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The Effect of Time Management and Work-Life Balance on Performance with Job Satisfaction as A Mediating Variable (A Study Graduate of The Open University at UT Kupang)

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Abstract

The phenomenon of working students who undertake dual roles as employees and postgraduate students requires effective time management and optimal work-life balance to maintain workplace performance. This study aims to analyze the effects of time management and work-life balance on employee performance, with job satisfaction as a mediating variable, among postgraduate students of Universitas Terbuka (UT) at UT Kupang. This study employed a quantitative approach using purposive sampling involving 82 postgraduate students at UT Kupang who were also active employees. Data were collected through an online questionnaire and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) with the assistance of SmartPLS 4 software. The results show that time management and work-life balance each had positive and significant effects on employee performance and job satisfaction, while job satisfaction also had a positive and significant effect on employee performance. The mediation test results indicate that job satisfaction did not mediate the relationship between time management and employee performance but partially mediated the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance. These findings suggest that time management directly influences performance without involving job satisfaction as a mediating mechanism, whereas work-life balance requires job satisfaction as a psychological mechanism to enhance the performance of working students.

INTRODUCTION

Employees who work while pursuing postgraduate education represent a common phenomenon in the workplace, as education not only enhances knowledge but also contributes to human capital development and self-actualization. Working students face the complex challenge of managing dual roles as employees and students while simultaneously fulfilling professional responsibilities and academic obligations. An imbalance between these two domains can create difficulties in both areas and, because organizational success depends on the effectiveness and productivity of human resources, may ultimately reduce employee

performance.

Universitas Terbuka (UT), Indonesia's distance-learning open university, provides a relevant context for examining this issue, as approximately 85% of its students are active employees. UT's online distance-learning system offers flexibility but also requires students to meet independent assignment deadlines and participate in mandatory discussion sessions, creating pressures that may contribute to stress, delayed academic completion, and reduced work performance when time and role balance are not managed effectively. Postgraduate students represent a particularly relevant population because many are simultaneously employed in government or private institutions and face challenges in managing time and balancing academic responsibilities with professional workloads.

Time management, defined as the ability to organize and complete tasks according to priorities while minimizing delays and errors, is an important factor in maintaining and improving individual performance. Conversely, ineffective time management may hinder priority setting, increase procrastination, and negatively affect performance. Work-life balance refers to an individual's ability to effectively manage time and energy across different life domains so that work demands and personal needs can be adequately fulfilled. In this study, work-life balance specifically focuses on the interaction between work and study domains, as postgraduate students who are also employees must manage competing demands from both areas. Effective time management and work-life balance practices are expected to enhance employee productivity and support performance achievement.

This study is grounded in Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory, which explains that an individual's ability to manage job demands is influenced by available resources, including work-related and personal resources, which subsequently affect well-being and performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). In this study, job demands are expanded beyond a single occupational role to include the dual demands experienced by working students, including work-related demands (workload and time pressure) and academic demands (assignments, examinations, and role conflict). Meanwhile, personal resources are represented by time management and work-life balance. This perspective is consistent with Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which suggests that individuals who successfully maintain resources under pressure are better able to prevent resource loss and associated fatigue, thereby supporting positive psychological conditions and optimal performance. Although previous studies have extensively examined job demands and resources, limited research has investigated both concepts simultaneously within a JD-R framework among individuals performing dual roles. By positioning time management and work-life balance as personal resources within the JD-R framework, this study addresses a gap in understanding how personal resources function under dual-role demands.

Effective management of personal resources contributes to more positive and stable psychological conditions, while high job satisfaction is associated with beneficial outcomes for both employees and organizations. This highlights the importance of personal resources in shaping job satisfaction as one of the motivational pathways within JD-R theory. In the context of working students, job satisfaction reflects an individual's evaluation of whether the work environment supports personal and professional goals. Individuals who experience satisfaction in their work environment tend to demonstrate more positive work attitudes and performance outcomes. Therefore, this study positions job satisfaction as a psychological mechanism that

mediates the relationship between time management, work-life balance, and employee performance.

Several previous studies have examined the relationships among time management, work-life balance, employee performance, and job satisfaction, although their findings remain inconsistent. Ghassani and Adi (2024) found that time management and work-life balance positively affected the performance of working students, whereas Prasetya and Siharis (2023) reported that time management had no significant effect on student-employee performance. Adiyanti and Gunawan (2024) also found a negative relationship between time management and job satisfaction. Regarding the mediating role of job satisfaction, Jamilah et al. (2024) found that job satisfaction mediated the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance, while Wardhani and Hasan (2024) found no mediating effect. Meanwhile, studies examining job satisfaction as a mediator between time management and employee performance remain limited.

Beyond these inconsistencies, most previous studies have focused on employees in general organizational settings, whereas research specifically examining working postgraduate students in distance-learning environments, particularly at Universitas Terbuka Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara, remains limited. The novelty of this study lies in its simultaneous examination of the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationships between time management, work-life balance, and employee performance, as well as its application of JD-R theory within the context of working students who perform dual roles. By positioning time management and work-life balance as personal resources that influence job satisfaction and performance, this study expands understanding of resource management in dual-role contexts. Based on this research gap, this study examines the effects of time management and work-life balance on employee performance, with job satisfaction as a mediating variable, among working postgraduate students at Universitas Terbuka Kupang. This study contributes to mediation-model research using a Structural Equation Modeling approach within a specific population by examining direct and indirect relationships and providing a reference for future studies in different institutional and regional contexts.

METHOD

Type of Research

This study employed explanatory research with a quantitative approach to examine causal relationships among the research variables. The analytical model applied was Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLLS 4 software. PLS-SEM was selected because it was suitable for the characteristics of this study, including the relatively small sample size, absence of a normality assumption requirement, and its applicability for predictive and exploratory models (Hair et al., 2014).

Data Sources

I. Type of Data: primary data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Form to active postgraduate students at Universitas Terbuka (UT) Kupang, while secondary data were obtained indirectly from official UT reports, journals, literature, and relevant books supporting the theoretical framework and population description.

II. Location and Research Subject: the study was conducted at Universitas Terbuka (UT)

Kupang, with postgraduate students in the current semester who are active workers as the research subjects. This location was selected because UT Kupang students undergo a distance-learning system while working, making it directly relevant to the study's focus on the dual role of work and study.

III. Population: the population comprises all postgraduate students at UT Kupang in the current semester who are active workers, totaling 118 students based on data obtained from UT Kupang.

IV. Sample: the sample was obtained using purposive sampling with the following criteria: (1) active UT Kupang postgraduate students in the current semester; (2) active workers (civil servants, employees of state/regional-owned enterprises, private-sector employees, honorary staff, or contract workers) for at least the past six months; and (3) willing to serve as respondents and complete the questionnaire in full. Following Ghozali and Latan (2015), PLS-SEM does not require a large sample, with 30 to 100 cases generally sufficient; applying Hair et al.'s (2014) ten-times rule (minimum sample size of at least ten times the largest number of indicators for any construct, which in this study is 5×10), a minimum sample of at least 50 respondents was required.

Research Instrument

The research instrument was a questionnaire developed from established theory and prior research, adapted to the context of working students at UT. To mitigate Common Method Bias (CMB), the questionnaire incorporated reverse-coded items, randomized item order, and guaranteed respondent anonymity. A five-point Likert scale was used, as presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Likert Measurement Scale

Score	Response	Symbol
1	Strongly Disagree	STS
2	Disagree	TS
3	Neutral/Moderate	N
4	Agree	S
5	Strongly Agree	SS

Respondent demographic data (control variables) - gender, age, employment status, weekly working hours, and length of service - were also collected to enhance validity and describe respondent characteristics, though these were not included in the PLS-SEM structural model or the study's main hypotheses.

The questionnaire blueprint was developed based on Macan (1994) for time management, Greenhaus et al. (2003) for work-life balance, Robbins (2006) for employee performance, and Spector (1997) for job satisfaction, with content validity confirmed by two Human Resource Management experts prior to distribution. In total, the instrument comprised 32 items: time management (X1, 8 items), work-life balance (X2, 6 items), employee performance (Y, 8 items), and job satisfaction (M, 10 items), including reverse-coded items as a Common Method Bias mitigation measure. The instrument blueprint, summarizing each construct's dimensions and item codes, is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Research Instrument Blueprint

Variable	Dimension	Item Codes	Total
Time Management (X1)	Goal setting and prioritization	TM1-TM2	2
	Planning and scheduling	TM3-TM4	2
	Perceived control of time	TM5-TM6	2
	Preference for organization	TM7-TM8 (R)	2
Work-Life Balance (X2)	Time balance between work and personal life	WLB1 (R)-WLB2	2
	Involvement balance between work and personal life	WLB3-WLB4	2
	Satisfaction balance between work and personal life	WLB5-WLB6	2
Employee Performance (Y)	Work quality	EP1-EP2	2
	Work quantity	EP3-EP4	2
	Timeliness	EP5	1
	Effectiveness	EP6	1
	Commitment	EP7-EP8 (R)	2
Job Satisfaction (M)	Promotion/career development	JS1-JS2	2
	Supervision	JS3-JS4 (R)	2
	Coworkers	JS5-JS6	2
	Procedures/rules	JS7-JS8	2
	The work itself	JS9-JS10	2

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected through an online Google Form questionnaire, following these steps: (a) developing and validating the questionnaire based on each variable's indicators; (b) obtaining data-collection permission from UT Kupang; (c) distributing the questionnaire through official communication channels (postgraduate student WhatsApp groups/individuals); (d) ensuring respondent confidentiality and anonymity, with a consent form presented at the start of the questionnaire; and (e) collecting data cross-sectionally over a defined period, followed by data cleaning and coding prior to analysis. The study adhered to social research ethics principles, including data confidentiality, voluntary participation, and use of data solely for academic purposes.

Data Analysis Method

Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling via Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4 software, applied to analyze the path model explaining relationships among variables and hypotheses. This study adopts a reflective measurement model, assuming indicators are reflections of their latent constructs. The analysis stages are as follows.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to describe respondent profiles (gender, age, employment status, weekly working hours, length of service) and to summarize each variable's sample

characteristics (mean, standard deviation, maximum, and minimum).

Common Method Bias (CMB) Test

CMB testing was conducted to detect potential bias arising from the use of a single data collection method (self-report questionnaires), assessed statistically using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) in SmartPLS; a VIF value > 3.3 indicates the presence of CMB, while a value < 3.3 indicates the model is relatively free of CMB (Kock, 2015).

Outer Model (Measurement Model)

a) Convergent Validity: assessed via outer loading (valid if ≥ 0.70) and Average Variance Extracted/AVE (valid if ≥ 0.50) (Ghozali & Latan, 2015).
b) Discriminant Validity: assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), with good discriminant validity indicated by a value < 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015).
c) Reliability: assessed via Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), with a construct considered reliable if both values are ≥ 0.70 (Ghozali & Latan, 2015).

Inner Model (Structural Model)

1) Coefficient of Determination (R^2): categorized as strong (0.75), moderate (0.50), or weak (0.25) (Ghozali & Latan, 2015).
2) Effect Size (F^2): categorized as small (0.02), moderate (0.15), or large (0.35).
3) Predictive Relevance (Q^2): the model has predictive relevance if $Q^2 > 0$, and lacks predictive relevance if $Q^2 < 0$ (Ghozali, 2014).
4) Model Fit: assessed using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR); an SRMR below 0.08 indicates good fit, while a value below 0.10 remains acceptable (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003).
5) Hypothesis Testing (Bootstrapping): conducted using the bootstrapping method with 5,000 resamples in SmartPLS. A direct effect is considered statistically significant if the t-statistic ≥ 1.96 or p-value ≤ 0.05 (Ghozali, 2014). For indirect/mediation effects, bootstrapping is used to test full or partial mediation using a 95% confidence interval (CI); a mediation effect is significant if zero (0) is not included within the CI range.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

The study surveyed 82 postgraduate students at Universitas Terbuka (UT) Kupang, all active workers pursuing postgraduate education through UT's distance-learning system. Respondent characteristics are summarized in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	35	42.68%
	Female	47	57.32%
Age	25-35 years	22	26.83%
	36-45 years	38	46.34%
	> 45 years	22	26.83%
Employment Type	Honorary/Government Contract Staff	2	2.44%
	State/Regional-Owned Enterprise Employee	7	8.54%
	Private Employee	6	7.32%
	Civil Servant (PNS/ASN)	67	81.7%
Weekly Working Hours	≤ 40 hours	20	24.39%
	41-50 hours	53	64.63%
	> 50 hours	9	10.98%
Length of Service	1-5 years	6	7.32%
	6-10 years	25	30.48%
	≥ 10 years	51	62.20%

Respondents were predominantly female (57.3%), aged 36-45 years (46.3%), civil servants (81.7%), working 41-50 hours per week (64.6%), and with 10 years or more of work experience (62.2%) - reflecting a population of established, mid-career civil servants who are simultaneously pursuing postgraduate education.

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Common Method Bias

Descriptive statistics for the four main constructs - time management (TM), work-life balance (WLB), employee performance (EP), and job satisfaction (JS) - together with the Common Method Bias (CMB) test using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics and VIF Results

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	VIF Range
Time Management	4.137	0.856	1.784-2.108
Work-Life Balance	3.821	0.879	1.784-2.209
Employee Performance	4.117	0.764	—
Job Satisfaction	4.000	0.874	2.240

Standard deviations below each variable's mean indicate a homogeneous data spread with relatively consistent respondent perceptions. All VIF values (1.784-2.240) fall below the 3.3 threshold (Kock, 2015), confirming the model is free of common method bias.

Outer Model: Validity and Reliability

The structural model comprises four reflective constructs: time management (8 indicators), work-life balance (6 indicators), job satisfaction (10 indicators), and employee performance (8 indicators). Convergent validity was assessed via outer loading, which ranged from 0.658 to 0.925 across all retained indicators (with two indicators, EP8R and JS4R, eliminated for insufficiently improving model fit), and via Average Variance Extracted (AVE), summarized together with discriminant validity (HTMT) and reliability (Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability) results in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Average Variance Extracted, Cronbach's Alpha, and Composite Reliability Results

Construct	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Time Management	0.589	0.900	0.919
Work-Life Balance	0.582	0.855	0.893
Employee Performance	0.740	0.941	0.952
Job Satisfaction	0.540	0.893	0.913

All constructs show AVE values above 0.50, confirming convergent validity; discriminant validity (HTMT) values ranged from 0.722 to 0.804, all below the 0.90 threshold; and all constructs show Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values above 0.70, confirming that the measurement model (outer model) meets all established validity and reliability criteria.

Inner Model: Structural Model Evaluation

Structural model testing - covering the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (F^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and model fit (SRMR) - is summarized in Table 6 below.

Table 6. R^2, Q^2, and F^2 Results

Criterion	Employee Performance	Job Satisfaction
R^2 (coefficient of determination)	0.714 (strong)	0.554 (moderate)
Q^2 (predictive relevance)	0.661	0.525
F^2: Time Management	0.270 (moderate)	0.182 (moderate)
F^2: Work-Life Balance	0.103 (small)	0.238 (moderate)
F^2: Job Satisfaction	0.135 (small)	—

Time management, work-life balance, and job satisfaction jointly explain 71.4% of the variance in employee performance ($R^2 = 0.714$, strong), while time management and work-life balance jointly explain 55.4% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.554$, moderate). Both Q^2 values exceed zero, confirming good predictive relevance, and the SRMR value of 0.095 falls within the acceptable-fit range (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003).

Hypothesis Testing (Bootstrapping)

Direct and indirect effects were tested via bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples, with a hypothesis considered significant at t-statistic ≥ 1.96 or p-value ≤ 0.05. Results are presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Path Coefficient and Indirect Effect Results

Hypothesis	Path	Original Sample	t-statistic	p-value	Decision
H1	Time Management → Employee Performance	0.404	4.641	0.000	Accepted
H2	Work-Life Balance → Employee Performance	0.255	2.459	0.014	Accepted
H3	Job Satisfaction → Employee Performance	0.294	2.944	0.003	Accepted
H4	Time Management → Job Satisfaction	0.380	3.569	0.000	Accepted
H5	Work-Life Balance → Job Satisfaction	0.435	4.897	0.000	Accepted
H6	Time Management → Job Satisfaction → Employee Performance (indirect)	0.112	1.933	0.053	Rejected
H7	Work-Life Balance → Job Satisfaction → Employee Performance (indirect)	0.128	2.411	0.016	Accepted (partial mediation)

Six of seven hypotheses were supported. H6 was rejected, as the t-statistic (1.933) fell slightly below 1.96 and the p-value (0.053) slightly exceeded 0.05, indicating that job satisfaction does not significantly mediate the relationship between time management and employee performance. H7 was accepted, and because the corresponding direct effect (H2) was also significant, job satisfaction was found to partially mediate the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance.

Discussion

Effect of Time Management on Employee Performance (H1)

H1 was accepted: time management has a positive and significant effect on the employee performance of working students at UT Kupang. Better ability to manage time, set priorities, schedule tasks, and control time use translates directly into improved workplace performance amid the demands of a dual role. This finding is consistent with JD-R theory, in which time management functions as a personal resource enabling individuals to manage the dual demands of work and study, and with COR theory, in which effective time management helps working students avoid resource loss and sustain performance. This finding is consistent with Rahmawati and Giovanna (2025) and Abugre et al., (2023), both of which identify time management as a key determinant of performance.

Effect of Work-Life Balance on Employee Performance (H2)

H2 was accepted: work-life balance has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Better ability to balance work and personal-life demands, including academic responsibilities, without sacrificing either role leads to more optimal performance. Within JD-R theory, work-life balance functions as a personal resource, while boundary/border theory suggests that balance minimizes role conflict and supports well-being through clear separation between work and non-work domains - a particularly salient consideration for distance-learning students, whose scheduling flexibility, while easing workload, also carries a risk of boundary blurring. This finding is consistent with Sjahruddin et al. (2022) and Ha et al. (2024).

Effect of Job Satisfaction on Employee Performance (H3)

H3 was accepted: job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Individuals who feel comfortable and supported by their work environment tend to be more motivated and to contribute more optimal performance, consistent with the JD-R motivational pathway, in which adequate resources generate positive psychological states - including job satisfaction - that enhance individual motivation and performance.

Effect of Time Management on Job Satisfaction (H4)

H4 was accepted: time management has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, consistent with Gazi et al.'s findings that effective time management enhances individuals' sense of control and satisfaction with their work.

Effect of Work-Life Balance on Job Satisfaction (H5)

H5 was accepted: work-life balance has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, consistent with Yoevita and colleagues' and Putri et al.'s (2025) findings, and with Aruldoss et al.'s work linking better work-life balance to higher job satisfaction.

Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction (H6 and H7)

H6 was rejected: job satisfaction does not significantly mediate the relationship between time management and employee performance among working students at UT Kupang, suggesting that time management affects performance more directly than through the psychological pathway of job satisfaction alone. H7 was accepted: job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance, indicating that work-life balance enhances employee performance both directly and indirectly by first fostering greater job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with Udin (2023) and Jamilah et al. (2024), who similarly found job satisfaction to mediate the effect of work-life balance on employee performance.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion presented in the preceding chapter, this study concludes that time management had a positive effect on the employee performance of working students, indicating that it was a significant factor in improving performance. Working students who effectively managed their time and established daily priorities were better able to achieve work targets. Thus, better time management, priority setting, and coordination between work and academic demands contributed to improved workplace performance.

Work-life balance also had a positive effect on the employee performance of working students, significantly improving performance outcomes. Working students who maintained balance among work demands, academic responsibilities, and personal life were able to sustain stronger mental focus, which positively influenced the quality of their work outcomes.

Both time management and work-life balance had positive and significant effects on job satisfaction. An organized schedule and a balanced approach to managing work and study roles fostered a greater sense of control, which contributed to individuals' comfort and satisfaction in the workplace.

Job satisfaction also had a positive and significant effect on the employee performance of working students. Emotional satisfaction and comfort within the work environment functioned as motivational factors; higher levels of job satisfaction encouraged working

students to demonstrate better performance.

However, job satisfaction did not mediate the relationship between time management and employee performance among working students. As a personal resource, time management appeared to influence performance more directly when individuals faced dual-role demands, without depending on their level of job satisfaction.

In contrast, job satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance among working students. This finding indicates that managing the dual demands of work and study not only directly improved performance but also enhanced job satisfaction, which subsequently contributed to better performance outcomes.

Overall, this study demonstrates that personal resources do not influence performance through identical mechanisms. Time management primarily affects employee performance directly without requiring job satisfaction as an intermediary mechanism. Conversely, work-life balance operates partly through job satisfaction as a psychological mechanism that supports improved performance.

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