

THE INTERPLAY OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND JOB STRESS IN SHAPING ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: EVIDENCE FROM THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR



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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effect of Work-Life Balance (WLB) and Work Stress on Organizational Commitment among employees in the hospitality sector. A quantitative study with a cross-sectional survey approach was conducted on 110 employees from various departments in 4 and 5-star hotels in Malang. Data were collected using an online questionnaire containing scales for Work-Life Balance (10 items, adapted from Haar et al., 2019), Work Stress (10 items, adapted from Perceived Stress Scale, Cohen & Williamson, 1988), and Affective Commitment (8 items, adapted from Allen & Meyer, 1990). Data were analyzed using multiple regression analysis with SPSS. The results show that Work-Life Balance has a positive and significant effect on Organizational Commitment ($\beta = 0.349$, $p < 0.001$). Conversely, Work Stress has a negative and significant effect on Organizational Commitment ($\beta = -0.342$, $p < 0.001$). Both variables collectively explain 82.4% of the variance in Organizational Commitment (Adj. $R^2 = 0.824$). These findings highlight the importance of WLB and stress management in enhancing employee commitment in the hospitality industry.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance, Work Stress, Organizational Commitment, Hospitality Sector, Conservation of Resources Theory

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality sector, as the driving force of the creative economy and the largest absorber of labor, faces complex human resource challenges in the post-COVID-19 era (García-Carbonell et al., 2022). The industry's 24/7 operations, customer service orientation with high standards, and frequent requirements to work on weekends and holidays place employees at high risk of work-family conflict and chronic job stress (Karatepe & Uludag, 2008).

Work-Life Balance (WLB) has evolved from being merely about time allocation to encompassing well-being and fulfillment in both domains (Kelliher et al., 2019). In the context of hospitality, the challenge of achieving WLB is increasingly evident. On the other hand, job stress, defined as a psychological response to work demands that do not match an individual's abilities and resources (Robbins & Judge, 2022), is a common phenomenon. The effects of both conditions are believed to significantly influence Organizational Commitment, which refers to the strength of an individual's identification with and psychological involvement in the organization they work for (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Low organizational commitment among hospitality employees is directly linked to high turnover intention, decreased service quality, and escalating recruitment and training costs (Koo et al., 2021). With the high level of competition in this industry, retaining committed employees becomes a strategic advantage. Therefore, this study aims to empirically examine the influence of Work-Life Balance and Job Stress on Organizational Commitment among employees in Indonesia's hospitality sector. This research is grounded in the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018), which posits that individuals are motivated to acquire and retain resources (such as time, energy, and social support). Stress occurs when these resources are lost or threatened, whereas good WLB functions as a resource that can enhance commitment.

The COR theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018) serves as the primary theoretical foundation of this study. It asserts that individuals are intrinsically motivated to obtain, maintain, and protect valued resources (e.g., time, personal energy, social support, psychological well-being). Stress develops when an individual's resources are threatened, depleted, or when investments of resources fail to yield the expected gains. Conversely, adequate resource possession (as reflected in good WLB) enables individuals to invest more into their organization, which manifests as higher commitment.

Work-Life Balance is defined as the extent to which an individual is equally engaged and satisfied with both work and non-work roles, with minimal conflict (Haar et al., 2019). From the COR perspective, good WLB is a key resource. When organizations, through their policies and work culture, facilitate the achievement of WLB (e.g., through flexible working hours, respect for time off, managerial support), employees perceive this as an investment and organizational support (Kelliher et al., 2019). In return, and in line with the norm of reciprocity in social exchange, employees tend to develop stronger affective bonds with the organization (García-Carbonell et al., 2022). Recent research in the hotel industry by (Koo et al., 2021) also confirmed that WLB support is a strong predictor of affective commitment. H1: Work-Life Balance has a positive and significant effect on Organizational Commitment.

Job stress is a psychophysiological response that arises when work demands exceed the individual's capacity and resources to cope (Robbins & Judge, 2022). Based on COR theory, prolonged stress leads to the depletion of employees' emotional and cognitive

resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018). This exhaustion causes employees to psychologically withdraw from the organization in order to conserve remaining resources, ultimately weakening their affective and normative commitment (Kim et al., 2022). Empirical studies in the hospitality sector consistently show that job stressors, such as excessive workload and customer conflict, are negatively correlated with organizational commitment (Karatepe & Uludag, 2008);(O'Neill & Davis, 2021).

H2: Job Stress has a negative and significant effect on Organizational Commitment.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The study of the relationships among work-life balance (WLB), job stress, and organizational commitment is often grounded in Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory. This theory posits that individuals strive to acquire, maintain, and protect valuable resources (e.g., time, energy, support). Stress arises when resources are threatened or lost, whereas having abundant resources encourages investment back into pressing roles (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Within hospitality or high-demand work environments, COR provides a framework to explain how support for WLB acts as a resource buffer that strengthens affective commitment, while job stress depletes resources and undermines that commitment.

Work-Life Balance (WLB) is increasingly conceptualized not merely as a division of time but as an integration of role fulfillment across work and nonwork domains (Kelliher et al., 2019). In service sectors—particularly those with irregular hours and emotional labor demands—achieving WLB becomes challenging (García-Carbonell et al., 2022). Empirical studies have linked organizational support for WLB (e.g., flexible scheduling, respecting off-hours) with higher levels of employee commitment (Koo et al., 2021);(García-Carbonell et al., 2022). Thus, higher WLB corresponds with stronger emotional attachment to the organization.

In contrast, job stress is defined as the internal psychological response when work demands exceed an individual's capacity to cope (Robbins & Judge, 2022). In hospitality settings, common stressors include workload overload, emotional labor, and unpredictable customer demands (Karatepe & Uludag, 2008);(O'Neill & Davis, 2021). Empirical evidence suggests a negative relationship between job stress and organizational commitment—employees under high stress may psychologically distance themselves to conserve their depleted resources (Kim et al., 2022);(Karatepe & Uludag, 2008).

Organizational commitment, especially its affective component, captures an employee's emotional attachment, identification, and involvement with their organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Affective commitment is particularly important in service sectors, as it correlates with lower turnover, higher discretionary effort, and better service delivery (Koo et al., 2021).

Synthesizing theoretical and empirical insights, the model posits that higher WLB functions as a resource reservoir that reduces job stress and thereby fosters stronger organizational commitment. Conversely, high job stress drains resources and undermines commitment. This integrative view aligns with COR theory. To strengthen evidence, future research should adopt longitudinal designs, test mediators/moderators (e.g., supervisor support, job satisfaction), replicate in diverse settings, and evaluate intervention programs.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative non-experimental design with a survey approach. Participants consisted of 110 employees working in both operational departments (front office, housekeeping, food & beverage) and non-operational departments at five 4-star and 5-star hotels in Malang City. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling with the following criteria: having worked for at least one year and holding full-time employment status.

Data were collected using an online questionnaire distributed through the HR departments of each hotel.

Work-Life Balance (WLB): Measured using an adaptation of the scale developed by (Haar et al., 2019) consisting of 10 items (e.g., “I feel I am able to balance the demands of my work and personal life”). Responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Cronbach’s Alpha for this study was 0.89.

Job Stress: Measured using an adaptation of the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) by (Cohen & Williamson, 1988), modified to fit the work context (e.g., “In the past month, how often have you felt nervous and stressed because of work?”). Responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Very Often). Cronbach’s Alpha was 0.86.

Organizational Commitment: Focused on the affective dimension, measured using 8 items from the (Allen & Meyer, 1990) scale (e.g., “I feel a strong emotional attachment to this organization”). Responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Cronbach’s Alpha was 0.91.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis results show that the mean score for Work-Life Balance (WLB) was 2.95 (SD = 0.71), Job Stress 2.96 (SD = 0.68), and Organizational Commitment 2.97 (SD = 0.75). The Standard Deviations (SD) for the three variables were relatively similar and fairly large (approximately 0.7 on a 5-point Likert scale). This indicates that:

There was considerable variation in responses among participants. Their answers did not cluster narrowly around the midpoint (3).

The distributions of the three variables were relatively similar, with Organizational Commitment showing slightly greater variability (SD = 0.75) than the others.

On a 5-point Likert scale, an SD of 0.7 suggests that respondents’ perceptions varied substantially. Some employees may have perceived their WLB as high (positive), while others perceived it as low (negative), resulting in an overall mean around the midpoint.

The correlation matrix revealed that WLB was positively and significantly correlated with Organizational Commitment ($r = 0.872$, $p < 0.01$), while Job Stress was negatively and significantly correlated with Organizational Commitment ($r = -0.843$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 1.
Multiple Regression Analysis Results

Variabel	β	t-hit	Sig.	Description
(Constant)		1.988	0.049	

Variabel	β	t-hit	Sig.	Description
Work-Life Balance	0.349	6.780	0.000	H1 Accepted
Job Stress	0.342	4.014	0.000	H2 Accepted
R = 0,910	R² = 0,827	Adj. R² = 0,824	R² = 0,000	F-hit = 256.215 (Sig. 0,000)

Source: Data Processing in 2025

Table 1 shows that the two independent variables simultaneously had a significant effect on Organizational Commitment ($F = 256.215$; $p < 0.001$), with a contribution of 82.4% (Adj. $R^2 = 0.824$). Partially, WLB had a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.349$; $p < 0.001$), thus supporting H1. Job Stress had a negative and significant effect ($\beta = -0.342$; $p < 0.001$), thus supporting H2.

These findings support the Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Good WLB functions as a strategic resource that enables employees to invest more of their emotional and cognitive energy into the organization, which is reflected in higher affective commitment. Conversely, sustained job stress depletes these resources, triggering psychological defense mechanisms such as withdrawal and reduced commitment in order to preserve the remaining resources.

The results are consistent with recent global studies (Koo et al., 2021); (O'Neill & Davis, 2021) and reinforce evidence within the Indonesian post-pandemic context. The practical implication is that hotel management should proactively cultivate an organizational culture that values employees' personal time, implement measurable flexible work policies, and provide Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) or stress management workshops to help employees conserve their psychological resources.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that both Work-Life Balance and Job Stress are significant determinant factors of Organizational Commitment among employees in the hospitality sector. Enhancing WLB and reducing job stress will contribute to strengthening employees' affective commitment.

This study has several limitations: (1) the geographical scope was limited to Malang City; (2) the use of a cross-sectional design cannot establish causal relationships; and (3) reliance on self-report data may have led to common method variance bias.

For future research, it is recommended to: (1) expand the sample to include various cities and types of hospitality accommodations; (2) employ a longitudinal design; (3) incorporate mediator or moderator variables such as supervisor support or employee engagement; and (4) utilize more diverse data sources, such as interviews with managers.

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