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The Moderating Role of Perceived Organizational Support on the Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Work-Life Balance of Gen Z Employees

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Abstract

Work-Life Balance (WLB) has become an important issue for Gen Z employees who often struggle to balance work demands and personal life. Emotional Intelligence (EI) is considered capable of enhancing WLB, while Perceived Organizational Support (POS) is assumed to moderate this relationship. This study employed a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design, involving 100 Gen Z employees at JNT Cargo Medan selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using an online questionnaire measuring EI, WLB, and POS, and analyzed using Partial Least Square - Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software. The findings reveal that EI

positively affects WLB; however, POS significantly moderates this relationship in a negative direction, meaning that the higher the perceived organizational support, the weaker the effect of EI on WLB. This suggests that in highly supportive organizational conditions, EI no longer serves as the primary factor in achieving WLB. The implication of this study is that organizations need to design human resource management strategies that not only provide structural support but also continuously foster employees' emotional intelligence, thereby creating an optimal balance between individual and organizational factors in supporting WLB.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Work-Life Balance, Perceived Organizational Support, Generation Z, Moderation

1. Introduction

Work-life balance (WLB) has become an increasingly relevant topic in the discourse of human resource management (HRM) in the modern era. This balance refers to the individual's ability to divide time and energy equally between the demands of work and personal life. Generation Z (Gen Z), consisting of individuals born between 1995 and 2010, is now beginning to enter the workforce. The characteristics of Gen Z are quite different from previous generations, especially regarding their values and expectations for work. Gen Z tends to prioritize time flexibility and a balance between work and personal life. They prefer jobs that provide space for self-development and support their mental and physical well-being ^[1].

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is an important concept in the workplace, particularly in dealing with workplace dynamics. EI refers to an individual's ability to recognize, understand, manage, and utilize emotions—both their own and those of others—in a constructive social context. A pioneer in the development of EI theory, suggested that EI consists of five main elements: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills ^[2]. This emotional intelligence enables individuals to interact effectively with colleagues, resolve conflicts, and cope with work-related stress. The relationship between EI and work-life balance is also very close. Employees with good emotional intelligence are able to respond to work demands in a calmer and more controlled manner, allowing them to manage their time and energy more efficiently. EI enables them to focus better on their personal and professional priorities, as well as set clear boundaries between time for work and time for relaxation ^[3].

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) is a concept that refers to the extent to which employees feel that the organization they work for cares about their well-being. POS is closely related to how employees assess the level of support they receive from the organization, whether in the form of physical, emotional, or material assistance related to their work and personal life ^[4]. According to organizational support theory, the higher the POS perceived by employees, the greater the likelihood that they will feel more satisfied and engaged in their work ^[4]. This support can take various forms, such as opportunities for skill development, recognition for work achievements, flexible welfare policies, or assistance in overcoming personal problems. This research objective to analyze the influence of Emotional Intelligence (EI) on Work-Life Balance (WLB) among Gen Z

employees in Medan City. To determine the moderating role of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) on the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Work-Life Balance (WLB).

2. Materials and Methods

The approach used in this research is the quantitative approach. The Population in this study consists of: a. Permanent employees working at JNT Cargo Medan. b. Permanent employees who have worked for more than one year. c. Employees who were born between 1995 and 2010

(Gen Z). The sampling technique used in this research is Purposive Sampling. The data collection method for this study is the survey method through the use of questionnaires. In this research, data analysis utilizes the SEM-PLS (Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Square) method, with the SmartPLS software.

3. Results and Discussion

Structural Model Analysis (Inner Model)

R Square

Tabel 1: R-Square

Variabel	R-square	R-square adjusted	Kesimpulan
<i>Work Life Balance (Y)</i>	0.606	0.594	Kuat

F Square

Tabel 2: F-Square

Variabel	f-square
<i>Emotional Intelligence (X) -> Work Life Balance (Y)</i>	0.307
<i>Perceived Organizational Support (Z) -> Work Life Balance (Y)</i>	0.507
<i>Perceived Organizational Support (Z) x Emotional Intelligence (X) -> Work Life Balance (Y)</i>	0.027

Hiphothesys Test

Tabel 3: The results of Bootstrapping

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ((O/STDEV))	P values
<i>Emotional Intelligence (X) -> Work Life Balance (Y)</i>	0.396	0.401	0.068	5.795	0.000
<i>Perceived Organizational Support (Z) -> Work Life Balance (Y)</i>	0.509	0.506	0.069	7.423	0.000
<i>Perceived Organizational Support (Z) x Emotional Intelligence (X) -> Work Life Balance (Y)</i>	-0.104	-0.102	0.047	2.213	0.027

1) The Effect of Emotional Intelligence (X) on Work-Life Balance (Y)

Based on Table 4.12, the path coefficient from the original sample for the variable Emotional Intelligence (X) on Work-Life Balance (Y) is \$.396\$ and is positive. This indicates that an increase in Emotional Intelligence (X) is followed by an increase in Work-Life Balance (Y), and vice versa. The influence of Emotional Intelligence (X) on Work-Life Balance (Y) is significant, as shown by the t-statistic value (\$5.795 > 1.96\$) and the p-value (\$0.000 < .05\$). Based on these results, Hypothesis 1 (H1), which states that Emotional Intelligence (X) has a positive effect on Work-Life Balance (Y), is accepted.

2) The Moderated Effect of Emotional Intelligence by Perceived Organizational Support (X*Z) on Work-Life Balance (Y)

The analysis of the effect of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) on Work-Life Balance (Y) shows a T-Statistic of \$7.423\$ and a significance value of \$.000\$\$. Furthermore, the analysis of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) as a moderating variable in the effect of Emotional Intelligence on Work-Life Balance yields an original sample estimate for the interaction term (X*Z) of \$-.104\$\$. This negative value indicates that POS acts as a negative moderator.

The moderating effect is found to be significant, with a T-Statistic of \$2.213\$ (\$> 1.96\$) and a significance value of \$.027\$ (\$P < .05\$). This supports Hypothesis 2 (H2), which states that Perceived Organizational Support has a moderating effect on the relationship between Emotional

Intelligence and Work-Life Balance, and is therefore accepted. To further understand the interaction of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) on the effect of Emotional Intelligence on Work-Life Balance, the researcher performed a Simple Slope Analysis.

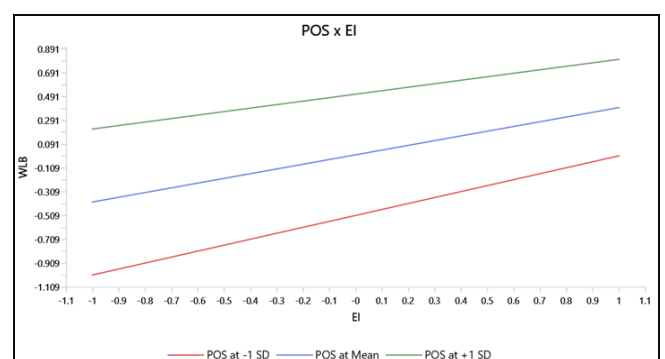


Fig 4.1: Reinforces the evidence of the negative moderating effect of the Perceived Organizational Support variable in this study. The lines illustrate the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Work-Life Balance at three different levels of Perceived Organizational Support: low (red line), average (blue line), and high (green line)

All three lines are sloping upwards from left to right, indicating that Emotional Intelligence has a positive influence on Work-Life Balance. This means that the higher an employee's ability to understand, manage, and appropriately use emotions, the higher the quality of their

work-life balance. The strength of this influence depends on the level of Perceived Organizational Support felt by the employee. This is observed in the graph where the regression lines at low, medium, and high levels of Perceived Organizational Support appear almost parallel to each other with a small distance between the lines. This suggests that the moderating effect of Perceived Organizational Support on the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Work-Life Balance is present but not very strong, or only weak. Furthermore, the flatter slope of the green line (high level of Perceived Organizational Support) shows that at high POS, the influence of Emotional Intelligence on Work-Life Balance becomes weaker. Conversely, the steeper slope of the red line (low level of Perceived Organizational Support) indicates that in conditions of low or adequate organizational support, Emotional Intelligence is more effective in fostering Work-Life Balance.

4. Discussion

1. H1: The Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Work-Life Balance of Gen Z Employees

The first hypothesis tested the influence of Emotional Intelligence (EI) on Work-Life Balance (WLB) among Generation Z employees. The analysis results showed that EI has a positive and significant influence on Gen Z employees' WLB. This finding is consistent with various previous studies affirming that an individual's ability to effectively manage emotions can lead to an improved quality of balance between private and professional life. Emotional Intelligence, defined as the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and appropriately use emotions [5], is a crucial factor for Gen Z employees in managing the increasingly complex demands and pressures of the modern workplace. In the context of WLB, EI helps employees control stress, resolve interpersonal conflicts, and maintain work motivation and productivity without sacrificing their personal lives. This finding aligns research, which stated that high EI plays a significant role in improving WLB through the mechanism of managing work stress. Employees with high EI are more capable of effectively allocating their time and energy between work demands and personal needs, thus avoiding burnout [6]. Furthermore, study noted that EI facilitates the building of healthy social relationships at work, contributing to better social support and adjustment to workload. Effective communication and empathy reduce interpersonal issues, making the work environment more conducive and less likely to burden personal life [7]. For Gen Z, who face the challenge of separating work and personal time due to intensive technology use, EI helps them establish healthy boundaries [8]. The ability to manage emotions allows Gen Z to avoid exhaustion caused by the pressure to be constantly connected and responsive to work outside formal hours. Conversely, low EI can lead to role conflict and ultimately disrupt work-life balance [9]. EI also contributes to building psychological resilience [10] which minimizes the negative impact of work stress and environmental pressure, enabling employees to maintain balance. In conclusion, the first hypothesis, stating that Emotional Intelligence positively influences Work-Life Balance in Gen Z employees, is accepted. This strengthens the importance of EI as a key competency for the younger generation in the challenging modern work environment.

2. H2: The Moderating Role of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) on the EI-WLB Relationship

The test results for the second hypothesis revealed that Perceived Organizational Support (POS) significantly moderates the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Work-Life Balance (WLB) in a negative direction. This means that the higher the POS perceived by employees, the weaker the positive influence of EI on WLB becomes. Resource Substitution Effect: This finding is primarily explained by the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory [11]. COR Theory posits that individuals strive to acquire, maintain, and protect their resources. In this context, EI is an internal resource, while POS is an external resource.

When external resources (POS) are highly available, individuals—especially Gen Z employees—tend to conserve and reduce the use of their internal resources, including their EI abilities. This phenomenon is known as the resource substitution effect. High organizational support can lessen the need for employees to activate their personal emotional abilities to cope with work demands [12]. When POS is high, employees may feel that the organization has "taken care of" their well-being, subsequently reducing their internal drive to employ internal coping strategies [4].

This effect is amplified by Gen Z's characteristics. Gen Z has high expectations that the organization is responsible for providing work comfort, flexibility, and WLB [13]. When POS is high, Gen Z employees may perceive that the organization has fulfilled its responsibility, making them less inclined to actively utilize their Emotional Intelligence to achieve balance. Conversely, the findings (as seen in the Simple Slope Analysis) show that the role of EI becomes more significant when external support is limited [14]. At low POS, employees rely more heavily on their internal resource (EI) to navigate pressures and achieve WLB, resulting in a steeper positive slope. The results indicate that high POS does not always strengthen the EI-WLB relationship; in the context of Gen Z employees, it can even weaken the role of Emotional Intelligence in fostering work-life balance. Therefore, organizations need to maintain a balance: providing adequate support without diminishing the importance of developing and utilizing personal competencies like Emotional Intelligence.

5. Conclusion

There is a positive and significant influence of Emotional Intelligence (EI) on Work-Life Balance (WLB). This means that the higher the employees' Emotional Intelligence, the better the Work-Life Balance they possess. The variable Perceived Organizational Support (POS) significantly and negatively moderates the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Work-Life Balance (WLB). This means that Perceived Organizational Support weakens the positive relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Work-Life Balance. Regarding the researched population, it was found that: * 84% of the respondents reported having a high level of Work-Life Balance 51% of the respondents reported having a high level of Emotional Intelligence. * 80% of the respondents reported having a high level of Perceived Organizational Support.

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