

Factors Influencing Work Life Balance Among Early Adults: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Work-life balance is an individual's ability to balance work and personal life, which affects well-being and work productivity. Poor work-life balance in early adulthood may lead to stress, fatigue, and lower job satisfaction. This literature review aims to identify factors influencing work-life balance among early adults through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR). A total of 13 national and international journal articles published between 2016 and 2025 were analyzed through article selection, data extraction, and thematic synthesis. The results show that personality traits are the most dominant factor, particularly neuroticism and extraversion. In addition, emotional intelligence, psychological capital, emotional labor, and job-related factors such as workload, work-related stress, and organizational support also play a role. Contextual factors, such as lifestyle behaviors and blurred work-life boundaries, also influence work-life balance. Overall, work-life balance in early adulthood is influenced by the interaction of internal and external factors.

Keywords: *Work-Life Balance, Personality Traits, Systematic Literature Review*

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INTRODUCTION

The literature review conducted in Indonesia showed that in 2020, more than half of workers experienced moderate levels of work-related stress (53.00%), while a substantial proportion of respondents also experienced high workloads (53.26%) (Widowati et al., 2020). These findings are supported by a more recent literature review showing that more than 20% of employees experienced reduced work vigor (negative vigor) and fatigue. The review also found a significant relationship between low work-life balance and increased work-related stress (Rokhim et al., 2025).

Work-life balance (WLB) has become a major priority, particularly for Generation Z, who value flexibility and quality of life (Rachmadini & Riyanto, 2020). In addition to seeking financial security, they want workplaces that support psychological well-being and personal development (Bulut & Maraba, 2021). An imbalance between work and personal life can lead to stress and reduced job satisfaction (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Hayman, 2009). This review also indicates that organizational support for WLB has a significant impact on

employee engagement among Generation Z (Chigeda et al., 2022). Manageable levels of stress may improve productivity, creativity, and innovation; however, excessive stress can reduce productivity and create a need for more flexible work arrangements (Moore et al., 2019; Rokhim et al., 2025).

WLB is defined as the level of individual involvement and satisfaction in balancing work, family, and personal life roles (Rahmawati & Gunawan, 2019; Greenhaus et al., 2003). According to Hayman (2009), WLB consists of three aspects: work interference with personal life (WIPL), personal life interference with work (PLIW), and work/personal life enhancement (WPLE). These three aspects describe how work and personal life may interfere with or enhance one another.

WLB also encompasses broader aspects of psychological well-being, including happiness, leisure time, family, and personal development (Greenhaus et al., 2003). In the context of Generation Z, WLB is an important need because this generation tends to evaluate work not only in terms of financial benefits but also in terms of flexibility and support for personal life (Barhate & Dirani, 2022; Bulut & Maraba, 2021). Good work-life balance has been shown to be associated with improved quality of life and reduced work-related stress (Greenhaus et al., 2012; Rokhim et al., 2025).

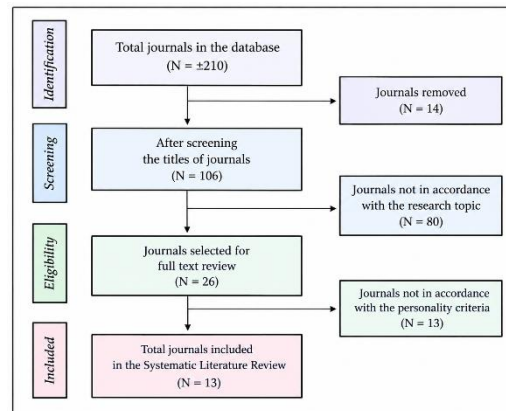
According to Houston (2005), WLB consists of three main components: time balance, involvement balance, and satisfaction balance, which together determine the quality of an individual's life balance. Thus, WLB is not merely related to the allocation of time, but also to psychological involvement and satisfaction in fulfilling life roles.

Early adulthood is a period in which individuals begin to build careers, achieve independence, and undertake various life roles. During this phase, individuals face challenges in balancing work demands and personal life. This condition makes WLB an important aspect of maintaining well-being and job satisfaction (Christian & Prapunoto, 2025). Research also shows that WLB mediates the relationship between psychological well-being and quarter-life crisis among early adults (Febrianti & Affandi, 2025). This indicates that the ability to maintain life balance can help individuals cope with developmental challenges during early adulthood.

Various factors influence the achievement of optimal WLB. Guest (2002) explained that WLB is influenced by work-related, individual, and family factors. Work factors include workload and work arrangements; individual factors include personality, values, preferences, and coping; while family factors include role demands at home. Empirically, various studies have shown that WLB in early adulthood is influenced by variables such as job satisfaction, psychological well-being, and psychological pressure (Christian & Prapunoto, 2025; Febrianti & Affandi, 2025). However, these studies remain fragmented and have not systematically integrated the various factors.

Based on this gap, there is still a need for a comprehensive mapping of the factors influencing WLB, particularly among early adults. Therefore, this review employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to identify, integrate, and synthesize factors influencing WLB among early adults.

Table 1. PRISMA Flowchart for Journal Selection



METHOD

This review used a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to identify, integrate, and synthesize findings concerning factors influencing WLB among early adults. The SLR procedure followed Kitchenham (2004), consisting of planning the review, conducting the review, and reporting the review.

During the planning stage, the review formulated review questions using the SPIDER framework (Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation, Research Type) as the basis for developing the literature search strategy and article selection process.

Based on the review questions, a literature search strategy was designed using the keywords work life balance, early adulthood, young adult, emerging adulthood, factors, determinants, and predictors. These keywords were combined using Boolean operators (AND and OR) to identify relevant articles from Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Garuda. All retrieved articles were then checked for duplicates using Mendeley reference-management software. Screening was subsequently conducted based on titles and abstracts. Articles meeting the initial criteria were reviewed in full text to ensure their relevance to the objectives of the review.

The inclusion criteria were: (1) articles discussing WLB among early-adult individuals; (2) studies identifying or discussing factors influencing WLB; (3) empirical studies using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods approaches; (4) articles written in Indonesian or English; and (5) articles published between 2016 and 2025. The exclusion criteria were: (1) articles not focusing on early-adult populations; (2) reviews, editorials, non-empirical proceedings, books, undergraduate theses, master's theses, or dissertations; (3) articles not available in full text; and (4) articles that did not discuss factors influencing WLB.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the synthesis of the 13 analyzed articles, WLB among early adults can be described as a dynamic condition influenced by the interaction between work demands

and individuals' ability to manage life roles. Most of the reviewed studies indicate that early adults are vulnerable to imbalance, particularly because of high work demands, emotional pressure, and the need to adapt to the world of work (Chigeda et al., 2022; Rahmawati & Gunawan, 2019).

In addition, the development of modern work systems that are increasingly flexible and technology-based has made the boundaries between work and personal life increasingly blurred (Pluut & Wonders, 2020). Consequently, individuals not only face direct work demands but also expectations to remain connected to work outside working hours. Nevertheless, several studies indicate that WLB among early adults is not always negative, as some individuals are able to achieve balance through internal factors such as emotional intelligence, resilience, and psychological capital (Gagnano et al., 2020; Pushpika et al., 2025).

Thus, WLB among early adults can be understood as an unstable and fluctuating condition influenced by a combination of work pressures, individual characteristics, and workplace support. The review findings show that factors influencing WLB among early adults can be grouped into several main categories: personality factors, psychological factors, work-related factors, and contextual factors. Several studies found that personality traits such as neuroticism, conscientiousness, and extraversion are associated with how individuals manage demands from work and personal life (Maszura et al., 2025; Shahin et al., 2021).

In addition, psychological factors such as emotional intelligence, resilience, and psychological capital have also been reported to be associated with individuals' ability to manage stress and maintain life balance (Gagnano et al., 2020; Chigeda et al., 2022; Pushpika et al., 2025). On the work side, variables such as workload, working hours, work-related stress, and organizational support have been found to be associated with WLB (Rahmawati & Gunawan, 2019; Chigeda et al., 2022). Several studies have also indicated that emotional labor and the emotional demands of work may contribute to this condition (Hofmann & Stokburger-Sauer, 2017; Lee & Lee, 2023).

Meanwhile, other factors such as blurred work-life boundaries and lifestyle behaviors demonstrate the influence of technological development and lifestyle patterns on work-life balance (Pluut & Wonders, 2020). Several studies have also linked WLB to individual values such as personal beliefs, vocation, and eudaimonic well-being (Soni & Bakhru, 2019; Quinn & Hartland-Grant, 2025).

In terms of participant characteristics, the studies analyzed were dominated by early- to middle-adult workers, with ages ranging from approximately 18 to 60 years, and most participants belonging to the early- to middle-working-age group (approximately 20–40 years). This indicates that WLB research frequently focuses on the early career stage, when individuals simultaneously face work demands and adjustments to life roles. Based on these findings, the characteristics of the studies and the factors influencing WLB among early adults are summarized in Table 2.

Based on the synthesis of the analyzed literature, the factors influencing WLB among early adults can be grouped into several main categories according to similarities

among the variables used in each study. This grouping facilitates the identification of patterns across the reviewed studies and helps indicate which factors appear most frequently and have received the greatest research attention in the context of WLB.

The analysis shows that personality traits are the most dominant factor, with six studies addressing this variable (Maszura et al., 2025; Shahin et al., 2021; Soni & Bakhru, 2019; Bagley et al., 2018; Pushpika et al., 2025; Quinn & Hartland-Grant, 2025). Emotional intelligence was identified in two studies (Chigeda et al., 2022; Gagnano et al., 2020), while emotional labor also appeared in two studies (Hofmann & Stokburger-Sauer, 2017; Lee & Lee, 2023). Other factors, such as psychological capital, work engagement, work-related stress, job-related factors, lifestyle behaviors, and other contextual factors, appeared in only one or two studies.

These findings indicate that WLB research among early adults remains strongly dominated by internal individual factors, particularly personality, compared with external factors such as the work environment or organization. This suggests that individual psychological characteristics are a major focus in understanding how people manage the balance between work and personal life.

Table 2. Study Characteristics and Factors Influencing Work–Life Balance Among Early Adults

No.	Study	Participants Number	& Age	Factors Influencing WLB
1	Chigeda et al. (2022)	212 private-school employees	20–70	Emotional intelligence, WLB support, work-related stress
2	Gagnano et al. (2020)	350 contract workers (Italy)	±20–60	Ability emotional intelligence, emotional self-efficacy, resilience
3	Hofmann & Stokburger-Sauer (2017)	436 front-line employees (USA & China)	±20–60	Emotional labor
4	Lee & Lee (2023)	240 mental health specialists	±20–60	Emotional labor, anger, work engagement
5	Maszura et al. (2025)	150 banking employees	21–40	Neuroticism
6	Pluut & Wonders (2020)	1,000 employees (Netherlands)	18–65	Blurred boundaries, work-life lifestyle behaviors
7	Rahmawati & Gunawan (2019)	200 millennial workers	20–40	Job-related factors
8	Shahin et al. (2021)	200 female academics	25–50	Personality traits
9	Soni & Bakhru (2019)	540 lecturers and management staff	Not stated	Personality traits, eudaimonic well-being

10	Bagley et al. (2018)	219 English nurses	21–60	Personality, hardiness, vocation
11	Pushpika et al. (2025)	357 female workers (Sri Lanka)	±20–60	Psychological capital, personality traits
12	Quinn & Hartland-Grant (2025)	55 UK academics	±25–60	Personality, personal beliefs
13	Christian & Prapunoto (2025)	164 employees of PT Budimas Makmur Mulia	18–25	Work-life balance, job satisfaction, productivity

CONCLUSION

WLB is fundamentally a multidimensional construct describing how individuals balance role demands in work and personal life. Conceptually, WLB is not understood merely as the allocation of time between two life domains, but also includes psychological involvement and the level of satisfaction individuals experience in fulfilling their roles (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Rahmawati & Gunawan, 2019). Hayman (2009) explains that WLB consists of three main dimensions: work interference with personal life (WIPL), personal life interference with work (PLIW), and work/personal life enhancement (WPLE). These aspects indicate that the relationship between work and personal life may be negative, through mutual interference, or positive, through mutual enhancement.

In the context of early adulthood, WLB is increasingly important because this generation seeks not only financial stability but also work flexibility, psychological well-being, and personal development (Bulut & Maraba, 2021; Barhate & Dirani, 2022). WLB imbalance has been associated with work-related stress, fatigue, and decreased job satisfaction and productivity (Rokhim et al., 2025; Chigeda et al., 2022). WLB is also shaped by various interconnected factors. Based on the literature, these factors can be grouped into individual, psychological, work-related, and contextual factors. Individual factors include personality traits such as neuroticism, conscientiousness, and extraversion, which influence how individuals respond to life demands (Maszura et al., 2025; Shahin et al., 2021). Psychological factors include emotional intelligence, resilience, and psychological capital, which contribute to the ability to manage stress and maintain role balance (Gragano et al., 2020; Chigeda et al., 2022; Pushpika et al., 2025).

Meanwhile, work-related factors include workload, working hours, work-related stress, organizational support, and emotional labor, all of which may increase role pressure (Rahmawati & Gunawan, 2019; Hofmann & Stokburger-Sauer, 2017; Lee & Lee, 2023). Contextual factors such as blurred work-life boundaries and lifestyle behaviors also demonstrate that technological development and modern lifestyles influence work-life balance (Pluut & Wonders, 2020).

Thus, WLB can be understood as a complex construct formed through the interaction of individual characteristics, psychological conditions, work demands, and social context. In early adulthood, this phase is crucial because individuals are simultaneously developing their careers and adjusting to life roles. Therefore, this study emphasizes that

WLB is not a single phenomenon, but a dynamic and fluctuating system that varies according to individuals' internal and external conditions.

Based on the Systematic Literature Review (SLR), it can be concluded that WLB among early adults (2016–2025) is fluctuating. Some individuals experience imbalance due to high work demands, work-related stress, and blurred role boundaries, whereas others are able to achieve balance through internal factors and external support. These findings reinforce that WLB is a complex, multidimensional construct influenced by multiple interacting factors.

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