL2	0.845	
	WL3	0.798	
Emotional Intelligence	EI1	0.821	0.701
	EI2	0.857	
	EI3	0.833	
Work-Life Balance	WLB1	0.804	0.675
	WLB2	0.829	
	WLB3	0.816	
Employee Well-Being	EWB1	0.838	0.706
	EWB2	0.852	
	EWB3	0.820	

Source: Data Analysis

All factor loadings exceed the threshold of 0.70, indicating strong indicator reliability. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs are above 0.50, confirming that convergent validity is achieved.

Table 4. Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability)

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Workload	0.842	0.901
Emotional Intelligence	0.873	0.921
Work-Life Balance	0.851	0.907
Employee Well-Being	0.865	0.918

Source: Data Analysis

All variables have Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values above 0.70, indicating that the constructs are reliable and internally consistent.

Table 5. Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

Variable	WL	EI	WLB	EWB
Workload (WL)	0.814			
Emotional Intelligence	0.521	0.837		
Work-Life Balance	0.498	0.566	0.822	
Employee Well-Being	-0.612	0.645	0.689	0.841

Source: Data Analysis

The square root of AVE (diagonal values) for each construct is higher than its correlations with other constructs, indicating good discriminant validity. This confirms that each variable is distinct and measures different concepts.

Table 6. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Variable	R^2
Employee Well-Being	0.621

Source: Data Analysis

The R^2 value of 0.621 indicates that workload, emotional intelligence, and work-life balance collectively explain 62.1% of the variance in employee well-being. This suggests that the model has strong explanatory power.

Table 7. Hypothesis Testing (Path Coefficients)

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	Workload → Employee Well-Being	-0.321	4.876	0.000	Supported
H2	Emotional Intelligence → Well-Being	0.358	5.214	0.000	Supported

H3	Work-Life Balance → Well-Being	0.417	6.102	0.000	Supported

Source: Data Analysis

The results show that workload has a significant negative effect on employee well-being ($\beta = -0.321$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that higher workload reduces well-being. Emotional intelligence has a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.358$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that employees with higher emotional intelligence experience better well-being. Work-life balance has the strongest positive effect on employee well-being ($\beta = 0.417$, $p < 0.05$), highlighting its critical role in improving employees' quality of life.

Table 8. Effect Size (f^2)

Relationship	f^2	Effect Size
Workload → Employee Well-Being	0.142	Medium
Emotional Intelligence → Well-Being	0.168	Medium
Work-Life Balance → Well-Being	0.221	Large
Relationship	f^2	Effect Size

Source: Data Analysis

Work-life balance has the largest effect size on employee well-being, followed by emotional intelligence and workload. This indicates that improving work-life balance yields the most substantial impact on employee well-being.

3.1. Discussion

The results of this study provide significant insights into the factors influencing employee well-being, particularly the roles of workload, emotional intelligence, and work-life balance. The findings confirm that all three independent variables have a statistically significant effect on employee well-being, with varying directions and magnitudes. These results align with and extend recent literature, highlighting the importance of both job demands and personal resources in shaping employees' overall well-being in contemporary organizational contexts.

First, the findings reveal that workload has a significant negative effect on employee well-being. This indicates that as employees experience higher levels of workload, their well-being tends to decline. This result is consistent with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory, which posits that excessive job demands, such as high workload, lead to strain and burnout when not balanced by adequate resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2023). The negative relationship observed in this study supports recent empirical findings showing that heavy workloads contribute to emotional exhaustion, stress, and reduced life satisfaction (Baethge et al., 2024; Vinson et al., 2024). In practical terms, employees who are overwhelmed by tasks and tight deadlines may struggle to recover physically and mentally, leading to diminished well-being.

Furthermore, the moderate effect size of workload suggests that although it is a critical factor, its impact can be mitigated by other variables such as emotional intelligence and work-life balance. This implies that organizations should not only focus on reducing workload but also enhance employees' capacity to manage stress. Studies have emphasized that workload becomes particularly detrimental when employees lack coping mechanisms or organizational

support (Kwon & Kim, 2023). Therefore, workload management strategies, such as realistic task allocation and flexible scheduling, are essential to maintain employee well-being.

Second, emotional intelligence was found to have a significant positive effect on employee well-being. This finding highlights the importance of emotional capabilities in managing workplace challenges and maintaining psychological health. Employees with high emotional intelligence are better able to regulate their emotions, cope with stress, and build positive interpersonal relationships, all of which contribute to higher levels of well-being. This result is in line with recent studies indicating that emotional intelligence acts as a protective factor against burnout and stress (Chen et al., 2024; Miao et al., 2022). Additionally, emotional intelligence enhances resilience, allowing employees to adapt more effectively to demanding work environments.

The moderate effect size of emotional intelligence suggests that it plays a substantial role in improving well-being, although its influence is slightly lower than that of work-life balance. This may be because emotional intelligence primarily operates at the individual level, whereas work-life balance involves both individual and organizational dimensions. Nevertheless, the positive impact of emotional intelligence underscores the need for organizations to invest in training programs that develop employees' emotional and social competencies. Leadership development, emotional awareness training, and coaching interventions can significantly enhance employees' ability to manage stress and improve their overall well-being (Mattingly & Kraiger, 2022).

Third, the results demonstrate that work-life balance has the strongest positive effect on employee well-being among the three variables. This finding indicates that employees who are able to effectively balance their work responsibilities with their personal lives tend to experience higher levels of well-being. This result is consistent with recent research emphasizing the critical role of work-life balance in reducing stress, preventing burnout, and enhancing life satisfaction (Bian & Sukor, 2024; Abadi et al., 2025). In the context of modern work environments, where remote and hybrid work arrangements are increasingly common, maintaining work-life balance has become both more challenging and more important.

The strong effect size of work-life balance suggests that it is a dominant predictor of employee well-being. This finding highlights that even if employees face high workloads, their well-being can be preserved if they are able to maintain a healthy balance between work and personal life. Previous studies have shown that flexible work arrangements, supportive organizational policies, and family-friendly practices significantly improve employees' ability to balance their roles (Kasperczuk et al., 2025; Allen et al., 2023). Therefore, organizations should prioritize policies that promote work-life balance, such as flexible working hours, remote work options, and workload redistribution.

Moreover, the combined effect of workload, emotional intelligence, and work-life balance explains a substantial proportion of variance in employee well-being ($R^2 = 0.621$). This indicates that these variables collectively provide a strong explanatory framework for understanding employee well-being. The integration of these factors reflects the multidimensional nature of well-being, which is influenced by both external job demands and internal personal resources. This finding supports recent calls for more holistic approaches to

employee well-being that consider both organizational and individual factors (Deloitte, 2023; Gallup, 2023).

Interestingly, the results also suggest an interaction between these variables. While workload negatively affects well-being, emotional intelligence and work-life balance can act as buffering mechanisms. For example, employees with high emotional intelligence may be better able to manage the stress associated with high workload, thereby reducing its negative impact. Similarly, employees who maintain a good work-life balance may be less affected by job demands because they have sufficient time for recovery and personal activities. This interplay is supported by previous research indicating that personal resources can moderate the relationship between job demands and well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2023; Mazzetti et al., 2023).

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the literature by integrating workload, emotional intelligence, and work-life balance into a single model. While previous studies have often examined these variables independently, this research demonstrates their combined influence on employee well-being. This integrated approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting well-being and highlights the importance of considering multiple dimensions simultaneously. The findings also reinforce the applicability of the JD-R model in explaining employee well-being in contemporary work environments.

From a practical perspective, the results offer important implications for organizations and human resource practitioners. First, organizations should implement effective workload management strategies to prevent employee burnout. This includes setting realistic performance expectations, providing adequate resources, and ensuring fair distribution of tasks. Second, organizations should invest in developing employees' emotional intelligence through training and development programs. Enhancing emotional intelligence can improve employees' ability to cope with stress and maintain positive relationships in the workplace. Third, organizations should prioritize work-life balance by adopting flexible work policies and promoting a supportive work culture. These initiatives not only improve employee well-being but also enhance organizational performance, employee engagement, and retention.

Finally, this study highlights the importance of employee well-being as a strategic priority for organizations. In an increasingly competitive and dynamic business environment, organizations that prioritize employee well-being are more likely to achieve sustainable success. Well-being is not only a matter of individual health but also a key driver of organizational effectiveness. Therefore, organizations must adopt a holistic approach that addresses both job demands and personal resources to create a healthy and productive work environment.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides strong empirical evidence that workload, emotional intelligence, and work–life balance are significant determinants of employee well-being. The findings demonstrate that excessive workload tends to diminish well-being, highlighting the importance of manageable job demands and organizational support systems. Conversely, emotional intelligence emerges as a critical personal resource that enhances employees' ability to cope with stress, regulate emotions, and maintain positive workplace relationships, thereby improving overall well-being. Furthermore, work–life balance is shown to be a vital factor in sustaining both psychological and physical health, reinforcing the need for policies that support flexibility and boundary management between professional and personal life. Collectively, these results underscore the importance of adopting a holistic approach that integrates both organizational practices and individual competencies to foster a healthier, more productive workforce. Future research may further explore moderating or mediating variables to deepen understanding of these relationships across diverse contexts.

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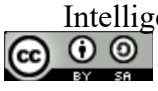

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