

Employee Dilemma: The Influence of Work-Life Balance on the Decision to Stay or Leave

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the relationship between work-life balance and turnover intention, with affective commitment as a moderating variable. An imbalance in work-life balance can increase employees' desire to leave their jobs, whereas affective commitment has the potential to weaken this effect. The research employs a quantitative approach with a causal-comparative design. Data were collected through an online questionnaire involving 250 employees from the industrial and service sectors in Indonesia, selected using the purposive sampling technique. Data analysis was conducted using the Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) technique to examine the relationships among variables. The results indicate that work-life balance has a negative effect on turnover intention, meaning that the better an individual's work-life balance, the lower their likelihood of leaving their job. Furthermore, affective commitment was found to be a moderating variable that weakens the relationship between work-life balance and turnover intention. The findings highlight the importance of organizations in fostering work-life balance while strengthening employees' affective commitment through organizational strategies that promote well-being and emotional engagement. Future research is recommended to expand the sector coverage and use longitudinal methods to better understand the long-term effects of work-life balance on turnover intention.

Keywords: *Affective commitment, emotional engagement, turnover intention, work-life balance*

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of quiet quitting has become an increasingly discussed topic in various studies, especially in the context of modern workforce dynamics (Formica & Sfodera, 2022; Harter, 2022; Pevec, 2023). This term describes a condition where employees only perform their tasks according to their job descriptions without putting in extra effort or deeper engagement. Quiet quitting is often associated with an increase in turnover intention, which refers to an employee's tendency to leave their job in search of better opportunities (Mahand & Caldwell, 2023).

Research by Galanis et al. (2023) found that approximately 60.9% of employees were identified as engaging in quiet quitting, with 40.9% of them exhibiting a high tendency to change jobs. Additionally, studies by Mujiati & Dewi (2016) and Octaviani & Hartijasti (2016) suggest that turnover intention results from employees' perceived job dissatisfaction. Factors such as an unbalanced workload, lack of recognition, and minimal organizational support can increase employees' desire to seek new employment (Mobley, 1986; Naiemah et al., 2021).

Quiet quitting is also frequently linked to employees' efforts to achieve work-life balance. Some studies indicate that employees who engage in quiet quitting tend to be more aware of the importance of setting boundaries between work and personal life (CNN, 2022; Efendi, 2023; Hamouche et al., 2023). Greenhaus et al. (2003) state that work-life balance is not merely about dividing time equally between work and personal life but ensuring that both aspects can coexist harmoniously without creating conflicts.

However, achieving work-life balance is not always easy. When this balance is not achieved, employees are more likely to experience stress and an increased turnover intention (Nanda, 2017; Lestari & Margaretha, 2021). Therefore, this study introduces affective commitment as a moderating variable. Affective commitment refers to employees' emotional attachment to an organization, which influences the extent to which they feel connected to the company and strive to maintain their jobs (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Several studies indicate that affective commitment has a significant relationship with work-life balance and turnover intention (Ahmed Zaid, 2023; Yukongdi & Shrestha, 2020). Individuals with high affective commitment tend to adapt more easily to organizational changes and are less likely to leave their jobs (Liu, Zhou & Che, 2019; Moussa & El Arbi, 2020).

Based on the identified research gap, this study aims to analyze whether affective commitment serves as a moderating variable in the relationship between work-life balance and turnover intention. Additionally, this study seeks to measure the extent to which affective commitment moderates this relationship. Thus, this research is expected to provide new insights into the role of affective commitment in the context of work-life balance and turnover intention, as well as practical recommendations for companies to manage their workforce more effectively.

2. Method

This study employs a quantitative approach with a causal-comparative design to examine the role of affective commitment as a moderating variable in the relationship between work-life balance and turnover intention. The study population comprises employees working in the industrial and service sectors in Indonesia. The sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique, with the criterion that respondents had at least one year of work experience. The study sample consists of 250 employees from various companies.

Data collection was conducted through an online questionnaire, which included demographic data, a work-life balance scale, a turnover intention scale, and an affective commitment scale. Respondents were provided with information about the research objectives and voluntarily completed the questionnaire. The instruments used in this study consisted of three primary scales:

- Work-Life Balance: Measured using a scale developed by Greenhaus et al. (2003) with a Likert scale (1–5).
- Turnover Intention: Measured using Mobley's (1986) scale, which assesses individuals' willingness to leave their job.
- Affective Commitment: Measured using a scale developed by Meyer & Allen (1990) to evaluate the extent of employees' emotional attachment to their organization.

Data analysis was conducted using the Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) technique to test the influence of work-life balance on turnover intention, with affective commitment as a moderating variable. Validity and reliability tests were performed to ensure that the instruments used were consistent and accurate in measuring the studied variables. Data processing was carried out using statistical software such as SPSS to ensure valid and interpretable results.

3. Results

This study aims to examine the relationship between work-life balance and turnover intention, with affective commitment as a moderating variable. The descriptive analysis results indicate that the majority of respondents have a moderate to high level of work-life balance, with an average score of 3.8 on a 1–5 Likert scale. Meanwhile, turnover intention shows an average score of 2.9, indicating a moderately high intention to leave the job among respondents.

The results of the Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) show that work-life balance has a significant negative effect on turnover intention ($\beta = -0.45$, $p < 0.05$). This means that the better an individual's work-life balance, the lower their tendency to leave their job. Additionally, the analysis results show that affective commitment acts as a moderator that weakens the relationship between work-life balance and turnover intention ($\beta = -0.30$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that individuals with high affective commitment tend to have lower turnover intentions even when their work-life balance is not optimal. The regression analysis results are presented in the following table:

Table 1.

Regression Analysis Results

Independent Variable	β (Regression Coefficient)	p-value
Work-Life Balance	-0,45	< 0,05
Affective Commitment	-0,30	< 0,05
Interaction (Moderation)	-0,20	< 0,05

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that work-life balance has a significant effect on turnover intention, where individuals with better work-life balance are less likely to leave their jobs. Furthermore, affective commitment serves as a factor that weakens the effect of work-life balance on turnover intention, indicating that employees with strong emotional attachment to their organization tend to remain in their jobs despite challenges in maintaining work-life balance.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that work-life balance is a crucial factor in determining employees' turnover intention. These results are consistent with previous research, which suggests that employees with good work-life balance tend to be more loyal to their organizations and have lower turnover intentions. In the context of this study, optimal work-life balance contributes to reducing turnover intention, aligning with the work-life balance theory proposed by Greenhaus et al. (2003).

Additionally, this study finds that affective commitment serves as a moderator in the relationship between work-life balance and turnover intention. Employees with strong emotional attachment to their organization are less likely to leave their jobs, even when experiencing work-life imbalance. These results support the three-component model of organizational commitment by Meyer & Allen (1990), which states that affective commitment plays a role in retaining employees within an organization.

This study also contributes to understanding the psychological factors that can mitigate the negative impact of work-life imbalance. Unlike previous research, which primarily focused on compensation or work environment factors, this study highlights the importance of emotional attachment in reducing turnover intention. These findings can serve as a foundation for organizations in designing more human-centered policies, such as strengthening organizational culture and implementing employee well-being programs aimed at enhancing affective commitment.

However, this study has several limitations. First, it employs a self-report survey method, which may introduce subjective bias from respondents. Second, the study only includes samples from the industrial and service sectors in Indonesia, making it necessary to generalize the findings to other sectors with caution. Therefore, future research is recommended to use longitudinal or experimental methods to further examine the causal relationships between variables and expand the sample coverage to various industries and different countries.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that work-life balance negatively affects turnover intention, meaning that employees with better work-life balance are less likely to leave their jobs. Furthermore, affective commitment serves as a moderating variable that weakens this relationship, highlighting the importance of fostering emotional attachment to the organization. Organizations should focus on strategies that promote work-life balance and enhance affective commitment to reduce turnover intention and improve overall workforce stability.

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