

THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN ENHANCING JOB SATISFACTION AMONG GENERATION Z EMPLOYEES

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Abstract: This study explores the role of Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Work-Life Balance (WLB) as factors influencing job satisfaction among employees. Utilizing a quantitative approach, data was collected from 250 employees through a questionnaire adapted from previously validated instruments. Data analysis was performed using multiple regression techniques to evaluate the impact of EI and WLB on job satisfaction. The findings suggest that companies should prioritize the development of employees' emotional intelligence and support a balance between work and personal life to enhance job satisfaction and organizational effectiveness.

Keywords: Work-life Balance; Emotional Intelligence; Job Satisfaction

1. Introduction

Indonesia, as the fourth most populous country in the world, is home to more than 283.49 million people in 2024 (Worldometer, 2024). Among this population, Generation Z, defined as individuals born between 1995 and 2009 (Ranstard, 2017) represents a significant portion, particularly in urban areas like Surabaya. This generation has grown up with early exposure to technology and is now entering the workforce in large numbers (BPS, 2020). Due to rapid technological advancements, Generation Z is shaped by instant access to information and digital tools, which influence their approach to both life and work (Ramli & Soelton, 2019). One of Generation Z's key traits is their emphasis on achieving a strong work-life balance (WLB). This generation values flexibility in the workplace and strives to maintain equilibrium between their professional and personal lives (Rachmadini & Riyanto, 2020). Unlike previous generations, Generation Z employees are known for maximizing their downtime, often leaving work devices at the office to maintain a clear boundary between work and personal life (Fisher, 2002). This shift mirrors broader trends in the modern workplace, where work-life balance is increasingly seen as a crucial factor in employee satisfaction and engagement (Mas-machuta et al., 2016).

Emotional Intelligence (EI) also plays a crucial role in shaping the work experiences of Generation Z employees. As Gentina et al. (2018) explain, EI consists of two key components: intrapersonal intelligence, which involves effectively interacting with others. For Generation Z, developing strong interpersonal intelligence is vital for building workplace relationships and achieving professional success. The ability to regulate emotions, maintain motivation, and adapt to changing environments has a direct impact on job performance and collaboration with colleagues (Gentina et al., 2018).

Job Satisfaction is closely linked to both WLB and EI. Research indicates that employees who feel emotionally supported and can maintain a balance between work and personal life are more likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction (Gupta & Sharma, 2016). Job satisfaction

is a key predictor of organizational success, as satisfied employees tend to be more productive, loyal, and engaged (Huang, 2019).

Understanding the connections between Work-Life Balance, Emotional Intelligence, and Job Satisfaction is crucial for organizations aiming to engage and retain Generation Z employees. By fostering a work environment that supports emotional well-being and flexible work practices, companies can enhance both individual and organizational outcomes.

2. Literature Review

Work-Life Balance

WLB (Work-Life Balance) refers to an individual's ability to maintain a balance between personal life and professional responsibilities. This concept has been increasingly discussed in the literature as employees strive to achieve a better balance between work and life, especially in the context of modern demands and digitalization. According to Sirgy & Lee (2017), work-life balance plays a crucial role in overall job satisfaction and well-being, as it helps individual manage their time between work and non-work obligations, the study emphasizes the importance of organizational policies, such as flexible working hours and telecommuting, which have become key factors in achieving WLB.

A study by Delecta (2016) highlights that work-life balance is not only essential for employees mental health but also for organizational productivity. Organizations that promote work-life balance often experience reduced burnout and lower employee turnover rates. Employees who are able to balance work and personal life tend to be more productive and engaged in their work. Additionally, Sarker et al. (2018) note that technological advancements have both positive and negative impacts on work-life balance, as constant connectivity can blur the boundaries between work and personal life, leading to increased stress in some cases.

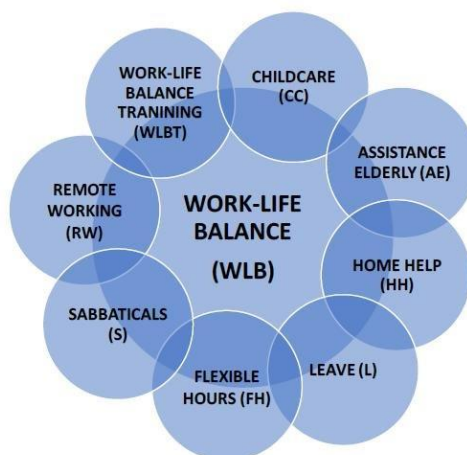


Figure 1: Common work-life balance practices
Source: Sánchez-Hernández et al. (2019)

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the ability to understand, manage, and use emotions positively to communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges, and resolve conflicts. In recent years, emotional intelligence has been recognized as a critical skill for employees across various sectors. Goleman's (1995) model of emotional intelligence, which includes self-

awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, continues to be widely used in research on workplace dynamics.

A study by Scutte et al. (2014) found that emotional intelligence has a strong correlation with job performance and job satisfaction, as individuals with high EI are better at managing stress and conflicts in the workplace. The authors emphasize that employees with emotional intelligence are more likely to develop strong interpersonal relationships and adapt more easily to organizational changes. Another study by Zeidner, Matthews, & Roberts (2015) highlights the role of emotional intelligence in leadership, demonstrating that leaders with high EI can foster a positive work environment, enhance team cohesion, and improve employee morale.

Furthermore, research by Wong & Law (2017) examined the mediating role of emotional intelligence in workplace outcomes, suggesting that EI influences employee engagement, turnover intentions, and job satisfaction. Employees with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to handle workplace challenges effectively, leading to higher satisfaction and lower stress levels.

Job Satisfaction

Job Satisfaction is defined as the extent to which individuals feel content and fulfilled with their job roles. It is a crucial predictor of organizational performance, employee retention, and overall well-being. Locke (1976) describes job satisfaction as a pleasurable emotional state resulting from an individual's appraisal of their job experiences. Recent literature continues to explore various factors contributing to job satisfaction, such as work-life balance, emotional intelligence, compensation, and organizational culture.

Research by Judge et al. (2017) demonstrates that job satisfaction is strongly influenced by an individual's perception of work-life balance and emotional intelligence. This study emphasizes that employees who feel valued and supported by their organization are more likely to experience higher job satisfaction. Additionally, Ahmad et al. (2016) found that workplace flexibility and autonomy are also critical factors in enhancing job satisfaction. Employees who are empowered to make decisions about their work tend to feel more satisfied and motivated in their roles.

Further research by Saari & Judge (2014) examines the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance. They argue that higher job satisfaction leads to increased productivity, improved motivation, and reduced absenteeism. The authors also highlight the importance of aligning job roles with employees' personal goals and values to foster long-term job satisfaction.

Based on these findings, it is clear that both work-life balance (WLB) and emotional intelligence (EI) significantly impact job satisfaction. WLB provides employees with a sense of control over balancing work and personal responsibilities, while EI enables employees to manage social and emotional relationships in the workplace more effectively. Together, these factors contribute to enhanced job satisfaction and overall organizational effectiveness (Judge et al., 2017; Ahmad et al., 2016).

3. Method

This study employs a quantitative approach with data collection conducted through surveys using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates "never" and 5 indicates "very often". The respondents in this study consisted of 250 individuals, all of whom belong to Generation Z in the East Java region. The independent variables used in this study are work-life balance

(X1) and emotional intelligence (X2), while job satisfaction (Y) is the dependent variable. The data obtained was then analyzed to understand the relationship between the independent variables and employee job satisfaction.

The data obtained was then processed using SPSS software. To ensure the accuracy of the measurement instruments, validity and reliability test were conducted. The results of this analysis were used to answer the research questions, providing a detailed interpretation of the relationship between work-life balance, emotional intelligence, and job satisfaction. The conclusions from this study are expected to offer insights on how companies can enhance employee job satisfaction through effective management of work-life balance and the development of emotional intelligence.

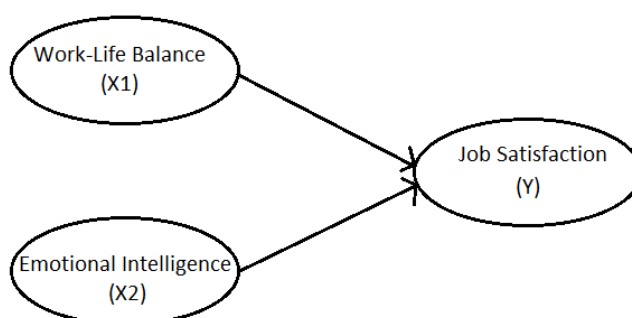


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

4. Result and Discussion

Description of Research Data

This research sample consisted of 175 male respondents (70%) and 75 female respondents (30%) aged between 18 and 25 years old. Most of the respondents had 1 to 5 years of work experience.

Table 1. Gender of Respondents

Profile	Information	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	175	70%
	Female	75	30%
	Total	250	100%

Source: Questionnaire data examined using SPSS (2024)

Table 2 represent the age distribution of the respondents in this study, with the majority falling within the 27-year-old age range.

Table 2. Gender of Respondents

Profile	Information	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18-20	20	8%
	21-23	32	12%
	24-26	35	14%
	27	163	66%
	Total	250	100%

Source: Questionnaire data examined using SPSS (2024)

According to table 2, out of a total of 250 respondents, 163 individuals (66%) are aged 27, indicating that this age group dominates the study, additionally, 35 respondents (14%) fall within the 24-26 years age group, followed by 32 respondents (12%) in the 21-23 years age range. Lastly, there are 20 respondents (8%) within the 18-20 years age group. This distribution shows that the majority of respondents are in the late phase of Generation Z, who generally have more work experience compared to the younger age groups.

Validity

Based on the results of the validity test using SPSS, all items in the variables work-life balance, emotional intelligence, and job satisfaction were found to be valid. This test was conducted by examining the item-total correlation, where each item from the three variables showed a correlation greater than 0.3, which is the minimum threshold for determining the validity of the instrument (Sugiyono, 2017). This indicates that each item in the questionnaire significantly measures the construct of each respective variable.

To test the significance of these validity values, the degrees of freedom (df) are calculated using the formula $df = N - 2$, where N is the number of respondents. With 250 respondents in this study, $df = 250 - 2 = 248$.

At $df = 248$ and a significance level of 5%, the validity test results showed that all items of the variables had t-values greater than the t-table, indicating that the instrument is valid and suitable for further testing (Ghozali, 2018). This supports the conclusion that work-life balance, emotional intelligence, and job satisfaction are well-measured in the context of this study.

Table 3. Test Results of Work-life Balance, Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction variable validity

Item	Sig	Ket	Item	Sig	Ket	Item	Sig	Ket
Work-Life Balance			EI4	0.001	Valid	JS1	0.001	Valid
WLB1	0.001	Valid	EI5	0.001	Valid	JS2	0.001	Valid
WLB2	0.001	Valid	EI6	0.001	Valid	JS3	0.001	Valid
WLB3	0.001	Valid	EI7	0.001	Valid	JS4	0.001	Valid
WLB4	0.001	Valid	EI8	0.001	Valid	JS5	0.001	Valid
WLB5	0.001	Valid	EI9	0.001	Valid	JS6	0.001	Valid
WLB6	0.001	Valid	EI10	0.001	Valid	JS7	0.001	Valid
WLB7	0.001	Valid	EI11	0.001	Valid	JS8	0.001	Valid
WLB8	0.001	Valid	EI12	0.001	Valid	JS9	0.001	Valid
WLB9	0.001	Valid	EI13	0.001	Valid	JS10	0.001	Valid
WLB10	0.001	Valid	EI14	0.001	Valid	JS11	0.001	Valid
WLB11	0.001	Valid	EI15	0.001	Valid	JS12	0.001	Valid
WLB12	0.001	Valid	EI16	0.001	Valid	JS13	0.001	Valid
WLB13	0.001	Valid	EI17	0.001	Valid	JS14	0.001	Valid
WLB14	0.001	Valid	EI18	0.001	Valid	JS15	0.001	Valid
WLB17	0.001	Valid	EI19	0.001	Valid	JS16	0.001	Valid
Emotional Intelligence			EI20	0.001	Valid	JS17	0.001	Valid
EI1	0.001	Valid	EI21	0.001	Valid	JS18	0.001	Valid
EI2	0.001	Valid	EI22	0.001	Valid	JS19	0.001	Valid
EI3	0.001	Valid	Job Satisfaction			JS20	0.001	Valid

Sources: Questionnaire data examined using SPSS (2024)

Reliability

Reliability decisions are based on the general standard that a Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.7 is considered reliable (Ghozali, 2018). Based on the results of the reliability test in SPSS, all the variables used in this study showed a Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.7, indicating that the instruments used in this study are reliable for measuring the variables Work-Life Balance, Emotional Intelligence, and Job satisfaction with good internal consistency among the items.

Table 4. Reliability Test Results Variable Research

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Item	Description
Work-Life Balance	0.953	17	Reliable
Emotional Intelligence	0.958	22	Reliable
Job Satisfaction	0.957	20	Reliable

Sources: Questionnaire data examined using SPSS (2024)

Multiple Coefficient of Determination (R-Square)

The multiple coefficient of determination (R-Square) in this study indicates that the independent variables contribute 0.68 or 68% to the dependent variable. This means that 68% of the variation in job satisfaction (the dependent variable) is explained by the two independent variables, work-life balance and emotional intelligence. The remaining 32% is explained by other variables that are not included in this study. These other variables could include factors such as work environment, compensation, or career development opportunities, which may also influence job satisfaction but were not examined in this research.

An R-Square value of 68% indicates a strong relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. However, it also suggests that there is room for further exploration of other factors that influence job satisfaction. The remaining 32% of the variance in job satisfaction, which is not explained by work-life balance and emotional intelligence, could be influenced by other variables such as work environment, compensation, and career development opportunities, which warrant further investigation in future studies. This leaves the potential to uncover additional insights into what other factors may contribute to improving job satisfaction in various organizational contexts.

Hypothesis Test Results

Table 5. Hypothesis Test Results

List of Hypotheses	Research Hypothesis	Coefficient	p-Value	Results
H1	Work-Life Balance has a positive influence on Job Satisfaction	0.611	0.001	H1 is supported
H2	Emotional Intelligence has a positive influence on Job Satisfaction	0.317	0.001	H2 is supported

Sources: Questionnaire data examined using SPSS (2024)

Discussion

The Influence of Work-Life Balance on Job Satisfaction

The results of the hypothesis test show that work-life balance has a positive influence on job satisfaction, with a coefficient value of 0.611 and a p-Value of 0.001, indicating the significance of this relationship. This finding is consistent with previous research that suggests employees who are able to maintain a balance between their personal and professional lives tend to experience higher job satisfaction. According to a study by Haar et al. (2014), work-life balance is directly related to improved job satisfaction and overall quality of life. This demonstrates the importance of creating workplace policies that promote a healthy balance between work and personal responsibilities for enhancing employee satisfaction and well-being.

In addition, research conducted by Sirgy and Lee (2017) also confirms that employees who experience a balance between work and personal life tend to have higher levels of job satisfaction. Employees who feel that their company supports this balance are generally more motivated and productive in carrying out their daily tasks (Haar et al., 2014; Sirgy & Lee, 2017). Therefore, work-life balance not only reduces stress but also enhances the quality of employees' interactions with their work, ultimately increasing job satisfaction. This highlights the crucial role of organizations in fostering environments that support personal and professional balance for the well-being and engagement of their workforce.

The Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Job Satisfaction

The results of this hypothesis test indicate that emotional intelligence has a positive influence on job satisfaction, with a coefficient value of 0.317 and a p-Value of 0.001, signifying the significance of this relationship. This finding aligns with research by Schutte et al. (2014), which revealed that employees with high emotional intelligence are better at managing their emotions, interacting more effectively with colleagues, and ultimately feeling more satisfied with their work. This suggests that developing emotional intelligence can be a key factor in enhancing overall job satisfaction, as it helps employees navigate interpersonal relationships and workplace challenges more effectively.

In addition, Wong and Law (2017) noted that emotional intelligence can help employees face workplace challenges, whether in high-pressure situations or conflicts, allowing them to maintain motivation and focus. With strong emotional intelligence, employees tend to feel more engaged in their work, which directly impacts their job satisfaction. According to Goleman (1995), employees who can manage their emotions and empathize with others are better equipped to navigate complex workplace dynamics, ultimately enhancing their job satisfaction. This highlights the importance of emotional intelligence in creating a supportive and adaptive work environment that fosters greater employee satisfaction.

5. Conclusions

This study found that emotional intelligence and work-life balance have a significant impact on job satisfaction among Generation Z employees in East Java. Employees with high levels of emotional intelligence tend to manage their emotions and interpersonal relationships effectively, which in turn enhances their job satisfaction. Additionally, a good work-life balance allows employees to maintain a healthy equilibrium between work responsibilities and personal life, improving their quality of life and reducing the risk of burnout.

The study also emphasizes that companies should prioritize policies that support work-life balance and emotional intelligence development programs to improve employee satisfaction and overall organizational productivity.

However, there are several limitations to this study. First, the study focuses on work-life balance and emotional intelligence as factors influencing job satisfaction, but it does not consider potential mediating variables that may also affect job satisfaction. Second, the geographical scope of the study is limited to East Java, meaning the findings may not be generalizable to other regions. Third, the study does not differentiate respondents based on job type, which may influence the results, as different job conditions can impact job satisfaction. Future research should consider expanding the geographical scope, incorporating mediating variables, and analyzing different job types to provide more comprehensive and in-depth results.

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