

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK–LIFE BALANCE AND WORK STRESS ON THE QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG AMBULANCE OFFICERS IN SEMARANG CITY

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ABSTRACT

Ambulance officers work under high pressure due to the demand for 24-hour readiness in handling emergencies. Imbalances between work and personal life (work-life balance) and high work stress can affect their quality of life. This study aims to analyze the relationship between work-life balance, work stress, and the quality of life of ambulance officers in Semarang City. This quantitative study employed a cross-sectional design. The respondents consisted of 46 Ambulance Hebat officers in Semarang City, selected through accidental sampling. Researchers collected data using the Work-Life Balance Scale, Work-Related Stress Questionnaire, and Professional Quality of Life (PROQoL) version 5. The results indicate that ambulance officers had high work-life balance (mean 68.65), low work stress (mean 149.83), and high compassion satisfaction within the quality-of-life domain (mean 47.48). They also reported low burnout (mean 15.22) and high secondary traumatic stress (mean 19.80). The Spearman rank test revealed significant relationships between work-life balance and quality of life ($p = 0.000$) and between work stress and quality of life ($p = 0.000$). This study recommends interventions to maintain work-life balance and reduce work stress as essential strategies to improve ambulance officers' quality of life.

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INTRODUCTION

Emergency conditions represent critical, life-threatening situations arising from various causes, including infections, trauma, and fluid and electrolyte imbalances (Sunarti et al., 2023). Emergency cases may result from natural disasters or non-disaster incidents. In such situations, victims are transported by

ambulance officers to the nearest hospital and admitted to the Emergency Department (ED), where triage procedures are applied. Ambulance officers are responsible for reporting the victim's condition, including vital signs (Murod & Andriansyah, 2021). Common cases managed by ambulance services include respiratory distress, cardiac arrest, acute pain, mobility impairment, maternity emergencies,

decreased

consciousness, occupational accidents, fires, natural disasters, and traffic accidents (Ratnaningtyas, 2021). Globally, road traffic accidents account for approximately 1.19 million deaths annually, with an additional 20–50 million individuals sustaining non-fatal injuries, many resulting in disability (Delavary et al., 2023). Traffic accidents remain a leading cause of death among children and young adults, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Data from the Indonesian National Police (Pusiknas) reported 198,251 traffic accident victims in 2023, comprising 83% minor injuries, 10% fatalities, and 7% severe injuries. Meanwhile, the Central Java Regional Police recorded 31,124 traffic accident cases in 2024.

The concept of the golden period emphasizes that victims must receive treatment within the first hour to prevent disability or death. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends an optimal response time of eight minutes, with effective initial management ideally provided within five minutes (Nafies & Jauhar, 2023). Ambulance services play a crucial role in delivering timely emergency care, including pre-hospital medical interventions and patient transport

Semarang Mayor Regulation No. 22 of 2019 governs Ambulance Hebat services, specifying 24-hour emergency and non-emergency services, on-site medical management, observation, therapy, and patient transport. Ambulance crews typically consist of a driver, a nurse, and a physician, each certified in BTCLS, ATLS, or ACLS competencies (Nugroho, 2019). Ambulance officers face high responsibility and occupational risk, necessitating optimal physical and psychological well-being (Wibowo et al., 2023).

Psychological challenges are inherent in emergency care work. Factors such as organizational stressors, prolonged shift work, fatigue, imbalance, and workplace conflict may contribute to stress (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health [NIOSH], 2022). Therefore, maintaining psychological stability is essential for emergency personnel.

Work–life balance (WLB) represents another critical factor influencing well-being. Irregular shifts and 24-hour readiness often make balancing professional and personal roles difficult (Nugroho, 2019). Perceptions of balance vary across individuals and may influence stress levels differently (Wulansari, 2023).

Work stress arises when occupational demands exceed an individual's adaptive capacity (Minggawati et al., 2023). Studies report that a substantial proportion of ambulance personnel experience mental health disturbances, including stress and burnout (Beldon & Garside, 2022). Unmanaged stress may negatively affect patient safety and reduce officers' quality of life.

Quality of life reflects an individual's perception of their well-being across physical, psychological, and social domains (WHO, 2022). Among emergency personnel, quality of life is often associated with compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress (Nugroho et al., 2022). This study aimed to analyze the relationship between work–life balance, work stress, and quality of life among ambulance officers in Semarang City.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional correlational design. The sample consisted of 46 Ambulance Hebat officers in Semarang City, including physicians, healthcare personnel, and drivers. Participants were recruited using accidental sampling. Univariate analysis described respondent characteristics (gender, age, education, length of employment, role) and study variables (work–life balance, work stress, quality of life). Bivariate analysis utilized Spearman rank correlation to examine relationships between work–life balance, work stress, and quality-of-life domains. Statistical significance was set at $p \leq 0.05$. Ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of STIKES Telogorejo Semarang (No. 066/V/EC/P3M/STIKES/2025).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

RESULTS

1. Respondent Characteristics

Table 1
Respondent Characteristics

Variable	n	%
1. Gender		
Male	26	56,5
Female	20	43,5
Total	46	100,0
2. Age		
≤20-24 years old	2	4,3
25-34 years old	25	54,3
35-44 years old	18	39,2
≥45 years old	1	2,2
Total	46	100,0
3. Education level		
Elementary School	1	2,2
Junior high school	1	2,2
Senior high school	12	26,0
Diploma	16	34,8
Bachelor	16	34,8
Total	46	100,0
4. Work experience		
≤1-5 years	18	39,2
6-10 years	26	56,5
11-15 years	2	4,3
>15 years	0	0
Total	46	100,0
5. Profession		
Doctor	2	4,3
Nurse/midwife	27	58,7
Driver	17	37,0
Total	46	100,0

Based on Table 1, the majority of respondents were male (56.5%), aged 25–34 years (54.3%), held D3 or D4/S1 education (69.6%), had 6–10 years of work experience (56.5%), and primarily served as healthcare personnel (58.7%).

2. *Work-Life Balance* among ambulance crew at Semarang City

Table 2

Work-Life Balance among ambulance crew at Semarang City (n=46)

Variable	Mean	Minimal	Maximal	Standar Deviasi
<i>Work Life Balance</i>	68,65	50	84	9,969

Based on table 2, the respondents demonstrated a high level of work–life balance (mean = 68.65; SD = 9.969)

3. Work stress among ambulance crew at Semarang City

Table 3
Work stress among ambulance crew at Semarang City (n=46)

Variabel	Mean	Minimal	Maximal	Standar Deviasi
Work stress	149,83	112	183	19,020

Based on Table 3, the respondents reported low work stress levels (mean = 149.83; SD = 19.020)

4. *Quality Of Life* among ambulance crew at Semarang City

Tabel 4
Quality Of Life among ambulance crew at Semarang City (n=46)

Variabel	Mean	Minimal	Maximal	Standar Deviasi
<i>Compassion Satisfaction</i>	47,48	38	50	3,318
<i>Burnout</i>	15,22	10	30	4,839
<i>Secondary Traumatic Stress</i>	19,80	14	42	6,267

Based on Table 4, the quality of life on compassion satisfaction domain was high (mean = 47.48), burnout domain was low (mean = 15.22), and secondary traumatic stress was low (mean = 19.80).

5. Relationship Between *Work Life Balance* Terhadap *Quality Of Life* among ambulance officers at Semarang City

Table 5
Relationship Between Work Life Balance Terhadap Quality Of Life among ambulance officers at Semarang City

Variabel	N	p-Value	Correlation Coefficient
<i>Work Life Balance - Quality of life (Compassion Satisfaction)</i>	46	0,000	0,595
<i>Work Life Balance - Quality of life (Burnout)</i>	46	0,000	-0,623
<i>Work Life Balance - Quality of life (Secondary Traumatic Stress)</i>	46	0,000	-0,526

Based on the statistical test results presented in Table 5, the correlation analysis revealed that work–life balance was significantly associated with compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress ($p = 0.000$; $p < 0.05$). Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted and the null hypothesis (H_o) was rejected. This finding indicates a significant relationship between work–life balance and the quality-of-life domains of compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress among ambulance officers in Semarang City.

Furthermore, the correlation coefficient demonstrated a positive direction in the relationship between work–life balance and the compassion satisfaction domain, with a moderately strong correlation. This suggests that higher work–life balance is associated with higher compassion satisfaction. In other words, as work–life balance increases, the quality of life in the compassion satisfaction domain also improves.

6. Relationship Between Work Stress and Quality Of Life among ambulance officers at Semarang City

Table 6

Relationship Between Work Stress and Quality Of Life among ambulance officers at Semarang City

Variable	N	p-Value	Correlation Coefficient
Work stress - <i>Quality of life (Compassion Satisfaction)</i>	46	0,006	0,402
Work stress - <i>Quality of life (Burnout)</i>	46	0,000	-0,537
Work stress - <i>Quality of life (Secondary Traumatic Stress)</i>	46	0,000	-0,633

Based on the statistical test results presented in Table 4.6, the correlation analysis showed that work stress was significantly associated with the quality-of-life domain of compassion satisfaction ($p = 0.006$; $p < 0.05$). Additionally, significant correlations were found between work stress and the burnout and secondary traumatic stress domains ($p = 0.000$). Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted and the null hypothesis (H_o) was rejected. These findings indicate that work stress has a significant relationship with the quality-of-life domains of compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress among ambulance officers in Semarang City.

The correlation coefficient demonstrated a positive direction in the relationship between work stress and compassion satisfaction ($r = 0.402$), indicating a moderately strong positive correlation. This suggests that higher levels of work stress were associated with higher compassion satisfaction. In other words, as total work stress increases, the quality of life in the compassion satisfaction domain also increases.

Discussion

1. Respondent Characteristics

The results of this study showed that the majority of respondents were male, with 26 respondents (56.5%), while 20 respondents (43.5%) were female. This indicates that ambulance officers were predominantly male. These findings are consistent with Satrial (2022), who reported that most ambulance personnel were male (42 individuals; 52.5%). Similarly, Alfian et al. (2024) found that ambulance officers were dominated by males (55 respondents; 72.4%).

Male ambulance officers may be perceived as better suited to meet job demands, as their work frequently involves outdoor activities requiring

greater stamina and physical performance (Alfian et al., 2024). In general, males are considered to have higher physical capacity than females. However, males and females differ in emotional, physical, and sensitivity aspects, with females tending to demonstrate greater emotional sensitivity and empathy (Nugroho et al., 2022).

In terms of age, most respondents were aged 25–34 years (late young adulthood), comprising 25 respondents (54.3%). This result aligns with Alfian et al. (2024), who reported that ambulance officers aged over 25 years constituted the majority (63 officers; 82.9%). Nugroho et al. (2022) similarly found that most ambulance personnel were aged 25–34 years (50 officers;

67.6%). Satrial (2022) also noted that the average age of ambulance nurses fell within young adulthood, a stage associated with optimal productivity and the ability to perform effectively in team-based work.

Ambulance officers older than 25 years are generally considered to have higher commitment and awareness compared to younger personnel (Alfian et al., 2024). Age may also influence cognitive abilities and thought processes; as individuals mature, their capacity to understand, analyze, and apply knowledge tends to improve (Sureskiarti Sitepu et al., 2024).

Regarding educational level, most respondents held D3 or D4/S1 qualifications (32 respondents; 69.6%). This finding is consistent with Alfian et al. (2024), who reported that most ambulance personnel had a D3 educational background (52 officers; 82.9%). Maharani (2024) similarly observed that the majority of ambulance officers possessed undergraduate-level education (34 officers; 60.8%).

Higher educational attainment may broaden knowledge, enhance learning opportunities, and improve adaptability within teams (Mukhid, 2023). Khasanah et al. (2024) further emphasized that individuals with D3 or S1 education levels are capable of performing efficiently and demonstrating competence in emergency management. Educational level also influences decision-making ability, critical thinking, and response-time analysis. Officers with higher education are typically more responsive and better prepared to handle complex situations (Alfian et al., 2024).

Most respondents had 6–10 years of work experience (26 respondents; 56.5%). This result is supported by previous studies indicating that pre-hospital personnel are often dominated by individuals with more than five years of experience (67 respondents; 83.8%). Yudhanto et al. (2021) similarly reported that emergency personnel were predominantly those with 6–10 years of service (22 respondents; 38.8%).

Longer work experience is associated with greater adherence to regulations, improved knowledge, and enhanced professional competence (Ayuningtyas, 2022; Babamohamadi et al., 2023). Length of employment reflects the duration an individual has worked in their role. Increased tenure contributes to greater experience and awareness of occupational hazards. However, prolonged work duration may also increase the risk of burnout (Pujiarti & Idealistiana, 2020).

In terms of professional roles, most respondents served as healthcare personnel (nurses and midwives), totaling 27 respondents (58.7%). This finding is consistent with Nugroho et al. (2022), who reported that nurses represented the largest proportion of ambulance staff. Yudhanto et al. (2021) similarly stated that healthcare professionals working in ambulance services are those with competencies in emergency interventions.

Nurses' skills play a crucial role in delivering pre-hospital care. Ambulance officers serving as nurses or midwives may also contribute to team motivation and leadership. Their professional roles often include providing guidance and instruction during emergency case management (Ayuningtyas, 2022).

2. Work Life Balance

Work–life balance refers to the psychological interplay between roles in personal life and occupational responsibilities. Personal life encompasses relationships with partners, family members, parents, friends, and the surrounding social environment, while work-related aspects include job demands that may contribute to workload and work stress (Nurhabiba, 2020).

The results of this study indicated a mean work–life balance score of 68.65, with a minimum of 50, a maximum of 84, and a standard deviation of 9.969. The majority of respondents demonstrated a high level of work–life balance (27 respondents; 58.7%). These findings are consistent with Maharani (2024), who reported that most

respondents exhibited high work–life balance (401 respondents; 71.61%). Similarly, Wijayanto et al. (2020) found that 21 respondents (52.5%) experienced high or balanced work–life balance.

Higher levels of work–life balance among personnel are associated with increased organizational loyalty and commitment, enhanced productivity, reduced lateness and absenteeism, and greater enthusiasm for sustaining job performance (Nurhabiba, 2020). Factors contributing to high work–life balance include positive individual personality traits, the absence of conflict between personal and professional roles, manageable workload and work patterns, and effective social interaction skills (Nafis et al., 2020).

3. Work stress

Stress is an individual’s response that may arise from physical or emotional factors. It can occur when a person undergoes an adaptation process in response to certain conditions. Prolonged stress may negatively affect both physical and psychological health (Antonio et al., 2021).

The results of this study showed a mean work stress score of 149.83, with a minimum of 112, a maximum of 183, and a standard deviation of 19.020. The majority of respondents demonstrated low levels of work stress (32 respondents; 69.6%). Notably, higher questionnaire scores indicated lower levels of work stress among the officers. These findings are consistent with Ayuningtyas (2022), who reported that most healthcare personnel experienced low work stress. Similarly, Priyatna et al. (2021) found that healthcare workers predominantly exhibited low stress levels.

The low stress levels observed among ambulance officers may be attributed to effective stress management and coping strategies, enabling individuals to control or reduce the negative effects of occupational stressors (Minggawati et al., 2023). Factors that may help prevent work stress include adherence to workplace regulations (Kotrinnada, 2021), sound

organizational management, and adequate social support among ambulance personnel (Priyatna et al., 2021).

4. Quality Of Life

Quality of life refers to an individual’s perception of their position in life within the context of their culture and value systems, and in relation to their goals and expectations (WHO, 2022). The domains of quality of life are categorized into three components: compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress (Nugroho et al., 2022).

In the compassion satisfaction domain, the results of this study showed a mean score of 47.48, with a minimum of 38, a maximum of 50, and a standard deviation of 3.318. The majority of respondents demonstrated high compassion satisfaction (41 respondents; 89.1%). This finding is consistent with Nugroho et al. (2022), who reported that 54 respondents (73%) had high compassion satisfaction. High compassion satisfaction among ambulance officers may be attributed to strong professional dedication and high work motivation. The sense of compassion experienced by ambulance personnel reflects the fulfillment and positive feelings derived from performing their duties effectively. Additionally, recognition received by ambulance officers may further enhance their work motivation (Nugroho et al., 2022).

For the burnout domain, the study findings indicated a mean score of 15.22, with a minimum of 10, a maximum of 30, and a standard deviation of 4.839. Most respondents exhibited low burnout levels (42 respondents; 91.3%). This result aligns with Nugroho et al. (2022), where 74 respondents (86.5%) reported low burnout. Similarly, Beldon and Garside (2022) found low burnout levels among ambulance personnel. Low burnout among ambulance officers may be associated with effective individual coping mechanisms in managing stressors encountered during emergency situations (Minggawati et al., 2023). Individuals who lose the ability to manage stressors may experience emotional exhaustion and

psychosomatic responses (Isdianto et al., 2025). The perception that working as an ambulance officer brings positive meaning to life may also contribute to lower burnout levels.

In the secondary traumatic stress domain, the analysis showed a mean score of 19.80, with a minimum of 14, a maximum of 42, and a standard deviation of 6.267. The majority of respondents demonstrated low levels of secondary traumatic stress (35 respondents; 76.1%). This finding is in line with Nugroho et al. (2022), who reported low secondary traumatic stress in 60 respondents (81.1%). Secondary traumatic stress among officers may arise from indirect exposure to traumatic events experienced by others (Darmawan, 2023). Low levels of secondary traumatic stress may be influenced by effective individual adaptation to occupational routines and stressors (Nugroho et al., 2022).

5. Relationship between Work Life Balance and Quality of life

Spearman's Rank analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between work-life balance and the compassion satisfaction domain of quality of life among ambulance officers in Semarang ($p < 0.001$). The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.595$) indicated a moderately strong positive association, suggesting that higher work-life balance is linked to greater compassion satisfaction. This finding aligns with previous studies reporting that work-life balance significantly influences job satisfaction (Dwitama & Ariyanto, 2024).

A higher level of work-life balance contributes to improved emotional well-being, stronger organizational commitment, and enhanced enjoyment in both professional and personal roles, which collectively support better quality of life (Hawa & Nurtjahjanti, 2020; Komala et al., 2023). Educational attainment may also play a role, as higher education is associated with more adaptive perceptions and improved quality of life, including compassion satisfaction

(Wulansari, 2023; Nugroho et al., 2022).

A significant relationship was identified between work-life balance and burnout ($p < 0.001$). The correlation coefficient ($r = -0.623$) demonstrated a strong negative association, indicating that better work-life balance is associated with lower burnout levels. This result is consistent with prior research highlighting the protective role of work-life balance against burnout (Ardiani et al., 2024).

Adequate work-life balance may enhance job satisfaction and reduce emotional exhaustion. Evidence suggests that male personnel with higher work-life balance tend to report lower burnout (Rahmi, 2022). Additionally, longer work experience (>5 years) may promote professional adaptation and contribute to improved work-life balance (Diniawarty & Prahawan, 2024). Conversely, imbalance between personal and occupational roles increases burnout risk (Satriyanto, 2022).

Spearman's Rank analysis showed a significant association between work-life balance and secondary traumatic stress ($p < 0.001$). The correlation coefficient ($r = -0.526$) indicated a moderately strong negative relationship, suggesting that higher work-life balance is associated with lower secondary traumatic stress. These findings are supported by previous studies demonstrating similar relationships (Latama & Muhardi, 2022; Rahayu, 2020).

Effective balance between work and personal life may buffer the psychological impact of indirect trauma exposure. However, prolonged occupational exposure may elevate secondary traumatic stress, potentially affecting personal well-being.

6. Relationship between Work Life Balance and Quality of life

Spearman's Rank analysis demonstrated a statistically significant association between work stress and compassion satisfaction among ambulance officers in Semarang ($p = 0.006$; $r = 0.402$), indicating a moderate correlation. The

positive direction observed in this study suggests that higher reported work stress was associated with higher compassion satisfaction. This result contrasts with prior studies that predominantly reported a negative relationship, where elevated work stress was linked to reduced compassion satisfaction (Xu et al., 2024; Gunawati, 2022).

This discrepancy may reflect contextual or occupational factors. In high-intensity professions such as ambulance services, a certain level of stress may coexist with a strong sense of professional meaning, engagement, or fulfillment, potentially sustaining compassion satisfaction despite job demands.

A significant relationship was identified between work stress and burnout ($p < 0.001$; $r = -0.537$), indicating a moderately strong negative correlation. Higher questionnaire scores (reflecting lower stress levels) were associated with lower burnout. This finding aligns with previous research emphasizing work stress as a key predictor of burnout (Putra, 2024; Wardhani et al., 2020).

Persistent occupational stress can contribute to emotional exhaustion and reduced professional efficacy. Conversely, effective stress management may mitigate burnout risk and support psychological well-being among emergency personnel.

Spearman's Rank analysis revealed a statistically significant association between work stress and secondary traumatic stress ($p < 0.001$; $r = -0.633$), reflecting a strong negative correlation. Lower work stress was associated with lower secondary traumatic stress. These findings are consistent with earlier studies highlighting the role of occupational stress in exacerbating trauma-related psychological responses (Rahayu, 2020; Landari & Wahyuni, 2022).

Chronic exposure to emergency situations may intensify vulnerability to secondary traumatic stress, particularly when coping resources are insufficient.

Conclusion

Psychological factors among personnel may influence the quality of healthcare services delivered, including aspects related to their quality of life. The quality of life of ambulance officers can be affected by their work-life balance and levels of work-related stress. In this context, counseling services should be provided as a supportive resource, enabling ambulance personnel to seek consultation regarding challenges they encounter. Such support may help ambulance officers perform their duties effectively and optimally in serving the community. This study recommends interventions to maintain work-life balance and reduce work stress as essential strategies to improve ambulance officers' quality of life.

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