



The Role of Managers in Promoting Work-Life Balance and Employee Success

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ABSTRACT

Work-life balance (WLB) is increasingly recognized as an important aspect of employee well-being and work-related outcomes. This systematic literature review examines the association between managerial and supervisory practices, WLB, and employee outcomes. The review followed the PRISMA 2020 reporting framework. Literature was identified from Google Scholar, PubMed, SINTA, ResearchGate, and relevant journal portals, with studies screened using predefined eligibility criteria and appraised using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) 2018. A total of 21 empirical peer-reviewed studies published between 2018 and 2025 were included and synthesized narratively and thematically. The findings indicate that transformational and empowering leadership, work autonomy and flexibility, emotional and psychological support, effective communication, and employee development are associated with WLB. WLB was also associated with job satisfaction, performance or productivity, engagement, psychological well-being, proactive or innovative behavior, and retention. The findings are consistent with Social Exchange Theory and Conservation of Resources Theory, suggesting that managerial support may function as a contextual resource that helps employees manage work and personal demands. However, the findings represent associations rather than uniform causal effects because the reviewed studies varied in research design, context, measurement, and outcomes, with many using cross-sectional data. Future research should employ longitudinal, multi-source, and, where appropriate, experimental designs to examine these relationships across diverse organizational contexts.

Keyword: Work-Life Balance, Employee Success, Managerial Role, Systematic Literature Review.

1. Introduction

Employee performance is a key determinant of an organization's success in facing increasingly intense global competition. In maintaining consistency in business competition, employee performance serves as a benchmark for organizational sustainability [1], [2]. In an era of fierce global market dynamics, organizations are required to focus not only on output productivity but also on the well-being of their human resources. Among the various dimensions of well-being, the balance between work and personal life—known as work-life balance—has become a primary concern for both management practitioners and academic researchers [3]. Work-life balance is defined as a state in which employees are able to meet the demands of their work and personal lives in a balanced manner without experiencing excessive conflict [4]. An imbalance between these two spheres causes severe negative effects, including increased work-related stress, decreased job satisfaction, heightened turnover intention, and a decline in overall performance [3]. Recent research by David et al. [5] emphasizes that work-life balance plays a crucial role as a mediator between organizational support and employee engagement, while directly contributing to improved employee performance.

Managers, as frontline leaders within an organization, play an indispensable role in shaping the employee work experience. A manager's leadership style, communication patterns, and policy implementations directly influence employees' ability to balance work demands [6]. As early conceptual frameworks established by Robbins [7] suggest, managers operate across interpersonal, informational, and decision-making roles. When managers exhibit Family-Supportive Supervisor Behavior (FSSB), they directly reduce dual-role conflict and emotional exhaustion [8], [9]. Employee success is a multidimensional construct that encompasses the achievement of work goals, career satisfaction, developing competencies, and psychological well-being [10]. To synthesize how managers systematically facilitate these outcomes, this study provides a comprehensive systematic literature review mapping managerial behaviors to employee work-life balance and success.

2. Method

2.1 Search Strategy and Selection

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology and reported the review process in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 statement. PRISMA 2020 was used as a reporting framework to enhance transparency in the identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion of relevant literature. The literature search was conducted using Google Scholar, PubMed, SINTA, and ResearchGate, with ResearchGate treated as a publication-discovery platform rather than a bibliographic database, as well as the specific national and international journal portals listed in Supplementary Table S1. The principal search concepts were “managerial role,” “managerial support,” “supervisor support,” “work-life balance,” “employee performance,” and “employee success,” which were combined using database-appropriate Boolean operators. For reproducibility, Supplementary Table S1 presents the source or platform name, search field, complete search string, publication-year limits, language restrictions, applied filters, search date, and retrieval procedure for each source. Records retrieved from the respective sources were screened for relevance, duplicates were removed, and potentially eligible articles were subsequently assessed against the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria described in Section 3.2.

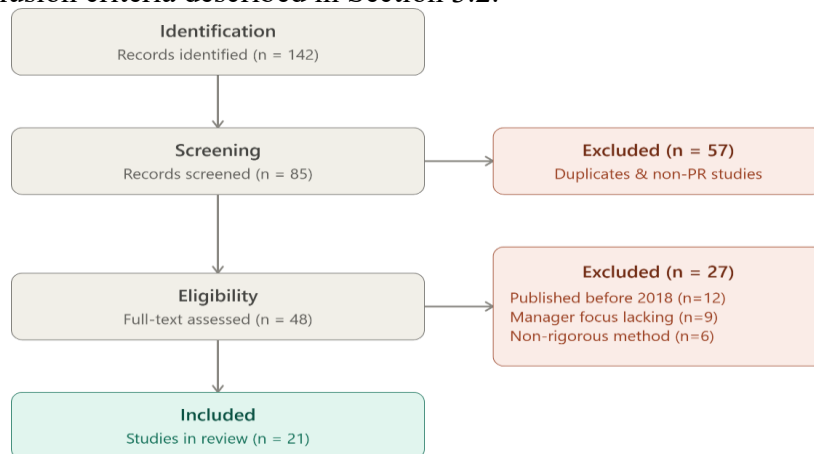


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow diagram

2.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Studies were screened using predefined eligibility criteria.

1. Inclusion criteria: (1) peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2018 and 2025; (2) empirical quantitative or qualitative studies that directly examined managerial or supervisory roles, work-life balance, employee performance, or employee success; (3) studies with a clearly reported research methodology and findings relevant to the objectives of this review; and (4) studies retrievable from the sources identified in the search strategy.
2. Exclusion Criteria: (1) publications outside the 2018–2025 publication period; (2) literature reviews, systematic reviews, bibliometric studies, conceptual or theoretical papers, books,

conference abstracts, dissertations, editorials, and other non-empirical publications; (3) studies without an explicit managerial or supervisory dimension relevant to the review objectives; (4) duplicate records; and (5) studies for which sufficient methodological or outcome information could not be extracted. Eligibility was assessed through title and abstract screening followed by full-text assessment after duplicate removal. The number of records identified, screened, excluded, and included at each stage was documented in the PRISMA 2020 flow diagram, with reasons for full-text exclusion recorded in the supplementary material.

2.3 Quality Appraisal and Analysis

The methodological quality of the included studies was assessed by one reviewer using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) version 2018, with criteria selected according to each study's methodological design and covering the appropriateness of the research approach, sampling or participant selection, data collection and measurement procedures, outcome data, data analysis, and the coherence between findings and research objectives. Each applicable criterion was recorded as "Yes," "No," or "Can't tell," and no overall numerical quality score was calculated. Data were extracted by the same reviewer using a structured matrix containing the author and publication year, study design, research context, participants or sample, managerial or supervisory factors, work-life balance and/or employee performance or success outcomes, and relevant findings. The extracted findings were coded according to the managerial and supervisory factors reported in each study, grouped into conceptually related categories, and compared across studies to identify recurring patterns and relationships among managerial roles, work-life balance, and employee outcomes. The study characteristics, appraisal results, and extraction and coding information were summarized in the supplementary tables. Statistical meta-analysis was not conducted because the included studies differed in research designs, measurement approaches, contexts, and reported outcomes; therefore, the findings were synthesized narratively and thematically.

3. Results and Discussion

Following the application of the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, 21 empirical studies published between 2018 and 2025 were included in the main synthesis. Studies that did not meet the eligibility criteria, including systematic reviews, bibliometric studies, conceptual or theoretical papers, books, meta-analyses, and studies published outside the 2018–2025 period, were excluded from the included-study matrix but may be used as background or theoretical references where appropriate. The characteristics and main findings of the included studies are presented in Table 1. The study selection process, including the numbers of records identified, screened, excluded, and included, is presented in the PRISMA 2020 flow diagram, while the reasons for full-text exclusion are documented in the supplementary material.

Table 1. The characteristics and main findings

No	Author(s) & Year	Methodology / Context	Key Findings
1	Frimayasa & Lawu (2020)	Quantitative, Corporate	Organizational commitment and human capital drive employee performance.
2	Nawangwulan et al. (2022)	Empirical Study	Organizational commitment mediates human capital/ethos impact on performance. Supervisor work-life support positively influences employee performance, while work autonomy significantly mediates the relationship between supervisor work-life support and work performance.
3	Msuya & Kumar (2022)	Quantitative, Survey, Banking Sector	Work-life balance positively influences job satisfaction and job performance, while family-supportive supervisor behavior
4	Susanto et al. (2022)	Quantitative, SMEs, Indonesia	

			moderates the relationships between work-life balance, job satisfaction, and job performance.
5	David et al. (2025)	Empirical Study	WLB mediates organizational support and employee engagement
6	Komlenac et al. (2022)	Quantitative, Academic Staff, Austria	Family-supportive supervisor behavior moderates the relationship between work stress and emotional exhaustion, particularly among employees with children, indicating its role as a job resource for managing work-family demands.
7	Fan et al. (2023)	Quantitative, Employee Quantitative, two-stage survey, 535 employees, China	Family-supportive supervisor behavior positively influences employees' proactive behavior. Perceived insider status and affective commitment partially mediate this relationship, while the two variables also form a chain-mediating mechanism.
8	García-Salirrosas et al. (2023)	Quantitative, Remote Workers, Peru	Family-supportive supervisory behavior positively influences work-life balance and job satisfaction among remote workers, with work-to-family positive spillover and work-life balance mediating the relationship between supervisory support and job satisfaction.
9	Effendi et al. (2025)	Quantitative, 736 University Lecturers, Indonesia	Supervisor support positively influences work-life balance, while work-life balance mediates the relationship between workload and lecturer productivity.
10	Pratiwi & Rizky (2024)	Quantitative Empirical	Leadership style and employee engagement directly elevate job performance.
11	Ridhani & Rahmawati (2025)	Quantitative, Survey	Transformational leadership positively influences job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.292$).
12	Prihandayani & Lubis (2024)	Quantitative, 40 employees, BPS Deli Serdang	Visionary leadership and job satisfaction were positively and significantly associated with employee performance.
13	Pensar & Rousi (2023)	Qualitative, Remote Work	Autonomy and time savings act as personal resources under COR theory.
14	Jiang et al. (2023)	Quantitative Study	Flexible work arrangements foster innovative behavior via workplace thriving.
15	Larasati & Ahluwalia-2020	Empirical WFH Study	Empowering leadership increases employee confidence and WLB during crises.
16	Adegbite & Bawalla (2023)	Quantitative Study	FSSB enhances psychological well-being and thriving at work.
17	Sulastri et al. (2025)	Quantitative, 85 employees, hospitality sector	Work experience, work communication, and self-efficacy were positively and significantly associated with employee performance.
18	Damanik (2025)	Quantitative, 111 employees, BPS North Sumatra	Employee engagement positively affects employee performance, while work-life balance moderates the relationship between engagement and performance.
19	Rodríguez-Sánchez et al. (2020)	Empirical Survey	Managerial investment in WLB programs significantly enhances talent retention.
20	Amri et al. (2022)	Quantitative Empirical	Perceived organizational support mediates flexible working and employee well-being.
21	Sekhar & Patwardhan (2023)	Empirical Study	Supervisor support acts as an essential mediator between flexibility and productivity.

3.1 Five Dimensions of Managers' Roles in Promoting Work-Life Balance

1. Transformational Leadership Style

Leadership practices were associated with employee-related outcomes across several empirical studies. Ridhani and Rahmawati [11] reported a positive association between transformational leadership and job satisfaction, while Prihandayani and Lubis [29] found that visionary leadership was positively associated with employee performance among employees of the Central Statistics Agency of Deli Serdang. These findings suggest that leadership style may be relevant to employee satisfaction and performance, although the evidence should be interpreted as associative because the reviewed studies used quantitative designs and varied in context and measurement.

2. Work Flexibility and Autonomy

Managers who grant autonomy over schedules, locations, and task methods directly mitigate stress [13], [14]. Jiang et al. [15] show that flexible work arrangements cultivate innovation by letting employees thrive. Similarly, Larasati & Ahluwalia [16] demonstrate that empowering leadership enhances both remote work-life balance and employee confidence during high-pressure crises.

3. Emotional and Psychological Support

Managerial empathy creates psychological safety. Within the JD-R and COR frameworks, Family Supportive Supervisor Behavior (FSSB) functions as a key interpersonal resource [8], [17]. Guo et al. [9] confirm via meta-analysis that FSSB reduces emotional exhaustion and strengthens leader-member exchange (LMX) quality.

4. Effective Communication

Effective workplace communication may also be associated with employee performance. Sulastri et al. [30] reported a positive association between work communication and employee performance among employees at The Royal Pita Maha Resort Ubud. In contrast, Nasution and Rizky [18] reported that communication did not significantly influence employee performance or work motivation in their public-sector sample. These differing findings suggest that the relationship between communication and employee outcomes may depend on organizational and contextual conditions.

5. Facilitating Career and Competency Development

Managers who align organizational tasks with individual career progression help employees view their time investment as mutually beneficial [10]. This alignment enhances intrinsic motivation and organizational commitment [2], [10].

3.2 Mechanisms Linking Work-Life Balance to Employee Success

1. Job Satisfaction and Performance: Work-life balance has been associated with employee-related outcomes such as job satisfaction and performance. Susanto et al. [19] reported positive relationships between work-life balance, job satisfaction, and job performance, while Damanik [28] found that work-life balance moderated the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance. These findings indicate that work-life balance may influence how employee engagement is related to performance, although the direction and mechanism of these relationships require further longitudinal investigation.
2. Reduced Stress and Burnout: Flexible scheduling supervised by supportive managers reduces role overload and emotional exhaustion [9], [20], [21].
3. Increased Motivation and Engagement: Work-life balance serves as a vital mediator between supervisor support and measurable performance quality [5], [10].
4. Continuous Competency Growth: Conserving cognitive and emotional energy allows employees to engage in skill development [10], [13].

3.3 Limitations of the Reviewed Literature

Despite the insights generated by the reviewed studies, several limitations should be considered.

1. A substantial proportion of the included studies used cross-sectional and self-reported survey designs, which limits the ability to establish temporal or causal relationships.
2. The studies varied considerably in organizational context, occupational groups, sample characteristics, and measurement approaches, which may limit direct comparability and generalizability.

3. Differences in how work-life balance, managerial support, and employee outcomes were operationalized may have contributed to variation in the reported findings.

4. Conclusion

This systematic review indicates that managerial and supervisory practices, including transformational and empowering leadership, work autonomy and flexibility, emotional and psychological support, effective communication, and employee development, are associated with work-life balance and various employee outcomes, such as job satisfaction, performance or productivity, engagement, psychological well-being, proactive or innovative behavior, and retention. From the perspectives of Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, managerial support can be understood as a contextual resource that may help employees manage work and personal demands. However, these findings should be interpreted as associations rather than uniform causal effects because the reviewed studies varied in research design, organizational context, measurement approaches, and outcome variables, with many relying on cross-sectional data. Future research should therefore employ longitudinal, multi-source, and, where appropriate, experimental designs to examine the temporal and causal relationships among managerial practices, work-life balance, and employee outcomes across diverse organizational and industry contexts.

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