

**THE INFLUENCE OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE
ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AT YUOFU FA STEEL CO., LTD.**

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ABSTRACT

The issue of work-life balance is increasingly becoming a focal point in human resource management studies. This phenomenon arises along with the increasing demands of the working world for productivity, efficiency, and full engagement from employees, especially in heavy industry sectors such as steel manufacturing. It provides a theoretical contribution to the development of studies on work-life balance, particularly in the context of heavy manufacturing industries, which are still rarely the main focus. Practically, the results of this research serve as a source or benchmark for company management in formulating work policies that are more balanced and responsive to employee needs. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at elaborating and deeply understanding the influence of work-life balance on employee performance at YUOFU FA STEEL CO., LTD. The research results indicate that work-life balance significantly influences employee performance at YUOFU FA STEEL CO., LTD. The imbalance between work demands and personal life has become the main issue felt by the majority of employees. This imbalance is primarily due to long working hours, an almost mandatory overtime system every day, and a lack of flexibility in work schedule arrangements. According to the results of in-depth interviews and direct observations, the majority of employees stated that they did not have enough time to rest, gather with family, or engage in other social activities. This condition significantly impacts physical and mental health, which ultimately reduces work quality, focus, and employee morale.

Keywords: employee performance improvement, manufacturing industry sector, work-life balance

1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, the issue of work-life balance has increasingly become a focus in human resource management studies. This phenomenon has emerged along with the increasing demands of the world of work for productivity, efficiency, and full employee involvement, especially in heavy industry sectors such as steel manufacturing. This sector is generally characterized by work that is time-intensive, involves high physical activity, and often requires long working hours and regular overtime. This imbalance not only has an impact on the mental and physical health of employees but can also disrupt their social life and family relationships. A study conducted (Kotera et al., 2020) showed that excessive working hours in the heavy industry sector are the main trigger for work-life imbalance, which has a direct impact on employee job satisfaction and motivation. Meanwhile, (Noordin et al., 2023) emphasize the importance of organizational support and flexible policies that support employees' personal needs as a strategy to create a better and more sustainable work-life balance. This reality is also clearly seen in YUOFU FA STEEL

CO., LTD, a manufacturing company in Taiwan engaged in cutting steel plates for automotive spare parts. This company implements a regular work system from 08.00 to 17.00, followed by regular overtime until the evening and also on Saturdays. Based on initial observations and informal interviews, several employees admitted to having difficulty managing their time between personal life and work. They feel exhausted because of the tight work schedule and not enough time to rest, gather with family, or even just do fun social activities. When this condition persists in the long term, employees begin to lose motivation, feel bored, and often experience work stress, which has an impact on decreased performance in the workplace. This problem reflects the imbalance between the company's expectations for work output and the basic needs of employees to maintain their quality of life. When work-life balance is not achieved, it affects the individual and the company's productivity and operational efficiency. In this context, it is very important to conduct a more in-depth study to understand how employees experience and perceive work-life balance, its impact on performance, and what factors influence its creation. This kind of study not only provides an empirical picture of the phenomena that occur but can also be the basis for formulating more adaptive work policies that are oriented toward employee welfare (Tijani et al., 2020).

This study specifically aims to analyze the effect of work-life balance on employee performance at YUOFU FA STEEL CO., LTD using a descriptive qualitative approach. The main focus of the study is to understand the direct experiences of employees in dealing with work pressure, its influence on productivity and motivation, and the obstacles they experience in achieving a balance between their professional and personal lives. Therefore, the study is motivated to identify possible solutions that can be implemented by the company to create a healthier and more humane work environment. In terms of benefits, this study is expected to be able to provide theoretical contributions to the development of studies on work-life balance, especially in the context of the heavy manufacturing industry, which is still rarely the main focus. In practice, the results of this study serve as a source or benchmark for company management in formulating more balanced work policies that are responsive to employee needs. With fulfillment or a good understanding of the importance of balance between work and personal life, it is hoped that companies can increase job satisfaction, reduce fatigue levels, and strengthen employee loyalty and performance in the long term. Although this study has limitations in the scope of one company, the findings obtained can be a starting point for broader studies in the future.

2. LITERATURE

The concept of Work-Life Balance (WLB)

Work-life balance (WLB) is a condition where individuals are able to manage work demands and personal life in a balanced manner. According to (Greenhaus et al., 2003), WLB reflects the extent to which an individual can fulfill work roles and personal life roles in a balanced manner without interfering with each other. In the context of manufacturing organizations like YUOFU FA STEEL CO., LTD, high work demands, tight work schedules, and production pressures become the main challenges in maintaining work-life balance (WLB). WLB consists of several dimensions, including time, involvement, and role satisfaction (Bhende et al., 2020). Imbalance in just one dimension can affect job satisfaction, motivation, and even employee loyalty. Therefore, the implementation of work flexibility policies, annual leave, and social support from the company can positively contribute to maintaining employees' work-life balance.

Employee Performance

Employee performance is the work result achieved by someone in carrying out their duties according to the responsibilities assigned. (Triansyah et al., 2023) explains that employee performance is influenced by internal factors such as ability and motivation, as well as external factors like the work environment, compensation system, and work-life balance. In the steel industry, including YUOFU FA STEEL CO., LTD., companies measure performance not only by productivity but also by discipline, quality of work, and team collaboration. Performance measurement can be conducted through indicators such as effectiveness, efficiency, work

accuracy, and innovation (Mazelis et al., 2025). Employees with a good work-life balance tend to show stable work performance, have low stress levels, and are more committed to the organization.

The Influence of Work-Life Balance on Performance

Research by (Oyibo & Tamunomiebi, 2020) found that WLB has a positive relationship with employee performance. When employees feel that their work and personal life roles support each other, work motivation increases and the risk of burnout decreases. Similar research (Ariasari & Tjahjono, 2024) also emphasizes the importance of organizational support for work-life balance as a key determinant of job performance and employee satisfaction. For companies like YUOFU FA STEEL CO., LTD that operate in heavy and labor-intensive industries, work-life balance is not just a personal issue but also a strategic factor that can enhance productivity and reduce turnover. The effective implementation of work-life balance programs can strengthen employee loyalty and foster a sustainable work culture.

Theoretical Framework and Contextual Relevance

This study is rooted in the Spillover Theory, which states that conditions in one life domain (work or personal) will affect other domains (Santati et al., 2023). This theory is relevant in understanding the impact of WLB on performance because it emphasizes the importance of harmony between these two aspects. In the context of YUOFU FA STEEL CO., LTD, the implementation of a managerial approach that is responsive to employees' needs in managing time, stress, and family will strengthen both individual and collective performance of the company.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at elucidating and deeply understanding the approach in research using qualitative methods descriptive, with the aim of understanding and depicting it in depth. The impact of work-life balance on employee performance at YUOFU FA STEEL CO., LTD. is significant. We chose a qualitative approach because it enables us to explore the subjective experience of employees in the social context and work environment as a whole (Badaruddin et al., 2024). At the same time, we use the descriptive method because it helps show the data as it really is, based on what the informants have seen and experienced, without the researcher changing anything. The data collection methods in this research include in-depth interviews and direct observation. We conducted in-depth interviews using a semi-structured guide. This guide was compiled based on work-life balance indicators and employee performance metrics. The goal is to explore the views and personal experiences of the employees. Direct observation was conducted to watch daily work activities and interactions among employees with the supervisor, as well as the physical and social conditions of the work environment.

The research subjects are permanent employees who have worked for at least one year at the company. Six employees, out of a total of 15, served as informants. Purposive sampling technique, with the criteria: having worked for at least one year, possessing overtime work experience, and willingness to provide information openly. The main instrument in data collection, including observation notes, interview guidelines, and aids like a voice recorder, was used with the informant's consent. The data obtained were analyzed using the interactive analysis model from Miles and Huberman, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. Conclusion: We carry out data reduction to filter and simplify information accordingly. The research focus includes presenting data in the form of narratives and direct quotes from informants. We use informants' narratives to demonstrate the authenticity of their perspectives while drawing conclusions. This process is accomplished by identifying patterns and relationships between relevant information. The selection of this model is based on its ability to organize and interpret qualitative data systematically and in-depth.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Six individuals conducted in-depth interviews and provided direct observations. Employees at YUOFU FA STEEL CO., LTD, found that the condition of work-life balance is still very far from ideal. Most employees experience high work pressure due to an overtime system that is almost routine every day, even on weekends. This leaves them with insufficient time to gather with family, rest, or engage in other social activities that are essential for maintaining psychological balance. One of the informants stated that they feel "they only live to work," a statement that reflects the significant impact of work pressure on their personal life aspects.

These findings indicate that the dominance of time and energy at work is the main factor disrupting that balance. The impact of this imbalance is clearly visible in the work performance of the employees. Some of them expressed that continuous fatigue leads to a decline in work spirit and concentration. Some admitted to frequently making technical mistakes due to suboptimal physical and mental conditions. This decline in performance does not only occur in physical aspects, such as slow response times at work or frequent small mistakes, but also in mental aspects, such as loss of motivation and increased boredom. Some informants stated that they often feel stressed and no longer have the enthusiasm they had when they started working. This situation reinforces the findings of (Susanto et al., 2022) which state that excessive workloads and continuous overtime systems can reduce job satisfaction and employee productivity, especially in heavy industries such as manufacturing. Furthermore, the absence of policies that support work-life balance exacerbates the situation. The company has not yet provided supportive facilities such as counseling programs, stress management training, or flexible working hours. Workers perceive a lack of space to voice their grievances or requirements due to concerns about potential unprofessionalism. This attitude reflects an organizational culture that is still authoritarian and unresponsive to the basic needs of employees. The absence of an open two-way communication system causes management to fail to understand the real conditions experienced by workers in the field. This conclusion is in line with the research findings (Inegbedion et al., 2020), which state that organizations that do not provide a space for employee aspirations will find it difficult to achieve harmony between production targets and individual welfare. However, there is another aspect of this research finding that shows the internal strength within the employees. Some of them continue to show high levels of loyalty and dedication to the company despite the very stressful working conditions.

Their behavior is influenced by factors such as economic needs, family responsibilities, and pride in the work being done. One of the employees stated, "Hard work has always been the norm, and this is for the family at home," indicating that internal motivation remains crucial for maintaining work spirit, even in challenging situations. This phenomenon supports the opinion of (Saputra & Nawangsari, 2025) that loyalty and family values often serve as the main motivators for employees in the informal and manufacturing sectors. However, intrinsic motivation such as family responsibility is not the ultimate answer to the larger issue, which is the inhumane work structure and system. Without management policies to create balance, this personal motivation can diminish over time, ultimately leading employees to want to leave the company. Some informants expressed their consideration of resigning and seeking a more flexible job, but economic factors prevented them from taking action. This indicates that work pressure without organizational support will create a high turnover intention, as revealed in the study (Wang & Wang, 2020).

This study also found that work-life balance is not something that can be formed solely by individuals. Employees need support from a healthy and caring organizational structure. The company needs to provide flexibility in working hours, reduce overtime burdens, and offer mental health programs accessible to all employees. Additionally, there is a need for supervisors training to be more sensitive to the conditions of their subordinates. In many cases, supervisors tend to evaluate performance solely based on production results, without considering the process and the well-being of the workers. However, optimal performance can only be achieved if employees are in excellent mental and physical condition.

As also found (Noordin et al., 2023) companies that implement flexible work policies and prioritize employee welfare successfully increase workforce retention and productivity. This proves that a humanistic approach in human resource management has a positive impact on individuals and directly affects the overall success of the company. Therefore, it is important for YUOFU FA STEEL CO., LTD to start considering the formulation of more inclusive and adaptive work policies that address the real needs of workers. Overall, the results and discussion in this study indicate that the balance between work and personal life is crucial for the quality and sustainability of employee performance. Continuous imbalance not only causes physical and psychological stress but also erodes employee morale and loyalty. In the long term, this situation has the potential to disrupt the overall operational stability of the company. Therefore, concrete steps from management are necessary to create a healthier, more humane, and welfare-oriented work environment. By prioritizing the balance between work demands and personal needs, the company will be able to create a workforce that is more resilient, productive, and loyal in facing future industry challenges.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that work life Balance has a significant impact on employee performance at YUOFU FA STEEL CO., LTD. The imbalance between work demands and personal lives has become a major issue for most employees. This is primarily caused by long working hours, an almost mandatory overtime system every day, and a lack of flexibility in work schedule arrangements. According to the results of in-depth interviews and direct observations, the majority of employees stated that they did not have enough time to rest, gather with family, or engage in other social activities. This condition significantly impacts physical and mental health, which ultimately reduces work quality, focus, and employee morale. This research also found that high workloads and lack of work-life balance lead to symptoms of stress, burnout, and chronic fatigue among workers. In some cases, employees feel they no longer have control over their time and personal activities. Such an environment has resulted in a gradual decline in performance, marked by work errors, decreased production speed, and a waning motivation to complete tasks well. One of the informants even expressed that they feel like they are working automatically without enthusiasm, just to fulfill their job obligations. However, there are also findings that indicate intrinsic motivation among employees, such as responsibility towards family, economic needs, and loyalty to their work, serve as a strong balancing factor in facing work pressure.

Some employees continue to show high work enthusiasm even under pressure because they feel that the job is their main source of livelihood. These findings indicate that personal motivation plays an important role in maintaining productivity, although it is not sufficient to replace the role of organizational policies that support work-life balance. The results of this study are in line with several previous studies that emphasize the importance of creating a balance between work and personal life to maintain optimal work performance. Wijaya and Hartatik (2020) emphasize that long working hours and excessive overtime in the heavy industry sector are the main triggers of disturbances in employees' work-life balance. Meanwhile, (Noordin et al., 2023) found that work flexibility, open communication, and organizational support can reduce stress levels and increase employee loyalty and productivity. This research strengthens and enriches the study by adding the social and cultural context of workers in the steel manufacturing industry, where family values, responsibility, and hard work still strongly influence work motivation. An important conclusion of this research is that achieving work-life balance cannot be viewed solely as the responsibility of individual employees. This balance must be built through the synergy of a humane work system, adaptive organizational policies, and managerial leadership that cares about the well-being of its subordinates. Work-life balance cannot be achieved through a uniform approach but must be tailored to the characteristics of the job, organizational culture, and the socio-economic conditions of the employees.

Therefore, we recommend that the management of YUOFU FA STEEL CO., LTD start implementing more flexible work policies that prioritize employee well-being. Some steps that

can be considered include reducing overtime hours, providing flexible leave, and enhancing two-way communication between management and employees. By creating a healthier and more balanced work environment, the company not only improves the quality of life for its employees but also directly maintains the sustainability of productivity and workforce loyalty in the long term.

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