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Achieving Work-Life Balance Among Millennial And Generation Z Employees

Challenges, Strategies, and Performance Implications

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Abstract

Work-life balance has emerged as a critical concern in contemporary organizational management, particularly as Millennial and Generation Z employees increasingly constitute the dominant workforce demographic globally. Despite widespread recognition of work-life balance, younger workers continue struggling to achieve balance amid economic pressures, digital connectivity demands, and evolving workplace expectations. This research examines work-life balance dynamics among Millennial and Generation Z employees, investigating relationships between organizational support, work-life balance, and multiple performance outcomes, while exploring generational differences in these relationships and identifying specific challenges, strategies, and organizational factors influencing balance. This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design combining quantitative surveys and qualitative semi-structured interviews. The quantitative phase collected data from 478 employees (289 Millennials, 189 Generation Z) across five Indonesian cities using validated instruments measuring work-life balance, organizational support, job performance, satisfaction, and well-being. Structural equation modeling analyzed relationships and tested mediation effects, while multigroup analysis compared generational differences. The qualitative phase involved 32 in-depth interviews exploring lived experiences, challenges, and coping strategies, analyzed through thematic analysis using NVivo software. Organizational support significantly predicted work-life balance (β=0.61, p<0.001), which positively influenced task performance, contextual performance, job satisfaction, and well-being. Job satisfaction partially mediates work-life balance effects on performance outcomes. Generational differences emerged, with work-life balance more strongly predicting task performance (β=0.38 vs. β=0.22, p=0.032) and well-being (β=0.51 vs. β=0.36, p=0.041) for Generation Z compared to Millennials. Qualitative findings identified five major challenges: excessive workload, digital connectivity demands, financial pressures, organizational inflexibility, and career advancement tensions. Participants employed boundary management, technology limitations, prioritization skills, and social support mobilization as coping strategies. Work-life balance critically shapes performance outcomes among younger employees, with generational distinctiveness requiring nuanced organizational approaches. Organizations must move beyond symbolic policies to authentic cultural transformation supporting work-life balance, particularly addressing Generation Z's heightened needs while maintaining strong organizational support structures benefiting all employees.

Keywords: *Generation Z, Millennial Employees, Organizational Support, Performance Outcomes, Work-Life Balance*

Introduction

Work-life balance has emerged as a critical concern in contemporary organizational management, particularly as Millennial and Generation Z employees increasingly constitute the dominant workforce demographic globally. Consistent with recent findings, work-life balance is the top consideration for Gen Z and millennials when choosing an employer, surpassing traditional factors such

as compensation and career advancement opportunities. The demographic shift in workforce composition, characterized by younger generations who prioritize flexibility, well-being, and meaningful work experiences, has necessitated a fundamental reconsideration of traditional employment paradigms and organizational practices [1]. Millennials and Gen Z are both facing true inflation for the first time in their lives, making them more vulnerable to the impact of general economic volatility, given that they are early in their careers with lower salaries and have had less opportunity to accumulate wealth compared to older generations. This economic reality, coupled with evolving workplace expectations, creates a complex environment where achieving work-life balance becomes both highly valued and increasingly difficult to attain. The significance of work-life balance extends beyond individual employee satisfaction to encompass organizational performance outcomes. Research demonstrates that employees with effective work-life balance exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and productivity, while simultaneously experiencing reduced stress, burnout, and turnover intentions [2],[3]. For organizations, fostering work-life balance among employees translates into tangible benefits, including enhanced employee engagement, improved talent retention, reduced absenteeism costs, and ultimately superior organizational performance [4]. However, despite widespread recognition of work-life balance importance, many organizations struggle to implement effective policies and practices that genuinely support employees in achieving balance, particularly for younger workers navigating early career stages, financial insecurity, and rapidly changing work environments.

Millennial employees, generally defined as individuals born between 1981 and 1996, and Generation Z employees, born between 1997 and 2012, represent distinct cohorts with unique characteristics, values, and expectations regarding work-life integration. Gen Z employees are more likely to value work-life balance than their millennial and Gen X colleagues, with 32% ranking it as the most important aspect of a job, versus 28% and 25% of the older generations. These generational differences reflect not merely age-related preferences but fundamental shifts in how younger workers conceptualize the relationship between work and personal life. Millennials have paved the way for more flexibility and better work-life balance; Gen Z has decided to make it the new norm. Both generations entered the workforce during periods of significant economic and social disruption—Millennials experienced the 2008 global financial crisis early in their careers, while Generation Z began their professional journeys amid the COVID-19 pandemic—experiences that profoundly shaped their workplace expectations and priorities. Recent empirical evidence reveals concerning trends regarding younger workers' work-life balance experiences and mental health outcomes. Only about half of Gen Zs (51%) and millennials (56%) rate their mental health as good or extremely good. And while stress levels have improved slightly since last year, they remain high, with 40% of Gen Zs and 35% of millennials saying they feel stressed all or most of the time. About a third of respondents say that their job and their work/life balance contribute a lot to their stress levels. The heightened stress levels among younger workers stem from multiple sources, including financial insecurity, long working hours, lack of organizational recognition, family welfare concerns, and broader societal issues such as climate anxiety and social inequality [5]. Many have added second or third gigs to get by, while others stayed on the

clock past the typical nine-to-five; seven out of 10 respondents said they responded to work emails outside of normal hours at least once a week. These patterns indicate a troubling disconnect between younger generations' stated work-life balance priorities and their actual lived experiences.

The COVID-19 pandemic fundamentally disrupted traditional work arrangements and accelerated the adoption of flexible work models, including remote work, hybrid schedules, and compressed work weeks. Two-thirds of Gen Zs (64%) and millennials (66%) say they work for organizations that have recently implemented a return-to-office policy, suggesting that post-pandemic organizational responses to workplace flexibility remain contested terrain. The pandemic experience demonstrated both the possibilities and challenges of alternative work arrangements—while many employees appreciated flexibility and autonomy, others struggled with boundary management, social isolation, and the blurring of work-personal life boundaries. For younger workers who began their careers during or shortly before the pandemic, these experiences shaped formative professional socialization, creating expectations for workplace flexibility that may conflict with organizational preferences for traditional office-based work models. Despite extensive research on work-life balance, several significant gaps exist in current scholarly understanding, particularly regarding Millennial and Generation Z employees. First, while numerous studies examine work-life balance impacts on job satisfaction and employee performance generally, research specifically addressing these relationships within younger generational cohorts remains limited and often produces inconsistent findings. Second, most existing research adopts cross-sectional designs examining work-life balance at single time points, with insufficient longitudinal investigation of how work-life balance challenges and strategies evolve as young workers progress through career stages and life transitions [6]. Third, substantial research gaps exist regarding how generational characteristics interact with organizational contexts, industry sectors, and cultural environments to shape work-life balance experiences and outcomes. Fourth, while technology's role in enabling flexible work receives attention, less research examines how digital connectivity and always-on work cultures specifically impact younger workers' ability to establish and maintain work-life boundaries. Finally, there is limited empirical evidence regarding which specific organizational strategies and interventions most effectively support work-life balance for Millennial and Generation Z employees, particularly in addressing their distinctive needs, values, and circumstances.

The theoretical framework guiding this research integrates multiple perspectives, including work-life balance theory, generational cohort theory, and organizational support theory. Work-life balance theory conceptualizes the dynamic equilibrium individuals seek between work demands and personal life responsibilities, emphasizing both objective time allocation and subjective satisfaction with work-life integration [1]. Generational cohort theory posits that individuals born during similar time periods share formative experiences that shape distinctive values, attitudes, and behaviors, including workplace expectations and priorities [7]. Organizational support theory suggests that employees form perceptions regarding the extent to which their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being, perceptions that significantly influence work attitudes and behaviors [8]. These theoretical perspectives collectively inform understanding of how younger workers' generational characteristics, organizational policies and practices, and individual work-life balance experiences

interact to influence performance outcomes. This research addresses identified gaps through a comprehensive investigation of work-life balance among Millennial and Generation Z employees, examining the multifaceted challenges these cohorts face in achieving balance, strategies they employ to navigate work-life tensions, organizational factors that facilitate or hinder balance, and relationships between work-life balance and various performance outcomes. The study pursues several specific objectives. First, it seeks to identify and characterize the primary work-life balance challenges confronting Millennial and Generation Z employees across different organizational and industry contexts. Second, it examines individual-level strategies and coping mechanisms younger workers utilize to manage work-life demands and establish boundaries. Third, it investigates organizational policies, practices, and cultural factors that support or undermine work-life balance for younger employees. Fourth, it analyzes relationships between work-life balance and multiple performance dimensions, including task performance, contextual performance, innovative behaviors, and well-being outcomes. Fifth, it explores whether and how work-life balance relationships with performance outcomes differ between Millennial and Generation Z cohorts, accounting for generational distinctiveness.

The research employs a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative survey data collection and qualitative interviews to capture both breadth and depth of work-life balance phenomena among younger workers. The quantitative component utilizes validated instruments measuring work-life balance, organizational support, job satisfaction, and multiple performance dimensions, with data collected from diverse organizational contexts to enhance generalizability. The qualitative component involves semi-structured interviews with Millennial and Generation Z employees exploring their lived experiences of work-life balance challenges, strategies, and organizational support, providing rich contextual understanding, complementing quantitative patterns. This methodological integration enables a comprehensive examination of complex work-life balance dynamics while accounting for individual differences and contextual variation. This research offers significant theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it advances understanding of how generational characteristics shape work-life balance experiences and outcomes, extends work-life balance theory by examining its application to younger worker populations with distinctive needs and circumstances, and contributes to organizational support literature by identifying specific support mechanisms most salient for Millennial and Generation Z employees. Practically, findings inform organizational policy and practice development regarding flexible work arrangements, employee well-being programs, and management approaches that effectively support younger workers' work-life balance needs. Given that Millennials and Generation Z collectively constitute the majority of the global workforce and will dominate organizational demographics for decades, understanding how to effectively support these generations' work-life balance represents a critical imperative for organizational success, talent attraction and retention, and sustainable workforce management.

The article proceeds as follows. The subsequent section presents a comprehensive literature review examining existing research on work-life balance generally and among younger workers specifically, generational characteristics of Millennials and Generation Z, relationships between work-

life balance and performance outcomes, and organizational factors influencing work-life balance. Following the literature review, the methodology section details the research design, sampling procedures, data collection instruments, and analytical techniques employed. The results section presents both quantitative and qualitative findings organized around the research objectives. The discussion section interprets findings in relation to existing theory and research, considers theoretical and practical implications, acknowledges limitations, and proposes directions for future research. Finally, the conclusion synthesizes key insights and emphasizes the importance of addressing work-life balance for younger worker cohorts in contemporary organizational contexts.

Material and Methods

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative survey methodology with qualitative semi-structured interviews to comprehensively examine work-life balance among Millennial and Generation Z employees. The research was conducted across multiple organizational sectors in Indonesia (technology, financial services, manufacturing, education, and healthcare) from March to July 2024. The target population comprised Millennial employees (born 1981-1996, aged 28-43 years) and Generation Z employees (born 1997-2012, aged 22-27 years) with a minimum of one year of full-time employment. For the quantitative phase, multi-stage cluster random sampling was employed across five major Indonesian cities (Jakarta, Surabaya, Bandung, Medan, Makassar). Sample size was determined using G*Power 3.1 software (Faul et al., 2009) with a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.15$), alpha 0.05, and power 0.80, yielding a minimum required sample of 118 participants, increased to 500 to account for non-response. The final sample comprised 478 valid responses (response rate 95.6%), including 289 Millennials (60.5%) and 189 Generation Z (39.5%). For the qualitative phase, purposive maximum variation sampling selected 32 participants (18 Millennials, 14 Generation Z) representing diverse work-life balance experiences, organizational contexts, and demographic characteristics.

Quantitative data were collected through structured self-administered questionnaires comprising six sections: demographics, Work-Life Balance Scale (Hayman [9], 15 items), measuring work interference with personal life, personal life interference with work, and work-personal life enhancement. Organizational Support for Work-Life Balance (Allen [10], 12 items), Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (Koopmans et al. [11], measuring task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behavior), Job Satisfaction (Brayfield & Rothe [12], 5 items), and Well-Being (Topp et al. [13], 5 items). All scales utilized 5-point Likert scales with demonstrated reliability (Cronbach's alpha 0.78-0.92 in pilot testing with 50 employees). Questionnaires were administered online via Qualtrics and paper-based formats during March-May 2024. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted in the Indonesian language during June-July 2024, either face-to-face (n=18) or via Zoom (n=14), lasting 45-75 minutes (mean=58 minutes). Interview protocol explored six key themes: current work-life balance situations, challenges faced, management strategies, organizational support, performance and well-being impacts, and generational

perspectives. All interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and transcribed verbatim, yielding 847 pages of transcript text.

Quantitative data analysis employed SPSS Version 28.0 (IBM Corp., 2021) for descriptive statistics, reliability assessment, and preliminary analyses, and SmartPLS 3.3.9 (Ringle et al., 2015) for structural equation modeling using a partial least squares approach (PLS-SEM) to test relationships between work-life balance, organizational support, job performance, satisfaction, and well-being. Multiple regression analysis examined work-life balance predictors, while multigroup analysis compared path coefficients between generational cohorts. Mediation effects were tested using bootstrapping procedures with 5,000 resamples. Qualitative data analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis framework using NVivo 12 software (QSR International, 2020), generating 324 initial codes organized into coherent themes. Quality was enhanced through investigator triangulation (two independent researchers coding subsets), member checking, peer debriefing, and audit trails. Ethical approval was obtained from the University Research Ethics Committee (Approval Number: UEC/2024/03/078, Date: February 15, 2024) before data collection. All participants provided written informed consent, with confidentiality maintained through pseudonyms and secure data storage. The integration of quantitative and qualitative components enhanced overall validity through methodological triangulation, with convergence strengthening confidence in conclusions while divergence prompted deeper investigation.

Results

The demographic profile of participants revealed diverse representation across key characteristics. Among the 478 respondents, 52.3% were female and 47.7% male, with Millennials comprising 60.5% (n=289) and Generation Z 39.5% (n=189). The majority held bachelor's degrees (68.4%), with 18.6% holding master's degrees and 13.0% diplomas. Regarding marital status, 41.2% were single, 38.5% married without children, and 20.3% married with children. Work arrangements varied, with 45.2% working on-site, 32.6% in hybrid arrangements, and 22.2% fully remote. Organizational tenure ranged from 1-3 years (42.5%), 3-5 years (31.8%), to over 5 years (25.7%). Descriptive statistics for key study variables are presented in Table 1, revealing that overall work-life balance scored moderately (M=3.24, SD=0.78), with notable differences between dimensions: work-personal life enhancement showed the highest scores (M=3.58, SD=0.82), while work interference with personal life scored lowest (M=2.98, SD=0.91). Organizational support for work-life balance averaged 3.42 (SD=0.85), indicating moderate perceived support. Job performance dimensions demonstrated relatively high scores: task performance (M=3.89, SD=0.68), contextual performance (M=3.76, SD=0.72), with low counterproductive work behavior (M=1.85, SD=0.64, reverse-scored). Job satisfaction averaged 3.67 (SD=0.79) and psychological well-being 3.51 (SD=0.88). Correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between work-life balance and organizational support ($r=0.58$, $p<0.001$), job satisfaction ($r=0.62$, $p<0.001$), task performance ($r=0.44$, $p<0.001$), contextual performance ($r=0.39$, $p<0.001$), and well-being ($r=0.56$, $p<0.001$), while negatively correlating with counterproductive work behavior ($r=-0.35$, $p<0.001$).

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Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Study Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Work-Life Balance	3.24	0.78	-							
2. WIPL	2.98	0.91	-0.72**	-						
3. PLIW	3.16	0.84	-0.68**	0.51**	-					
4. WPLE	3.58	0.82	0.81**	-0.42**	-0.38**					
5. Organizational Support	3.42	0.85	0.58**	-0.46**	-0.41**	0.52**	-			
6. Task Performance	3.89	0.68	0.44**	-0.31**	-0.28**	0.39**	0.41**	-		
7. Contextual Performance	3.76	0.72	0.39**	-0.27**	-0.24**	0.35**	0.38**	0.67**	-	
8. Job Satisfaction	3.67	0.79	0.62**	-0.48**	-0.43**	0.56**	0.61**	0.52**	0.49**	-
9. Well-Being	3.51	0.88	0.56**	-0.44**	-0.39**	0.51**	0.54**	0.46**	0.43**	0.68**

Note: N=478. WIPL=Work Interference with Personal Life; PLIW=Personal Life Interference with Work; WPLE=Work-Personal Life Enhancement. **p<0.001.

The structural equation modeling results demonstrated that the hypothesized model fit the data well (χ^2/df=2.18, CFI=0.94, TLI=0.93, RMSEA=0.05, SRMR=0.04). Organizational support for work-life balance significantly predicted work-life balance (β=0.61, p<0.001), explaining 37.2% of its variance (R^2=0.372). Work-life balance, in turn, significantly predicted task performance (β=0.28, p<0.001, R^2=0.24), contextual performance (β=0.25, p<0.001, R^2=0.21), job satisfaction (β=0.48, p<0.001, R^2=0.45), and well-being (β=0.42, p<0.001, R^2=0.38), while negatively predicting counterproductive work behavior (β=-0.31, p<0.001, R^2=0.15). Job satisfaction mediated the relationship between work-life balance and both task performance (indirect effect: β=0.16, 95% CI [0.11, 0.22]) and contextual performance (indirect effect: β=0.14, 95% CI [0.09, 0.20]), supporting partial mediation. Multigroup analysis comparing Millennials and Generation Z revealed significant generational differences in several path relationships (Table 2). The effect of work-life balance on task performance was significantly stronger for Generation Z (β=0.38, p<0.001) compared to Millennials (β=0.22, p<0.01, ΔM-G=-0.16, p=0.032). Similarly, work-life balance more strongly predicted well-being for Generation Z (β=0.51, p<0.001) than Millennials (β=0.36, p<0.001, ΔM-G=-0.15, p=0.041). However, organizational support predicted work-life balance equally strongly for both generations (Millennials: β=0.59, Generation Z: β=0.63, ΔM-G=-0.04, p=0.582), suggesting similar organizational support importance across cohorts.

Table 2. Multigroup Analysis: Path Coefficients for Millennials and Generation Z

Path Relationship	Millennials (n=289)	Generation Z (n=189)	Difference (ΔM-G)	p-value
Organizational Support → WLB	0.59***	0.63***	-0.04	0.582
WLB → Task Performance	0.22**	0.38***	-0.16*	0.032
WLB → Contextual Performance	0.23**	0.28***	-0.05	0.468
WLB → Job Satisfaction	0.45***	0.52***	-0.07	0.318
WLB → Well-Being	0.36***	0.51***	-0.15*	0.041
WLB → CWB (reversed)	-0.29***	-0.34***	0.05	0.521
Job Satisfaction → Task Performance	0.38***	0.32***	0.06	0.425
Job Satisfaction → Contextual Performance	0.34***	0.29**	0.05	0.536

Note: WLB=Work-Life Balance; CWB=Counterproductive Work Behavior. *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

Qualitative findings from 32 interviews enriched the understanding of quantitative patterns by revealing specific challenges, strategies, and organizational factors influencing work-life balance. Thematic analysis identified five major challenge themes:

- excessive workload and overtime expectations (mentioned by 28 participants), particularly acute for Generation Z employees in early career stages facing steep learning curves;
- digital connectivity demands creating "always-on" work cultures (24 participants), with instant messaging and email expectations blurring work-home boundaries;
- financial pressures requiring additional income sources (19 participants), especially prevalent among younger Generation Z employees with student loans and limited savings;
- lack of organizational flexibility despite stated policies (17 participants), where formal flexible work policies existed but informal norms discouraged utilization; and
- career advancement pressures conflicting with personal priorities (15 participants), with concerns that prioritizing work-life balance might signal a lack of ambition.

Regarding strategies, participants described four primary approaches:

- boundary management through designated work times and spaces (26 participants),
- technology use limitations, including disabling work notifications after hours (22 participants),
- prioritization and delegation skills to manage workload efficiently (20 participants), and
- social support mobilization from family, friends, and colleagues (18 participants).

Organizational support manifestations included flexible scheduling options valued by 23 participants, supervisor understanding and accommodation praised by 19 participants, wellness programs and resources utilized by 14 participants, and organizational culture emphasizing results over presenteeism appreciated by 12 participants.

Generation Z participants particularly emphasized authenticity expectations, with one stating:

> "We want organizations to genuinely care about our well-being, not just have policies on paper that nobody can actually use without being judged."

Millennial participants more frequently discussed challenges balancing dual responsibilities of childcare and eldercare, reflecting their life stage positioning in the generational sandwich.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide robust empirical evidence for the critical role of work-life balance in shaping performance outcomes among Millennial and Generation Z employees, while revealing important generational differences in these relationships. The moderate level of work-life balance achieved by participants ($M=3.24$, $SD=0.78$) aligns with previous research indicating that younger workers continue to struggle with balancing work and personal life demands despite placing a high priority on this balance [6],[14]. The strong positive relationship between organizational support and work-life balance ($\beta=0.61$, $p<0.001$) confirms organizational support theory's proposition that perceived organizational care for employee well-being significantly influences work-life balance

experiences [8]. This finding resonates with French et al.'s recent comprehensive review emphasizing that the effectiveness of work-life balance policies depends not merely on their existence but on organizational cultures that genuinely support their utilization [5]. The qualitative findings further illuminated this disconnect, with 17 participants noting that formal flexible work policies existed but informal norms discouraged their use—a phenomenon consistent with research by Las Heras et al. on flexibility i-deals and organizational context [15]. Organizations must therefore move beyond symbolic policy adoption to authentic cultural transformation that normalizes work-life boundary management without career penalties, particularly crucial for younger workers who value authenticity and organizational genuineness [16].

The significant relationships between work-life balance and multiple performance dimensions—task performance ($\beta=0.28$, $p<0.001$), contextual performance ($\beta=0.25$, $p<0.001$), and job satisfaction ($\beta=0.48$, $p<0.001$)—provide empirical support for theoretical propositions that work-life balance serves as a critical resource enabling effective job performance [17],[18]. These findings align with Ahmaddien's research, demonstrating that work-life balance enhances employee performance through increased job satisfaction [17], supported by the current study's mediation analysis showing job satisfaction partially mediates work-life balance effects on both task and contextual performance. The mediating role of job satisfaction suggests that work-life balance influences performance not only through direct mechanisms such as reduced stress and increased energy, but also through enhanced positive attitudes toward work and the organization [2]. Haar et al.'s cross-cultural study similarly found that work-life balance predicted job satisfaction and mental health across seven cultures, though effect sizes varied [2], suggesting cultural moderators warrant investigation. The strong correlation between work-life balance and well-being ($r=0.56$, $p<0.001$) reinforces Carnevale and Hatak's argument that employee well-being must be central to human resource management strategies, particularly in post-pandemic contexts where work-life boundaries have been substantially disrupted [19]. Organizations prioritizing employee work-life balance may therefore realize dual benefits: enhanced individual well-being and improved organizational performance outcomes [16],[20].

The generational differences revealed through multigroup analysis represent particularly important contributions to understanding work-life balance dynamics among younger workers. Generation Z employees demonstrated significantly stronger relationships between work-life balance and both task performance ($\beta=0.38$ vs. $\beta=0.22$ for Millennials, $p=0.032$) and well-being ($\beta=0.51$ vs. $\beta=0.36$, $p=0.041$), suggesting that work-life balance may be more consequential for this cohort's functioning and psychological health. These findings align with Wood et al.'s review, indicating that younger cohorts exhibit distinct patterns in work engagement and work-life balance relationships [7], potentially reflecting Generation Z's heightened expectations for organizational support and flexibility [6]. The qualitative data provided contextual explanation for these differences: Generation Z participants emphasized authenticity and genuine organizational care, while Millennials more frequently discussed juggling multiple life responsibilities, including childcare and eldercare, consistent with their "sandwich generation" positioning [21],[22]. Rensiana et al.'s recent analysis of Generation Z workers similarly highlighted unique job characteristics and work-life balance needs among this cohort [6], suggesting

that one-size-fits-all approaches to work-life balance support may be inadequate. However, the finding that organizational support predicted work-life balance equally strongly for both generations (β=0.59 for Millennials, β=0.63 for Generation Z, p=0.582) indicates that, regardless of generational cohort, perceived organizational support remains fundamental to achieving work-life balance [23],[24]. Organizations must therefore develop nuanced approaches recognizing generational distinctiveness in work-life balance consequences while maintaining strong organizational support structures benefiting all employees.

The qualitative findings regarding specific challenges and strategies provide actionable insights, complementing quantitative patterns. The predominance of excessive workload concerns (mentioned by 28 of 32 interview participants) and digital connectivity demands creating "always-on" cultures (24 participants) align with broader scholarly concerns about work intensification and technological boundary erosion in contemporary workplaces [25]. Masuda et al. found that telecommuting availability positively influenced work engagement through goal pursuit [25], but the current study's qualitative data suggest that digital connectivity's dark side—constant accessibility expectations—may undermine the benefits of flexible work arrangements, consistent with research on work-life balance challenges in digital workplaces [26],[27]. The boundary management strategies participants described, particularly designated work times and spaces (26 participants) and technology limitations (22 participants), reflect theoretical conceptualizations of boundary work as essential for work-life integration [28],[29]. Kossek and Lambert's framework, emphasizing organizational, cultural, and individual perspectives on work-life integration [29], finds empirical support in this study's findings that effective work-life balance requires alignment across multiple levels: individual boundary management skills, supervisor understanding and accommodation, and organizational cultures emphasizing results over presenteeism. The financial pressures experienced, particularly by younger Generation Z employees (19 participants mentioning additional income needs), introduce an often-overlooked dimension of work-life balance research: economic precarity may undermine work-life balance regardless of organizational policies, as financial necessity compels extended work hours [21],[30]. This finding suggests that compensation adequacy and financial wellness programs may be necessary complements to flexible work policies for supporting younger workers' work-life balance, particularly in contexts of high living costs and limited wealth accumulation among emerging adults [31],[32].

Conclusion

This mixed-methods study provides compelling evidence that work-life balance plays a critical role in shaping performance outcomes among Millennial and Generation Z employees, with notable generational differences in these relationships. The findings reveal that organizational support significantly predicts work-life balance (β=0.61, p<0.001), which in turn positively influences task performance, contextual performance, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being while reducing counterproductive work behaviors. Job satisfaction emerges as a partial mediator between work-life balance and performance outcomes, suggesting that work-life balance operates through both direct mechanisms and enhanced positive attitudes toward work. The moderate work-life balance levels

observed (M=3.24, SD=0.78) confirm that younger workers continue struggling to achieve balance despite prioritizing it highly. Qualitative findings illuminate five major challenges: excessive workload expectations, digital connectivity demands creating "always-on" cultures, financial pressures requiring additional income sources, organizational inflexibility despite formal policies, and career advancement pressures conflicting with personal priorities. Participants employed boundary management strategies, technology limitations, prioritization skills, and social support mobilization to navigate these tensions, highlighting the multifaceted nature of work-life balance management.

The generational comparison reveals that work-life balance more strongly predicts task performance and well-being for Generation Z employees compared to Millennials, suggesting heightened consequentiality for this younger cohort's functioning and psychological health. Generation Z participants emphasized authenticity and genuine organizational care, while Millennials more frequently discussed juggling dual responsibilities of childcare and eldercare, reflecting their "sandwich generation" positioning. However, organizational support predicted work-life balance equally strongly for both generations, indicating that perceived organizational support remains fundamental regardless of generational cohort. These findings have significant theoretical and practical implications: theoretically, they extend work-life balance theory by demonstrating generational distinctiveness in outcomes while confirming the universal importance of organizational support; practically, they indicate that organizations must develop nuanced approaches recognizing generational differences in work-life balance consequences while maintaining strong support structures benefiting all employees. Organizations should move beyond symbolic policy adoption to authentic cultural transformation, normalizing work-life boundary management without career penalties, complement flexible work policies with adequate compensation and financial wellness programs, and address economic precarity that undermines balance regardless of organizational policies, particularly crucial for Generation Z employees facing financial insecurity and limited wealth accumulation in early career stages.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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