

The Strategic Role of Work-Life Balance in Female Employee Loyalty at the Palu City Building Union

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine and describe the work-life balance conditions experienced by female employees, identify factors that influence work-life balance, and analyze the strategic role of work-life balance in shaping female employee loyalty at Union Bangunan Kota Palu. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. Research informants consisted of female employees in the service and administration departments selected using purposive sampling techniques. Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Data analysis used the Miles and Huberman model which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results show that the work-life balance conditions of female employees at Union Bangunan Kota Palu are influenced by organizational support, flexible work schedules, family support, and a harmonious work environment. The main inhibiting factors include busy working hours, physical fatigue, and high customer service demands. Work-life balance plays a strategic role in shaping female employee loyalty by creating a sense of comfort, job satisfaction, responsibility, and emotional attachment to the organization. Female employees who feel organizational support tend to show higher commitment and desire to stay despite facing considerable work pressure.

INTRODUCTION

Women have an increasingly important position in the modern world of work, including in the trade sector. The increase in women's participation in the world of work shows that women no longer only play a role in the domestic sphere, but also actively contribute to various economic activities. This condition causes the need for a work-life balance to become increasingly important for organizations and individuals to pay attention to. In the context of human resource management, this balance is known as work-life balance.

Work-life balance is an individual's ability to manage the demands of work and personal life in harmony so that both roles can be carried out optimally. This concept has to do not only with the division of time between work and personal life, but also includes the balance of psychological involvement and the individual's level of satisfaction in carrying out both roles. When work-life balance is not achieved, individuals have the potential to experience role conflicts, work stress, physical and emotional fatigue, and decreased quality of social and family relationships.

The Palu City Building Union is one of the businesses in the building materials trading sector that has work characteristics with relatively high operational demands. Work activities in this sector demand a physical presence, a high intensity of customer service, a tight work rhythm, and the readiness of employees to remain responsive and professional in various situations. These job characteristics show that the building materials trading sector demands not only physical resilience, but also the emotional readiness of employees in carrying out daily tasks. From a human resource management perspective, working conditions with high operational demands need to be managed appropriately so as not to cause work burnout, stress, and decreased employee loyalty to the organization.

In this context, female employees are in a position to face more complex challenges. In addition to carrying out job responsibilities in the workplace, women in general are also faced with the demands of

personal and family life after working hours are over. This situation causes women to often carry out dual roles simultaneously, namely as workers in the public sphere and as individuals who still bear domestic responsibilities in the family. The burden of dual roles can become even heavier when organizations have long working hours, tight work rhythms, and high intensity of work interactions.

This phenomenon can be seen in the work reality of female employees at the Palu City Building Union. Based on the results of the initial interviews conducted by the researcher, it was obtained that high work demands are the main challenge in maintaining a balance between work and personal life. Female employees are not only required to provide maximum service to customers, but also must continue to carry out responsibilities in family life. This condition shows that the issue of work-life balance is a real and relevant issue to be further researched.

If these conditions persist without adequate organizational support, then female employees have the potential to experience physical fatigue, emotional pressure, and prolonged work stress. High work pressure not only impacts individual well-being, but can also affect work motivation, job satisfaction, commitment, and loyalty to the organization. In the long run, an imbalance between work and personal life can magnify the risk of role conflict and decrease employees' emotional attachment to the organization.

However, an interesting phenomenon found in the Palu City Building Union is the presence of female employees who continue to survive and show work responsibilities despite facing considerable work pressure. This shows that the loyalty of female employees is not only influenced by economic factors, but also by work comfort, social relationships in the workplace, organizational support, and the ability to maintain a work-life balance. Thus, work-life balance is not only an issue of individual welfare, but also has a strategic role in shaping the loyalty of female employees to the organization.

More broadly, the issue of work-life balance is becoming increasingly important as women's participation in the formal workforce in Indonesia increases. Data from the Central Statistics Agency shows that the participation rate of the female labor force continues to increase from year to year. This condition shows that women have a greater contribution to the national employment structure, so organizations are required to create a work environment that is more conducive to a balance between employees' work and personal lives.

Previous studies have shown that work-life balance is associated with various positive work attitudes, such as job satisfaction, psychological well-being, organizational commitment, and employee loyalty. However, most of the research is still dominated by quantitative approaches and is more conducted in the service, education, and office sectors. Research on work-life balance among female employees in the building materials trade sector is still relatively limited, especially in local organizations such as the Palu City Building Union.

Based on these conditions, this research is important to analyze more deeply the strategic role of work-life balance in shaping the loyalty of female employees in the Palu City Building Union. This research is expected to provide a more contextual picture of the work experience of female employees, the factors that affect work-life balance, and the relationship with loyalty to the organization.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type of research. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to understand and describe in depth the experiences of female employees related to work-life balance and their role in forming work loyalty in the Palu City Building Union.

The research location was carried out at the Palu City Building Union which is engaged in the trade of building materials. The selection of the research location was based on the phenomenon of work-life balance experienced by female employees in the midst of high operational demands.

Informants in this study were determined using the purposive sampling technique, which is the deliberate selection of informants based on certain criteria that are in accordance with the purpose of the research. The research informants consisted of female employees who work at the Palu City Building Union, both in the service and administration departments, who are considered to understand the conditions of work-life balance in their work environment.

The data sources in this study consist of primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly through in-depth interviews with research informants and observation results at the research site. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from company documents, literature, journals, books, and other sources relevant to research on work-life balance and employee loyalty.

Data collection techniques are carried out through interviews, observations, and documentation. The interviews were conducted in depth to obtain information related to the experiences, views, and working conditions experienced by female employees. Observations were made to see firsthand work activities and the situation of the work environment at the Palu City Building Union. Meanwhile, documentation is used to complete research data in the form of archives, photos, and other documents that support research.

The data analysis technique in this study uses the Miles and Huberman data analysis model which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. Data reduction is carried out by selecting and

simplifying data that is relevant to the focus of the research. Furthermore, the data is presented in the form of a descriptive description so that it is easy to understand and analyze. The last stage is to draw conclusions based on the results of the research that has been obtained so that it can provide an overview of the strategic role of work-life balance in the loyalty of female employees at the Palu City Building Union.

To maintain the validity of the data, this study uses source triangulation techniques and triangulation techniques. Triangulation is carried out by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation so that the data obtained can be tested for the level of correctness. Thus, the results of the study are expected to have a good level of validity and credibility.

RESULTS

The results of this study were obtained through qualitative data analysis of in-depth interviews with several female employees at the Palu City Building Union. The analysis was carried out through a process of data reduction, theme categories, and interpretation of interview results to identify *work-life balance conditions* and their relationship with the loyalty of female employees.

Work-Life Balance Conditions of Female Employees

The results of the study show that female employees at the Union building in Palu City face challenges in maintaining a balance between work and personal life. Some conditions *work-life balance* The findings in this study include:

- Tight working hours and high customer service intensity
- Physical fatigue after work
- Limited time with family
- Difficulty dividing time between work and household affairs
- Emotional distress due to work responsibilities and personal life at the same time

However, some informants said that they still try to carry out the two roles in a balanced manner because of the sense of responsibility for work and family.

Factors Affecting Work-Life Balance

The results of the analysis showed that *the work-life balance* of female employees was influenced by supporting and inhibiting factors.

Supporting Factors

- Superiors' support for the condition of female employees
- Harmonious working relationship between fellow employees
- Family support in carrying out work
- Comfortable working environment
- Good teamwork in operational activities

Some informants stated that social support in the work environment helps relieve work pressure and make them more comfortable in carrying out their daily work.

Inhibiting Factors

- Long working hours
- High customer service demands
- Physical and emotional fatigue from work
- Lack of time for personal life
- The burden of dual roles as workers and family members

These factors cause some informants to find it difficult to maintain an optimal balance between work and personal life.

Conditions of Employee Involvement and Work Responsibilities

The results of the study show that female employees have a fairly high level of work involvement in carrying out their duties. This can be seen from:

- Sincerity in serving customers
- Responsibility for the job given
- Discipline in carrying out operational duties
- Willingness to keep working even in a tired state
- Concern for the smooth running of work in the work environment

However, high work engagement also causes some informants to experience physical and emotional fatigue, especially when work is ongoing and of high intensity.

Female Employees' Loyalty to the Company

The results of the study showed that most female employees still showed high loyalty to the Palu City Building Union despite facing considerable work pressure. This loyalty is reflected in:

- The desire to stay working in the company
- A sense of responsibility for work
- Compliance with work rules
- Good emotional connection with the work environment
- Commitment to perform tasks well

Some informants said that the comfort of the work environment and good social relationships were the main reasons they stayed at the company. However, some informants also revealed that work fatigue and limited personal time sometimes lead to work burnout which can affect their comfort at work.

The Strategic Role of Work-Life Balance in Employee Loyalty

The results of the study showed that there was a strong relationship between work-life balance and the loyalty of female employees at the Palu City Building Union. Employees who feel they get organizational support, work comfort, and harmonious working relationships tend to have higher loyalty to the company. Work-life balance plays a role in forming loyalty through:

- Creating a sense of comfort at work
- Increased employee job satisfaction
- The formation of an emotional attachment to the Company
- Increased work commitment and responsibility
- Desire to stay in the organization

On the other hand, if the work-life balance is not fulfilled properly, then employees have the potential to experience work stress, emotional fatigue, and decreased motivation and job loyalty in the long term.

DISCUSSION

Work-Life Balance Conditions of Female Employees at the Palu City Building Union

Compensation The results of the study show that the work-life balance of female employees at the Palu City Building Union has not been fully running optimally. This condition can be seen from the high demands of work, tight working hours, and limited personal time experienced by most informants. Female employees are not only required to carry out work responsibilities in the work environment, but also must still carry out domestic and family life responsibilities after working hours are over. This condition shows the dual role carried out by female employees. In the perspective of Role Theory, individuals who perform multiple roles simultaneously have the potential to experience role conflicts when the demands of each role are difficult to meet in a balanced manner. In this study, role conflicts arise when work takes up time and energy that should be used for personal and family life.

In addition, the high demands on customer service and operational activities that take place continuously cause some informants to experience physical and emotional fatigue. This shows that there is a strain-based conflict, which is work pressure that is carried over into personal life so that it affects the psychological condition and well-being of individuals. Fatigue felt by female employees not only impacts physical condition, but can also affect the quality of social relationships and family life. However, some informants are still able to maintain a work-life balance due to the adaptability and support from the surrounding environment. This condition shows that work-life balance is not only influenced by workload, but also by social support, the individual's ability to manage roles, and supportive work environment conditions.

Factors Affecting Work-Life Balance

Results The results of the study show that the work-life balance of female employees is influenced by organizational factors, family factors, and social conditions in the work environment. Organizational factors are the most dominant factors because they are directly related to the company's work system and operational conditions. Long working hours and high customer service intensity are the main factors that cause female employees to have difficulty maintaining a work-life balance. This condition makes employees experience limited rest time and reduced time with their families. In the Boundary Theory, this condition suggests that the boundary between work and personal life becomes increasingly blurred as work continues to affect the individual's personal life even after the working hours are over.

However, the study also found that organizational support has an important role in helping employees maintain a work-life balance. Superior support, harmonious working relationships, and good teamwork help create a more comfortable work atmosphere and reduce the work pressure felt by female employees. These findings are in line with the concept of Perceived Organizational Support which explains that employees will feel more comfortable and have a more positive work attitude when the organization shows concern for their well-being. Organizational support can help reduce work stress levels and increase work comfort so that employees are better able to carry out work and personal life roles in a balanced manner.

In addition to organizational factors, family support is also an important factor in maintaining the work-life balance of female employees. Family support provides emotional strength for employees in dealing with the pressures of daily work. When families provide understanding and support for the work they do, the pressure of the role felt by the individual can be lighter. On the other hand, the social culture that still places women as the party responsible for domestic affairs also increases the burden of dual roles experienced by female employees. This condition causes women to be able to carry out two responsibilities at once, namely work and family life.

Work Engagement and Responsibilities of Women Employees

The results of the study show that female employees at the Palu City Building Union have a fairly high level of work involvement. Employees still try to do their jobs well despite facing considerable work pressure and physical fatigue. This can be seen from work discipline, responsibility for duties, and seriousness in serving customers. High work engagement indicates an individual's commitment to the work being carried out. Some informants consider work not only as a source of income, but also as a form of personal responsibility that must be carried out properly.

However, continuous work engagement without adequate balance can lead to emotional exhaustion. In the perspective of Spillover Theory, the pressure and burnout experienced by individuals can be carried over into personal life and affect emotional conditions and social relationships in the family. If these conditions occur continuously without adequate support, then employees have the potential to experience decreased work motivation, prolonged stress, and a decrease in the quality of psychological well-being.

Female Employees' Loyalty to the Company

The results of the study show that most female employees still show high loyalty to the Palu City Building Union. This loyalty is reflected in the desire to stay at work, a sense of responsibility for work, and a good emotional connection with the work environment. In the context of this study, employee loyalty is not only shaped by economic factors, but also by work comfort, social relationships, and positive experiences while working at the company. A harmonious work environment makes employees feel more comfortable and have an emotional attachment to the organization.

These findings are in line with the concept of Affective Commitment which explains that loyalty is formed through the emotional connection between employees and the organization. When employees feel valued, accepted, and supported by the work environment, there will be a sense of belonging to the organization so that the desire to survive will be higher. In addition to emotional commitment, the loyalty of female employees is also influenced by a sense of moral responsibility towards work. Some informants still choose to stay even though they face work pressure because they feel they have an obligation to carry out their work properly and professionally.

However, this study also found that there is work boredom experienced by some informants due to high work demands and limited personal time. If these conditions are not managed properly, it can affect the level of employee loyalty to the organization in the long run.

The Strategic Role of Work-Life Balance in Shaping Employee Loyalty

The results of the study show that work-life balance has a strategic role in shaping the loyalty of female employees in the Palu City Building Union. Employees who feel they have a work-life balance tend to show higher levels of job comfort, job satisfaction, and loyalty to the company. Work-life balance helps create a more stable psychological state so that employees are able to carry out their work more comfortably and productively. When organizations provide support to the needs of female employees, there will be a sense of appreciation and emotional attachment to the company.

On the other hand, if the work-life balance is not met, then employees have the potential to experience work stress, emotional fatigue, role conflicts, and decreased work motivation. In the long run, these conditions can lead to decreased loyalty and a desire to leave work. The findings of this study show that work-life balance is not only related to individual well-being, but also an important strategy in human resource management. Organizations that are able to create a work environment that supports work-life balance will be better able to maintain employee loyalty and create healthier and more sustainable working relationships.

Therefore, companies need to pay attention to the needs of female employees through organizational support, harmonious working relationships, better workload management, and more adaptive work policies so that employee loyalty and welfare can be optimally maintained.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and discussion on the strategic role of work-life balance in the loyalty of female employees in the Palu City Building Union, the following conclusions can be drawn.

Work-Life Balance Conditions, Female employees at the Palu City Building Union face the challenge of time balance due to the high demands of store operations and the dual role of the household. Some

employees still experience negative spillover, where work fatigue is carried over into their personal lives. However, regular schedules and good social relationships at work help them maintain emotional stability.

Influencing Factors, There are three main factors that affect the work-life balance of informants, namely organizational factors (supervisor support and co-worker relationships), individual and family factors (moral support from family), and socio-cultural factors (expectations of women's domestic roles).

Strategic Role of Loyalty, Work-life balance plays a strategic role in forming loyalty through the creation of a sense of comfort and emotional attachment (affective commitment). When an organization provides flexibility and support to employees' personal needs, it increases the employee's sense of responsibility and desire to stay in the Company.

Based on the overall findings of the research, it can be concluded that *work-life balance* has a very important, strategic, and multidimensional role in shaping the loyalty of female employees in the Palu City Building Union. The balance between work and personal life is influenced by various factors, both from the organizational environment, family, and socio-cultural conditions that surround the lives of female employees. Despite the challenges of high operational demands on the company, limited personal time, and the burden of dual roles as workers and family members, they are still able to maintain loyalty to the company through social support obtained from the work and family environment.

Work-life balance works through various psychological and social mechanisms, namely by creating a sense of comfort at work, reducing stress and role conflicts, improving emotional well-being, and strengthening employees' emotional attachment to the organization. When employees feel that the company pays attention to their personal needs, provides a harmonious work environment, and provides adequate support, they will grow a sense of appreciation, a sense of belonging to the organization, and a commitment to continue to make the best contribution to the company.

Thus, the loyalty of female employees is not only influenced by economic factors or financial rewards, but also greatly influenced by the quality of their work experience. Therefore, efforts to increase the loyalty of female employees should not only focus on the aspect of financial compensation, but also on the creation of a work environment that supports work-life balance through harmonious working relationships, support from superiors, proportionate workload management, flexibility in certain conditions, and attention to the psychological well-being of employees. With consistent and sustainable management, work-life balance can be the main foundation in maintaining loyalty, commitment, productivity, and sustainability of human resources in the Palu City Building Union.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

This study shows that work-life balance plays an important role in increasing the loyalty of female employees in the Palu City Building Union. Theoretically, these findings reinforce the concept that work-life balance can shape emotional commitment as well as increase employee loyalty to the organization. Practically, companies need to create a supportive work environment through the support of their superiors, harmonious working relationships, and good workload management so that employees can maintain a work-life balance. In addition, from a policy perspective, companies need to pay attention to the aspect of work-life balance as part of their human resource management strategy to increase employee loyalty, productivity, and sustainability.

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