



## Analysis of Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction in Improving Employee Performance Mediated by Work Motivation

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### Abstract:

The complexity of problems in the work environment demands attention to work-life balance (WLB) and job satisfaction as key determinants of employee performance, with work motivation acting as a mediating variable that strengthens the causal relationship between working conditions and individual productivity. This study aims to examine the influence of WLB and job satisfaction on employee performance, focusing on the mediating role of work motivation within a government context. Using a quantitative approach, primary data were collected through questionnaires distributed directly to 70 employees of the Serang District Ministry of Religion Office, and the relationships between variables were tested using PLS-SEM version 4.0. The empirical findings reveal that WLB neither directly nor indirectly influences employee performance. Conversely, job satisfaction significantly affects work motivation, which positively contributes to improving employee performance. Furthermore, work motivation mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and performance, but it does not serve as a mediating factor between WLB and performance. These findings underscore the importance of implementing human resource management strategies centered on performance enhancement to foster a more motivated and productive workforce, which, in turn, can support the efficiency of public sector services and contribute to broader economic growth

### Article History:

Submitted: March 18, 2025

Revised: April 21, 2025

Accepted: April 23, 2025

Published: April 29, 2025

### Keywords:

Employee Performance

Government Sector

Job Satisfaction

Work Motivation

Work-Life Balance

To cite this article (APA Style):

Nawawi., Wahyudi., & Abdurrohman. (2025). Analysis of Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction in Improving Employee Performance Mediated by Work Motivation. *Almana : Jurnal Manajemen dan Bisnis*, 9(1), 141-154. <https://doi.org/10.36555/almana.v9i1.2798>

## INTRODUCTION

In the midst of the dynamic development of an increasingly complex world of work, quality human resources are strategic assets that determine the success and competitiveness of an organization. In the realm of governmental institutions, high-performing personnel contribute significantly to the realization of institutional objectives and the enhancement of the caliber of public services (Xiao et al., 2024). Employee performance within government institutions serves as a crucial measure of success in attaining organizational objectives and fulfilling public needs. Optimal performance reflects employees' accomplishments that align with their assigned duties and established standards (Stirpe et al., 2022). Therefore, sustaining and enhancing employee performance remains a key focus in effective human resource management.



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Achieving optimal employee performance is closely related to maintaining work-life balance (WLB). Ensuring WLB is not only important for creating a sense of balance, but also serves a significant function in enhancing the productivity of employees within the organization (Ahiabu et al., 2024). Disruptions caused by conflicts between family responsibilities and personal interests can negatively impact the quality of employee performance at work (Gultom & Liyas, 2023). The American Productivity Audit (APA) reports that inadequate work-life balance (WLB) leads to a \$225.8 billion annual loss in productivity, equivalent to \$1,685 per employee each year, resulting from a decline in work performance (Stewart et al., 2003). In a research investigation undertaken by (Arifin & Muharto, 2022) at PT. Livia Mandiri Sejati Pasuruan, which included a sample of 40 participants, it was revealed that WLB exerts a positive and statistically significant impact on employee performance, quantified at 85.1%. Furthermore, a study conducted by the University of Warwick indicated that employees exhibiting a favorable work-life balance are 12% more productive in their professional endeavors (Oswald et al., 2015). Therefore, it is very important for government and private organizations to build a work atmosphere that fosters WLB, enabling employees to be inspired by their own potential.

In the Serang Religion Affairs Ministry of Regency (Kemenag), maintaining WLB is often challenging due to the high demands of work and the pressure to meet optimal performance targets. Based on data in 2023, there were 1,103 Hajj and Umrah applicants totaling 2,500 pilgrims (Diskominfo, 2024), while in 2024, there were 1,301 Hajj and Umrah applicants totaling 2,800 (Kosasih, 2023). The data shows that Hajj and Umrah registrants experience a significant increase ever year, along with the increasing of the community in performing worship. However, this increase also brings its own challenges, especially which is often limited (Vu et al., 2019), if not balanced with efforts to optimize systems and human resources. From the results of an interview with one of the Kemenag staff, it was stated that although there are many work tasks and tasks that must be adjusted, this does not reduce the quality of Kemenag services to the community because good service is the top priority. Even so, as an ordinary human being, when faced with work tasks that are piling up and work targets that must be equilibrated, it will affect work performance and will have an impact on the balance of life/WLB and work satisfaction. Consequently, the establishment of a WLB framework is integral not solely to enhancing individual employee performance, but also to bolstering the overall efficacy of the organization (Ahiabu et al., 2024).

Although the significance of work-life balance (WLB) and job satisfaction has been widely examined, their implementation within government institutions particularly at the district level remains underexplored. In the Serang Regency Ministry of Religious Affairs, WLB is increasingly relevant due to the growing complexity of tasks and administrative demands placed on staff (Ahiabu et al., 2024). While achieving WLB can enhance motivation and improve performance, public sector employees often struggle to balance personal well-being with professional expectations. An imbalance tends to reduce engagement and productivity (Ahiabu et al., 2024), whereas effective WLB contributes to better job commitment and service quality (Campo et al., 2021). Alongside WLB, job satisfaction is essential for maintaining motivation, fostering collaboration, and minimizing stress in public services (Mosuin et al., 2019; Stirpe et al., 2022).

Furthermore, beyond job satisfaction, work motivation plays a vital role in shaping employee behavior and performance across sectors. Motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, directs individual effort toward organizational goals (Pârjoleanu, 2020). Motivated employees tend to report higher job satisfaction and demonstrate stronger performance commitment (Bodendieck et al., 2022). Within the Serang District Ministry of Religion, motivation becomes crucial for sustaining productivity in resource-constrained environments and may serve to strengthen the link between WLB, satisfaction, and employee performance outcomes (Silaban & Margaretha, 2021).

While various studies have explored the links between WLB, job satisfaction and employee performance, the focus has been predominantly on the private sector or industrial organizations, leaving the government sector, particularly at the regional level, relatively understudied. Although previous research, such as that of (Stirpe et al., 2022; Xiao et al., 2024), has explored the connection between job satisfaction and employee performance, yet there's still a little gap in grasping how WLB impacts job satisfaction and work motivation, and eventually employee performance in the public sector, especially within the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag). Most existing studies focus on private companies or direct service organizations, providing limited insights into government institutions. Research conducted by (Bodendieck et al., 2022) on the relationship between work motivation and employee performance, but the influence of work life balance (WLB) on work motivation is still under-explored. This deficiency underscores the importance of additional research to explain the mediating function of work motivation in the relationship between WLB, job satisfaction, and employee performance.

Therefore, although previous studies have examined WLB, job satisfaction, and work motivation, there remains a need for a more in-depth and context-specific analysis of how these factors influence employee performance within the Serang District Government. This study is anticipated to contribute meaningfully by expanding academic understanding and offering practical recommendations for human resource management in the public sector.

This study presents a novel approach by integrating WLB, job satisfaction, and employee performance, with work motivation as a mediating variable, specifically within the context of local government organizations. It highlights the significance of the interaction between these variables in enhancing performance in the public sector, which has distinct characteristics and challenges compared to the private sector. The study aims to examine the impact of WLB and job satisfaction on employee performance at the Serang District Ministry of Religion Office, considering work motivation as a mediating factor. It focuses on the causal relationships among these three variables and investigates how work motivation can strengthen or amplify the influence of WLB and job satisfaction on employee performance. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the human resource management literature and offer practical insights for developing more effective policies to boost employee performance in both public and private sectors.

#### Work-life balance and employee performance

The notion of WLB pertains to an individual's capacity to effectively allocate time and energy between professional obligations and personal endeavors, which encompass familial responsibilities, recreational pursuits, and self-maintenance activities (Bodendieck et al., 2022). According to Mukhopadhyay. (2023), WLB is defined as the degree to which individuals can participate in and derive satisfaction from both their professional and family lives. When individuals in the workforce achieve an optimal balance between professional obligations and personal involvement, they generally exhibit high levels of conscientization and productivity (Ahiabu et al., 2024). A good WLB allows employees to rest and recharge, so that employees can return to work with high energy and creativity (Campo et al., 2021). Conversely, employees who feel irritated or stressed due to an imbalance are likely to suffer a decline in both productivity and work quality. (Mukhopadhyay, 2023).

H1: Work-life balance has a positive impact on employee performance

#### Job satisfaction and employee performance

Job satisfaction is an affirmative emotional response that individuals show toward their job, which arises when their anticipations, requirements, and values are met. Mumford et al. (2024) Job satisfaction refers to a person's emotional reaction to their job whether positive or negative, reflecting the level of comfort they experience in the workplace. It can shape employees' reactions toward the organization, influenced by how well the job aligns with their expectations, needs, and preferences (Abd-Rabou et al., 2024). Employees who feel valued and confident in their skills are more likely to be driven to accomplish

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organizational objectives with maximum performance (Mosuin et al., 2019). Increased levels of job satisfaction foster an environment in which employees are motivated to put in more effort, use more strategic engagement, and improve their overall performance. In contrast, dissatisfied employees are less motivated, more likely to make mistakes, and have poor performance (Otero et al., 2023).

H2: Job satisfaction has a positive impact on employee performance

#### Work-life balance and work motivation

WLB enables individuals to fulfill their basic needs, such as family time, relaxation, and self-balancing. When these needs are fulfilled, it naturally affects the individual's energy to work. In accordance with Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, the realization of self-actualization is feasible solely after the essential needs have been fulfilled (Ştefan et al., 2020). A good WLB keeps work motivation high because employees have enough time to rest and restore their stamina. On the other hand, an unbalanced WLB reduces work motivation due to fatigue and fatigue.

H3: Work-life balance has a positive impact on work motivation

#### Job satisfaction and job motivation

Job satisfaction signifies the affirmative emotions that individuals encounter in relation to their occupational endeavors. When employees perceive a sense of fulfillment in their roles, they are predisposed to exhibit enhanced performance levels (Otero et al., 2023). Motivation arising from job satisfaction makes employees driven to achieve organizational targets optimally, on the contrary, job dissatisfaction can cause a decrease in motivation, so that productivity decreases and organizational goals are difficult to achieve (Ayalew et al., 2021). Individuals exhibiting high levels of motivation are predisposed to encounter a profound sense of fulfillment within their occupational endeavors, thereby augmenting their comprehensive job satisfaction (Ferreira et al., 2020). Highly motivated employees experience higher job satisfaction, which is critical for organizational success (Ayalew et al., 2021; Lee & Na, 2024).

H4: Job satisfaction has a positive impact on job motivation

#### Work motivation and employee performance

Motivation has an important role in the life of a person, especially in performance. Motivation is basically the internal drive that arises within a person to achieve goals and accomplish tasks with enthusiasm. Work motivation provides the energy and direction for employees to focus on the specific goals set by the organization (Yim et al., 2024). Without motivation, employees are likely to lose direction and just carry out tasks as a routine without enthusiasm, which results in slow achievement of targets and lack of quality results (Oteiro et al., 2023).

H5: Work motivation has a positive impact on employee performance.

#### Work-life balance, work motivation, and employee performance

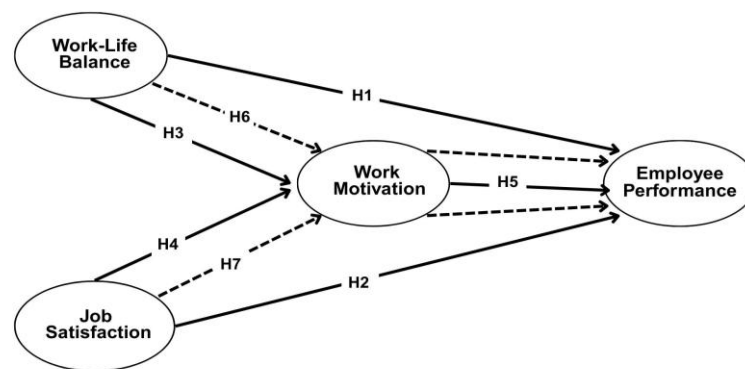
WLB is a state in which an individual is able to harmonize the demands of professional responsibilities and personal life effectively. Failing to balance work obligations and personal life can negatively impact an employee's job performance (Ahiabu et al., 2024). In this condition, what can mediate is motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic. WLB can affect performance through motivation, where a good balance makes employees more enthusiastic, productive, and committed in their work. Motivation is seen as a driver so that WLB not only creates comfort, but also encourages individuals to perform better (Bodeindeick et al., 2022).

H6: WLB has a positive impact on employee performance through work motivation as a mediator.

### Job satisfaction, work motivation, and employee performance

Motivation is super important for connecting job satisfaction with how well employees perform. When folks are motivated, they usually do a better job, and that motivation often comes from how satisfied they are with their work. Motivation is key in turning the good vibes from job satisfaction into real actions that boost performance. Job satisfaction is shaped by things like relationships with coworkers, personal life stuff, job features, behaviors, and the work environment. It can foster psychological conditions that encourage intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Thant & Chang, 2021). It is this motivation that then becomes the main driver for individuals to direct their energy and efforts to be more optimal, so that it will have an impact on improving performance (Mosuin et al., 2019). Thus, motivation acts as a linking mechanism that reveals how job satisfaction indirectly affects performance through increased motivation.

H7: Job satisfaction has a positive impact on employee performance with work motivation as a mediating variable.



**Figure 1. Framework**

Source: Processed data (2025)

### METHODS

The principal aim of this investigation is to meticulously analyze the causal relationships to determine the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variables. The study population comprised 70 employees from the Serang District Ministry of Religion Office. Given the relatively limited size of the population, this research implemented a census sampling technique, thereby permitting all individuals within the population to engage as respondents (Stratton, 2023). Furthermore, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was utilized to meticulously examine the interconnections among the variables.

This study employs quantitative methodologies to empirically examine the causal interactions among the variables being investigated. The primary aim is to evaluate the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The population of this study consisted of 70 employees of the Serang Regency Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Given the limited population size, a census sampling technique was adopted to ensure that all individuals in the population participated as respondents (Stratton, 2023). In addition, PLS-SEM analysis was used to comprehensively evaluate the interrelationships between variables.

The selection of the research object was guided by its significance to the issues being investigated, including WLB, job satisfaction, job motivation, and the uniqueness of the organizational conditions that reflect significant performance dynamics in the context of the government bureaucracy. In addition, this location was chosen because of its accessibility and potential to collect comprehensive and representative data. Data were gathered by distributing questionnaires directly to staff and conducting interviews to deepen the

understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Utilizing questionnaires in research allows for the systematic collection of information from a broad range of respondents while minimizing both time and cost. The distribution of direct speech questionnaires has the advantage of higher response rates, direct interaction that allows clarification of questions, and better control over the distribution of questionnaires (Arundel, 2023). This study presents the indicators of WLB, job satisfaction, work motivation, and employee performance in table 1.

**Table 1. Research constructs and indicators**

Variable	Indicators	Statement	Codes
Work-life balance (Sirgy & Lee, 2023)	Time balance	I can allocate time in a balanced way between work and personal activities.	WLB1
	Balance of engagement	I focus on work in accordance with assigned tasks and non-work activities.	WLB2
	Satisfaction balance	I feel satisfied with the way I manage my work and personal life responsibilities.	WLB3
Job satisfaction (Thant & Chang, 2021)	Interpersonal relationship	I have good working relationships with my coworkers.	JS1
	Factors in personal life	My job does not put pressure on me that interferes with my personal life.	JS2
	The work itself	I feel satisfied with the type of tasks assigned to me.	JS3
	Confession	I am often recognized for my work.	JS4
	Working condition	My work environment is comfortable and safe to work in.	JS5
	Policy and administration	The policies and procedures established by the Ministry of Religious Affairs can support productivity and facilitate the performance of my duties.	JS6
Work motivation (Pârjoleanu, 2020; Puspitasari et al., 2024)	Success in the workplace	I feel capable of achieving good work results in my tasks.	WM1
	Feedback	I get constructive feedback from my supervisor on my performance.	WM2
	Differentiation of responsibilities	Variety of tasks helps keep me motivated at work.	WM3
	Career advancement	I feel I have the opportunity to grow in my career at the Ministry of Religious Affairs.	WM4
	Thrust	I feel encouraged to carry out the tasks I have been given.	WM5
Employee performance (Ratih et al., 2023)	Quality	I ensure that every job I complete is of good quality.	EP1
	Quantity	I can complete tasks in accordance with the predetermined amount.	EP2
	Time multiplicity	I always complete tasks in accordance with the time that has been set.	EP3
	effectiveness	Activities or programs carried out by my work unit have a real impact on improving public services.	EP4
	independence	I can complete my work without depending much on the help of others.	EP5

Source: Considered for this study (2025)

Ratings of the items in the construct were conducted using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicates "strong disagree," 2 "disagree," 3 "neutral," 4 "agree," and 5 "strongly agree." The use of this scale aims to elicit a more structured response from the respondent while providing an adequate level of granularity to support the analysis (Jiří et al., 2021).

Data analysis in the present investigation was executed utilizing SmartPLS 4.0 software, which was chosen for its adeptness in processing datasets characterized by relatively limited sample sizes, its independence from the assumption of normal distribution, and its relevance to both reflective and formative measurement frameworks. The analytical methodology comprised two fundamental stages: the evaluation of the measurement framework (outer model) and the structural framework (inner model). This research adopted a reflective measurement model, wherein the constructs of WLB, job satisfaction, work motivation, and employee performance were evaluated reflectively. The appraisal of reflective measurements adheres to multiple criteria, which include factor loadings exceeding 0.70, composite reliability surpassing 0.70, Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.70, and an AVE score exceeding 0.50 (Hair et al., 2022). R-square values are used to ascertain the extent to which the variability in the dependent variable can be elucidated by the independent variable. According to Hair et al. (2022), R-square is categorized into three levels: high (0.75), moderate (0.50), and low (0.25). Furthermore, a hypothesis is accepted if the T-statistic exceeds the critical T-table value of 1.960 or if the P-value is less than 0.05.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the gathered data, the sample comprised 70 participants, which included 39 males and 31 females. With respect to age distribution, the predominant cohort was comprised of individuals aged 41-50 years (34 individuals), succeeded by those in the 31-40 years age bracket (20 individuals). Simultaneously, nine participants were categorized as falling within the age range of 21 to 30 years, whereas seven individuals were classified as exceeding the age of 51 years. Regarding educational qualifications, the predominant number of respondents held a bachelor's degree (49 individuals), followed by those who had completed secondary education (7 individuals), diploma holders (4 individuals), and individuals possessing master's degrees (10 individuals). There were no respondents with only elementary or junior high school education. Based on years of service, the distribution of respondents was quite varied, with 21-25 years of service dominating (17 people), followed by 16-20 years (16 people), 11-15 years (14 people), 5-10 years (13 people), 1-5 years (9 people), and only 1 person with more than 26 years of service. The inner model and outer model tests can be found in Table 2.

**Table 2. Model Outer Test**

Variable	Measurement Items	LF	CA	CR	AVE	R-Square
Work-Life balance (WLB)	WLB 1	0.906	0.899	0.936	0.831	
	WLB 2	0.897				
	WLB 3	0.931				
Job satisfaction (JS)	JS1	0.919	0.960	0.968	0.835	
	JS 2	0.937				
	JS 3	0.946				
	JS 4	0.858				
	JS 5	0.905				
	JS 6	0.916				
Work motivation (WM)	WM 1	0.894	0.940	0.954	0.808	0.808
	WM 2	0.922				
	WM 3	0.906				
	WM 4	0.924				
	WM 5	0.845				

Employee performance (EP)	EP 1	0.908	0.945	0.958	0.822	0.854
	EP 2	0.947				
	EP 3	0.904				
	EP 4	0.923				
	EP 5	0.848				

Source: SmartPLS 4.0 (2025)

Based on the data presented in Table 2, all measured indicators pertaining to the variables of Work-Life Balance (WLB), Job Satisfaction, Job Motivation, and Employee Performance exhibit loading factor values that surpass 0.7, thereby indicating a robust level of indicator validity. The construct reliability is further corroborated, as evidenced by the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values, both of which exceed the threshold of 0.7 for every variable under consideration. Moreover, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are found to be greater than 0.5, thereby suggesting a sufficient degree of convergent validity. As articulated by Hair et al, (2022), a construct is regarded as reliable when the Composite Reliability is greater than 0.70, the Cronbach's Alpha exceeds 0.70, and the AVE is greater than 0.5. Consequently, the model in question exhibits a strong level of validity and reliability, thereby affirming that the indicators proficiently measure the constructs they are intended to assess.

In the r-square column, work-life balance and job satisfaction collectively account for 80.8% of job motivation, thereby signifying a substantial impact, while the residual 19.2% is ascribed to other variables not analyzed within the confines of this investigation. Moreover, the triad of work-life balance, job satisfaction, and work motivation collectively elucidates 85.4% of employee performance, which also denotes a considerable degree of influence, with the remaining 14.6% being affected by factors that fall beyond the purview of this inquiry.

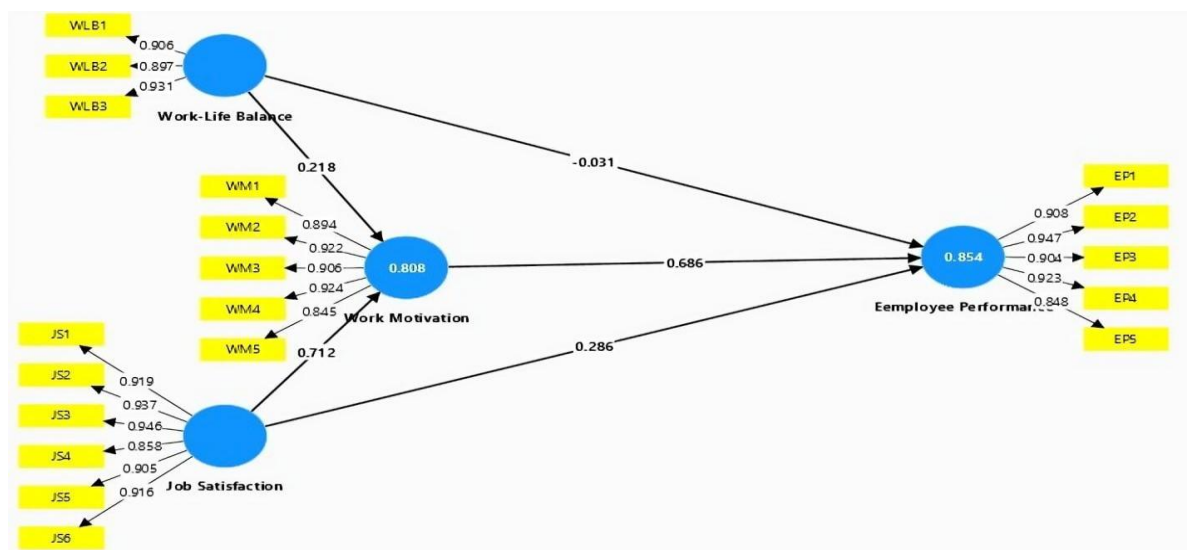


Figure 1. Mode Of Research

Source: SmartPLS 4.0 (2025)



**Table 5. Hypothesis Testing**

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values	Description
Direct Effect				
H1. WLB -> EP	-0.031	0.164	0.870	Insignificant
H2. JS -> EP	0.286	0.976	0.329	Insignificant
H3. WLB -> WM	0.218	1.523	0.128	Insignificant
H4. JS -> WM	0.712	4.955	0.000	Significant
H5. WM -> EP	0.686	2.818	0.005	Significant
Indirect Effect				
H6. WLB -> WM -> EP	0.150	1.404	0.160	Insignificant
H7. JS -> WM -> EP	0.489	2.050	0.040	Significant

Source: SmartPLS 4.0 (2025)

The results derived from the Bootstrapping analysis presented in Table 5 indicate that among the seven validated hypotheses, four (H1, H2, H3, and H6) lack empirical support, as demonstrated by T-Statistic values that fall below the threshold of 1.96 and P-Values that exceed 0.05. Conversely, the other three hypotheses (H4, H5, and H7) exhibit statistical significance and are corroborated by the data.

The results reveal that the relationship between work-life balance (WLB) and employee performance (EP) is not significant, with  $p = 0.870$  and  $t\text{-stat} = 0.164$ . Likewise, the relationship between job satisfaction (JS) and employee performance (EP) is also not significant, showing  $p = 0.329$  and  $t\text{-stat} = 0.976$ . Additionally, the link between work-life balance (WLB) and work motivation (WM) is insignificant, with  $p = 0.128$  and  $t\text{-stat} = 1.523$ . Conversely, job satisfaction (JS) exerts a significant influence on work motivation (WM), as indicated by a coefficient of 0.712, a p-value of 0.000, and a t-statistic of 4.955. Additionally, work motivation (WM) has a notable impact on employee performance (EP), demonstrated by a coefficient of 0.686, a p-value of 0.005, and a t-statistic of 2.818.

For the indirect effect, hypothesis H6 (WLB -> WM -> EP) exhibits a lack of statistical significance, with a p-value of 0.160 and a t-statistic of 1.404, suggesting that work motivation does not function as a mediating variable between work-life balance (WLB) and employee performance (EP). Conversely, hypothesis H7 (JS -> WM -> EP) demonstrates statistical significance, with a p-value of 0.040 and a t-statistic of 2.050, signifying that job satisfaction (JS) can positively influence employee performance via work motivation as a mediating variable, substantiated by the contributions derived from the relationships between JS and WM, as well as WM and EP.

#### Effect of work-life balance on employee performance

The research findings show that work-life balance (WLB) does not significantly affect employee performance. Although WLB is often described as the ability to harmonize professional tasks and personal life (Bodeindeick et al., 2022), it does not guarantee better results. Employees with sufficient personal time but lacking motivation or competence may still perform poorly (Agarwal & Raghav, 2023). In many cases, internal factors such as motivation and skills are more decisive in determining performance, even when WLB is disrupted (Maulana et al., 2020).

In addition, although some studies emphasize the positive effects of WLB on employee performance (Ahiabu et al., 2024; Campo et al., 2021), these studies are in line with the finding that WLB does not directly improve overall performance (Gultom & Liyas, 2023). In the context of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Serang Regency, public sector characteristics including job security and rigid procedural norms reduce the relevance of flexible work arrangements. Therefore, although employees perceive balanced work-life conditions, this does not necessarily translate into higher performance outcomes.

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### The effect of job satisfaction on employee performance

The study revealed that job satisfaction does not exhibit a statistically significant effect on employee performance, particularly within bureaucratic institutions like the Serang District Government. In this structured environment, employee performance is primarily driven by professional duties and adherence to standardized procedures rather than satisfaction levels (Meirana, 2022; Rohman, 2022). Employees tend to fulfill their responsibilities out of obligation to regulations rather than intrinsic motivation, which explains the limited role of job satisfaction in influencing productivity (Rohman, 2022; Wahyuhadi et al., 2023).

Similarly, within the Ministry of Religious Affairs, rigid bureaucratic systems, procedural compliance, and seniority-based promotion reduce the influence of job satisfaction on performance outcomes (Vu et al., 2019). The current evaluation framework prioritizes task completion over result-oriented performance (Suleimeinova et al., 2018), weakening the connection between satisfaction and productivity. Although prior research highlights a positive correlation between job satisfaction and performance (Mosuin et al., 2019; Stirpei et al., 2022; Xiao et al., 2024), in this public-sector context, enhancing performance is better achieved through revising performance management systems, strengthening competencies, and implementing incentive structures aligned with measurable achievements.

### Effect of work-life balance on work motivation

The results derived from the hypothesis testing suggest that WLB does not demonstrate a statistically significant impact on work motivation. In a work environment that has administrative and public service demands, work motivation is more influenced by other factors such as diversification of responsibilities, as well as the system of rewards and behaviors received by employees. An optimal WLB does not invariably exhibit a direct correlation with elevated levels of motivation, as motivation is predominantly shaped by internal or external variables that are intrinsically linked to the tasks and obligations associated with one's professional responsibilities (Rene & Wahyuni, 2018). The findings of the present investigation correspond with previous scholarly work indicating that WLB does not exert a substantial impact on work motivation (Mahardika et al., 2022; Rene & Wahyuni, 2018). However, other studies, such as those by Bodendieck et al. (2022) argue that WLB has a notable impact on motivation.

If a staff member has high dedication they will continue to work, regardless of whether they have a good WLB or not. If a worker has a strong sense of responsibility for his/her work and is rewarded for the results of his/her work, he/she will remain motivated to perform his/her duties well, even if his/her workload is high. On the other hand, if they do not have enough intrinsic motivation or external incentive, then even a good WLB will not necessarily increase their motivation to work. Thus, WLB is not the main factor in increasing work motivation, because motivation is more influenced by other factors that are more directly related to work tasks and responsibilities.

### Effect of job satisfaction on job motivation

Job satisfaction contributes significantly to increasing work motivation, because a sense of satisfaction with work creates an intrinsic motivation to work better. When employees feel that the tasks they are assigned are in line with their expertise and interests, they will be more enthusiastic in carrying out their responsibilities (Xiao et al., 2024). The fulfillment derived from professional endeavors cultivates a profound sense of valuation for the tasks undertaken, consequently allowing employees to experience an elevated sense of recognition and significance in their contributions. This, in turn, motivates them to exhibit heightened dedication and to pursue the attainment of superior work outcomes. This study

aligns with previous research suggesting that job satisfaction significantly influences work motivation (Ayalew et al., 2021a; Xiao et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the potential for professional progression augments the relationship between occupational contentment and motivational factors. When employees see the prospect of career advancement in the organization, they will be more motivated to perform well in order to achieve this opportunity. This creates a positive cycle, whereby satisfaction with one's work reinforces one's morale, which in turn increases one's motivation to be more balanced and make a greater contribution.

#### The effect of work motivation on employee performance

Employee performance is profoundly affected by the construct of work motivation, which serves as a pivotal determinant in encouraging individuals to accomplish tasks with efficacy. This research supports existing studies that underscore the positive connection between motivation and performance (Mosuin et al., 2019; Stirpe et al., 2022). Highly motivated employees tend to demonstrate greater dedication, take initiative, and work diligently to achieve set targets. When employees perceive their work as offering a sense of balance, they are more enthusiastic in fulfilling their responsibilities, ultimately enhancing their performance (Stirpe et al., 2022).

The ability to be balanced in the career is the main factor that reinforces the correlation between motivation and performance. Employees who see the opportunity to improve their career path will have more motivation to perform well and achieve organizational goals. With strong motivation, employees will not only produce the required amount of work, but will also strive to improve the quality of their work.

#### The effect of work-life balance on performance through work motivation as a mediating variable.

The findings indicate that work-life balance (WLB) does not significantly influence employee performance through the mediating role of work motivation. Among employees of the Serang District Ministry of Religion, the ability to balance professional and personal roles does not necessarily strengthen the internal drive to enhance performance. This is because work motivation is shaped more by intrinsic factors such as recognition, meaningful challenges, and growth opportunities rather than by WLB alone (Otero et al., 2023; Pârjoleanu, 2020).

Moreover, employee performance appears to be shaped more by competence, job system support, and structural incentives than by motivation derived from WLB. Previous studies confirm that WLB does not always correlate with increased autonomy or efficiency (Gultom & Liyas, 2023). The study also shows that work motivation, particularly the drive indicator, lacks sufficient strength to mediate the relationship between WLB and performance. Instead, job security, recognition, and career development are the primary forces behind motivation (Pârjoleanu, 2020). This suggests the need to explore alternative mediators or external variables that may more effectively explain employee performance patterns within the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

#### The effect of job satisfaction on performance through job motivation as a mediating variable.

A significant and positive correlation is evident between job satisfaction and employee performance, with work motivation functioning as a mediating variable. This observation can be elucidated through the psychological and organizational frameworks that underpin the interrelationship among the three variables. Contentment in the workplace can elicit affirmative emotions that contribute to heightened work motivation (Stirpe et al., 2022; Xiao et al., 2024). Work motivation, in this case, appears to be an effective mediator because it facilitates the transformation of satisfaction into concrete actions that support performance. The findings of this study demonstrate that job satisfaction exerts an impact on employee performance in both a direct and an indirect manner by enhancing work motivation.

The results of this investigation corroborate earlier studies suggesting that job satisfaction exerts a beneficial influence on work motivation, which subsequently enhances employee performance (Ayalew et al., 2021; Stirpe et al., 2022; Xiao et al., 2024). This aligns with motivational theories suggesting that job satisfaction can foster intrinsic motivation, especially when employees view their work as meaningful and see opportunities for recognition (Ştefan et al., 2020). As a result, job satisfaction significantly influences employee performance, wherein work motivation functions as a mediating variable that transforms job satisfaction into effective behavior. These findings underscore the imperative for organizations to not only improve job satisfaction but also to foster motivation in order to propel employees towards realizing optimal performance levels.

### CONCLUSION

Drawing from the synthesis of empirical findings, it can be deduced that employee performance is a pivotal factor in ascertaining the efficacy of public services within the governmental sector. While work-life balance (WLB) and job satisfaction contribute to the formation of employee motivation and productivity, this investigation offers an academic contribution by exploring the interrelationship between WLB, job satisfaction, and employee performance, with job motivation functioning as a mediating variable. The results of this investigation indicate that WLB does not exert a significant influence on employee performance, either in a direct or indirect manner, implying that WLB is not an essential catalyst for productivity within a bureaucratic context. Conversely, job satisfaction demonstrates a considerable positive effect on job motivation, which subsequently enhances employee performance. These results emphasize the critical role of job satisfaction as a fundamental element in driving motivation and productivity among employees in the public sector. From a practical standpoint, the research underscores the necessity for human resource strategies to prioritize job satisfaction by cultivating a supportive work environment, implementing performance-based reward systems, and providing clear, structured career development trajectories.

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