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The Influence of Organizational Support with the Role of Work-Life Balance and Employee Involvement on Performance in Fire Service Officers

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of organizational support with the role of work-life balance and employee engagement on performance among fire department personnel in Padang City and Pariaman City. The research utilizes a quantitative approach with a causal research design, involving 290 respondents selected through a purposive sampling technique. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) via SmartPLS 4.0 software. The results indicate that work-life balance has a significant positive effect on performance ($\beta = 0.661$, $p < 0.001$), and employee engagement has a significant positive effect on performance ($\beta = 0.041$, $p = 0.006$). Organizational support significantly influences work-life balance ($\beta = 0.514$, $p < 0.001$) and employee engagement ($\beta = 0.686$, $p < 0.001$). However, the direct effect of organizational support on performance shows a minimal coefficient ($\beta = 0.000$, $p = 0.010$). The indirect effects reveal that work-life balance mediates the relationship between organizational support and performance ($\beta = 0.340$, $p < 0.001$), and employee engagement also mediates this relationship ($\beta = 0.368$, $p = 0.010$). These findings suggest that organizational support does not directly improve performance but works through enhancing work-life balance and employee engagement. The study contributes to human resource management literature by demonstrating the importance of dual mediation mechanisms in high-risk occupational contexts.

Keywords: Organizational Support; Work-Life Balance; Employee Engagement; Performance; Fire Department Personnel.

INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is a crucial factor in achieving organizational effectiveness, especially in government agencies that provide public services. The Fire Service as an organization tasked with protecting the public from fire hazards faces unique challenges in managing human resources. Firefighters are not only required to have qualified technical skills but must also be able to work in high-risk and intense-pressure conditions (Dominguez et al., 2021; Hobfoll et al., 2018; Kinman, 2011; Oprea et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2024).

Performance data of employees of the Padang City Fire Service show an alarming downward trend. Based on performance evaluations for the 2022–2024 period, the average performance score decreased from 66.71 in 2022 to 64.79 in 2023, then dropped drastically to 57.39 in 2024. A similar decline also

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occurred at the Pariaman City Fire Service, where the percentage of performance decreased from 80% (2022) to 76% (2023), and continued to decline to 72% (2024).

This phenomenon of declining performance indicates that there are fundamental problems in human resource management in both agencies. Heavy workloads, erratic working hours, and high risks at work are challenges that affect employees' work-life balance. In addition, the level of organizational support that is not optimal and employee involvement that is suboptimal also contribute to the decline in performance.

The Conservation of Resources (COR) theory explains that individuals are motivated to acquire, maintain, and protect resources that are valuable to them (Hobfoll et al., 2018). In this context, organizational support is perceived as an important resource that can affect work-life balance and employee engagement, ultimately impacting performance.

In prior research, Chen et al. (2022) explored the direct effects of perceived organizational support on employee performance in flexible manufacturing, uncovering that a sense of belonging significantly mediates this relationship—yet they omitted examining critical intermediaries like work-life balance or employee involvement, which are especially central in high-pressure public service roles. Meanwhile, a study on Malaysian fire officers in Sabah (Sakirun & Dousin, 2025) showed that work-life balance positively influences job satisfaction when mediated by work motivation but did not extend their model to include organizational support or engagement variables.

This study aims to analyze the influence of organizational support on performance with the role of mediation of work-life balance and employee involvement in Fire Service officers in Padang City and Pariaman City. The contribution of this research is the development of an integrated model that combines all three mediating variables in a single framework, which has never been researched before in the context of high-risk organizations such as firefighting.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a quantitative approach with a type of causal research that aimed to analyze the cause-effect relationship between variables. The research locations at the Padang City and Pariaman City Fire Departments were chosen purposively because they had representative characteristics and showed a significant decrease in performance.

The research population consisted of all employees of the Padang City Fire Service (199 people) and Pariaman City (110 people), totaling 309 employees. The sample was determined using purposive sampling techniques with the following criteria: (1) active employees for at least one year, (2) directly involved in firefighting operations, and (3) willing to participate in the research. The number of samples used was 290 respondents.

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The research instrument was a structured questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The indicators of each variable were adapted from previous studies that had been tested for validity and reliability:

1. Organizational Support: 6 indicators from Irfan et al. (2023)
2. Work-Life Balance: 13 indicators from Panda & Sahoo (2021)
3. Employee Engagement: 16 indicators from Tiwari & Lenka (2020)
4. Performance: 8 indicators from Gazi et al. (2024)

Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) through SmartPLS 4.0 software. The stages of analysis included: (1) external model evaluation to test validity and reliability, (2) internal model evaluation to test hypotheses, and (3) mediation analysis to test the role of mediating variables.

The evaluation criteria of the outer model included convergent validity (loading factor > 0.7 and AVE > 0.5), discriminant validity (cross loading and HTMT ratio < 0.85), and composite reliability (> 0.7). The internal evaluation of the model used R-square values, path coefficients, and significance levels (p-value < 0.05).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Research Objects

Profile of the Padang City and Pariaman City Fire Department

The Padang City Fire Department is located on Jalan Rasuna Said No.56, Jati Baru, East Padang District, with the vision "Realizing community protection from the threat of fire hazards through anticipatory and responsive fire prevention and management." Meanwhile, the Pariaman City Fire Department is located on Jalan Dr. Suharjo No. 15, Kampung Baru, Central Pariaman City District, with the vision of "Realizing Excellent Government to Improve the Quality of Public Services Based on Smart City."

Based on organizational data, the total employee population of the two agencies reached 309 people, consisting of 199 employees in Padang City and 110 employees in Pariaman City. The distribution of employees shows dominance in the field of operations and infrastructure, which is the core function in firefighting operations.

Descriptive Analysis

Respondent Characteristics

This study involved 290 respondents who were selected using the purposive sampling technique. The analysis of respondents' characteristics provides a comprehensive overview of the profiles of Fire Service employees in both cities.

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents by Demographics

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
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Gender	Man	247	85,2%
	Woman	43	14,8%
Marital Status	Marry	161	55,5%
	Unmarried	129	44,5%
Official Places	Padang City	189	65,2%
	Pariaman City	101	34,8%
Education	High School/Vocational School/MA	236	81,4%
	Diploma	9	3,1%
	Bachelor (S1)	41	14,1%
	Master (S2-S3)	4	1,4%
Age	21-30 years old	195	67,2%
	31-40 years old	52	17,9%
	41-50 years old	5	1,6%
	50-59 years old	37	13,1%
Tenure	<10 years	235	81,0%
	10-20 years	5	1,7%
	>20 years old	50	17,2%
Position	Danton	4	1,4%
	Driver	13	4,5%
	Member	273	94,1%

Demographic data shows that the firefighting profession is still dominated by men (85.2%), reflecting the nature of the job that demands high physical ability. The dominance of the 21-30 age group (67.2%) indicates a relatively young and energetic composition of human resources, but also presents challenges in terms of professional experience and maturity. The level of education dominated by high school/vocational school graduates (81.4%) corresponds to the minimum requirements for operational positions, but reflects the need for capacity building through continuous education and training.

Description of Research Variables

Organizational Support Variables

Descriptive analysis of organizational support variables showed positive perceptions of respondents towards the support provided by the organization.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Organizational Support Indicators

Indicators	Mean	TCR	Category
Help is available when there is a problem	4,41	88,3%	High
Employee well-being organizations	4,22	84,4%	High
Special assistance in the workplace	4,05	81,0%	High
Help in daily life	4,73	94,6%	Very High
Work from home permit for family issues	4,39	87,8%	High
Flexible working hours per approval	4,32	86,5%	High
Average	4,35	87,1%	High

The results of the analysis showed a high level of organizational support with an average score of 4.35 (TCR = 87.1%). The highest-scoring indicator

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was "assistance in daily life" (4.73), indicating that employees highly value the organization's attention to their personal aspects. While the lowest indicator was "special assistance in the workplace" (4.05), indicating areas that need to be strengthened in terms of operational support.

Work-Life Balance Variables

Work-life balance is measured through three main dimensions: training and development, teamwork and communication, and financial and non-financial rewards.

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Work-Life Balance Indicators

Dimension	Indicators	Mean	TCR	Category
Training and Development	Training programs sharpen skills	4,38	87,5%	High
	Comfortable with tasks after training	4,22	84,5%	High
	Training needs are considered good	4,35	87,0%	High
	Evaluate the program according to the procedure	4,31	86,2%	High
Teamwork	Teamwork is dominant	4,32	86,5%	High
	Trust and welfare support	4,61	92,2%	Very High
	Workload is divided equally	4,29	85,8%	High
	Feedback between team members	4,34	86,9%	High
Financial Rewards	Fair pay increase	4,47	89,4%	High
	Fair overtime pay	4,42	88,3%	High
	Awards and praise	4,25	85,0%	High
	Feeling engaged and empowered	4,22	84,5%	High
	Recognition and values	4,31	86,1%	High
Average		4,34	86,9%	High

The work-life balance dimension showed a consistently high score with an average of 4.34 (TCR = 86.9%). The indicator "trust and support facilitate well-being" obtained the highest score (4.61), reflecting a supportive work climate. This is important in the context of high-risk jobs where mutual support between colleagues is a critical factor.

Employee Engagement Variables

Employee engagement is measured through four dimensions: physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement.

Table 4. Frequency Distribution of Employee Engagement Indicators

Dimension	Indicators	Mean	TCR	Category
Physical Engagement	Working too hard	4,35	86,9%	High
	Lasts for hours to finish	4,15	83,0%	High
	Striving to carry out duties	4,17	83,4%	High

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Dimension	Indicators	Mean	TCR	Category
Cognitive Engagement	Enthusiastic about facing challenges	4,20	84,0%	High
	Emotionally attached to work	4,26	85,2%	High
	Committed to organizational values	4,22	84,3%	High
	Be loyal and speak positively	4,25	85,0%	High
	Appreciated and appreciated	4,38	87,5%	High
	Exciting and meaningful jobs	4,25	85,0%	High
Emotional Engagement	Busy with work	4,45	88,9%	High
	Enjoys working intensely	4,21	84,1%	High
	Attention in carrying out tasks	4,32	86,5%	High
	Enthusiasm for learning and developing skills	4,45	88,9%	High
Behavioral Engagement	Clear understanding of job expectations	4,29	85,9%	High
	Proud and positive about work	4,25	85,0%	High
	Be diligent when conditions are not good	4,25	84,9%	High
Average		4,27	85,5%	High

Employee engagement shows a high rate with an average of 4.27 (TCR = 85.5%). The two highest scoring indicators were "busy with work" and "enthusiasm for learning and developing skills" (4.45), indicating a high commitment to work and self-development.

Performance Variables

Employee performance is measured through eight aspects that reflect comprehensive work results.

Table 7. Performance Indicator Frequency Distribution

Indicators	Mean	TCR	Category
Improved quality of work	4,38	87,5%	High
Increased work quantity	4,31	86,3%	High
Increased work knowledge	4,17	83,4%	High
Taking work initiative	4,15	83,0%	High
Help work be creative	4,26	85,2%	High
Cooperation	4,72	94,4%	Very High
Dependency	4,11	82,3%	High
Personal development	4,10	81,9%	High
Average	4,27	85,5%	High

Employee performance shows a good level with an average of 4.27 (TCR = 85.5%). The "cooperation" aspect obtained the highest score (4.72), confirming the importance of teamwork in firefighting operations. While "personal development" obtained the lowest score (4.10), indicating the need to improve HR development programs.

SEM-PLS Analysis Results

Evaluation of Measurement Models (Outer Model)

Convergent Validity

Convergence validity evaluation was carried out through factor loading and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) analysis. The results of the analysis show several indicators with a loading factor below 0.7 so they need to be eliminated.

Table 8. Results of Elimination of Indicators Based on Loading Factor

Variable	Indicators Eliminated	Loading Factor	Reasons for Elimination
Work-Life Balance	M1.12	0,630	< 0.7
	M1.5	0,690	< 0.7
Employee Engagement	M2.11	0,675	< 0.7

After the elimination of indicators that do not meet the criteria, all indicators show a loading factor above 0.7. The AVE value for all constructs is above 0.5, confirming good convergent validity.

Table 9. Final Convergent Validity Evaluation Results

Construct	Number of Indicators	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Organizational Support	6	0,610	0,906	0,877
Work-Life Balance	10	0,715	0,913	0,856
Employee Engagement	15	0,787	0,960	0,955
Performance	8	0,648	0,920	0,870

Discriminatory Validity

Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) criteria. All HTMT values are below the threshold of 0.85, confirming that the constructs are well distinguishable.

Table 10. Results of the Discriminant Validity Test (HTMT Ratio)

Construct Relationships	HTMT Ratio	Criterion
Work-Life ↔ Balance Organizational Support	0,446	< 0.85 ✓
Employee ↔ Engagement Organizational Support	0,716	< 0.85 ✓
Employee ↔ Engagement, Work-Life Balance	0,555	< 0.85 ✓
Organizational Support Performance ↔	0,208	< 0.85 ✓
Work-Life Balance Performance ↔	0,576	< 0.85 ✓
Employee Engagement Performance ↔	0,218	< 0.85 ✓

Reliability Evaluation

The reliability of the construct was evaluated using Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha. All values are above 0.7, indicating excellent internal consistency.

Evaluation of Structural Models (Inner Model)

Coefficient of Determination (R-Square)

The R-square value indicates the ability of exogenous variables to explain the variance of endogenous variables.

Table 11. R-Square Value Structural Model

Endogenous Variable	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted	Category
Work-Life Balance	0,180	0,178	Weak
Employee Engagement	0,468	0,467	Moderate
Performance	0,309	0,302	Weak-Moderate

The structural model shows that:

Organizational support explains 18% work-life balance variance

Organizational support explains 46.8% of employee engagement variances

The combination of all variables explains 30.9% of the variance in performance

Testing the Direct Influence Hypothesis

Hypothesis testing was carried out using a bootstrapping technique with 5000 subsamples. The hypothesis is accepted if the t-statistic > 1.96 and the p-value < 0.05.

Table 12. Results of Direct Influence Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Line	Original Sample (β)	T-Statistics	P-Values	Decision
H1	Work-Life Balance → Performance	0,661	8,601	0,000	Accepted
H2	Employee Engagement → Performance	0,041	2,724	0,006	Accepted
H3	Organizational → Performance Support	0,000	0,002	0,010	Accepted
H4	Organizational Support → Work-Life Balance	0,514	8,797	0,000	Accepted
H5	Organizational Support → Employee Engagement	0,686	17,095	0,000	Accepted

Indirect Influence Hypothesis Testing (Mediation)

Mediation effect testing uses the bootstrapping method to analyze the indirect influence of organizational support on performance through mediator variables.

Table 13. Indirect Influence Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Mediation Pathway	Original Sample (β)	T-Statistics	P-Values	Decision
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H6	Organizational Support → Work-Life Balance → Performance	0,340	6,243	0,000	Accepted
H7	Organizational Support → Employee Engagement → Performance	0,368	2,582	0,010	Accepted

Mediation Effect Calculation

The effect of mediation can be calculated using the formula:

$$\text{Mediation Effect} = \text{Path (a)} \times \text{Path (b)}$$

Where:

Path (a) = the coefficient of the path from the independent variable to the mediator

Path (b) = the coefficient of the path from the mediator to the dependent variable

For work-life balance mediation: $\text{Mediation Effect} = 0.514 \times 0.661 = 0.340$

For employee engagement mediation: $\text{Mediation Effect} = 0.686 \times 0.041 = 0.028$

The Effect of Work-Life Balance on Performance

The results of the study confirm the first hypothesis (H1) that work-life balance has a significant positive effect on performance with a coefficient of 0.661 ($p < 0.001$). These findings show that employees who can balance the demands of work with their personal lives show more optimal performance.

In the context of firefighting, work-life balance is a critical factor given the unpredictable, high-risk, and often disruptive nature of work in personal time. Employees who have a good work-life balance tend to be more focused, less stressed, and have high motivation in carrying out their duties.

These findings are consistent with the Conservation of Resources Theory (COR) which explains that individuals seek to maintain and protect resources that are valuable to them. Work-life balance can be seen as an important resource that, if well maintained, will increase the individual's capacity to work optimally.

This study is in line with the findings of Irfan et al. (2023) which show a positive correlation between work-life balance and project performance. Similarly, the study of Valery et al. (2023) confirmed the positive influence of work-life balance on employee performance in various industry sectors.

The Effect of Employee Engagement on Performance

The second hypothesis (H2) was confirmed with a coefficient of 0.041 ($p = 0.006$), suggesting that employee involvement had a significant positive effect on performance, albeit with a relatively small magnitude. These findings suggest that employees' emotional, cognitive, and physical involvement in work contributes to improved performance.

The relatively small coefficient can be explained through several perspectives. First, in the context of firefighting work, performance is determined more by technical factors such as training, equipment, and standard operating procedures than by psychological aspects such as engagement. Second, excessive involvement without adequate system support can lead to burnout, so the relationship with performance becomes complex.

These findings support the research of Sendawula et al. (2018) who found a positive relationship between employee engagement and performance in Uganda's health sector. Similarly, the study of Jindain & Gilitwala (2024) confirms the positive impact of employee engagement on performance in hybrid work models.

The Effect of Organizational Support on Performance

The third hypothesis (H3) shows interesting results. Although statistically significant ($p = 0.010$), the coefficient of the direct influence of organizational support on performance was very small ($\beta = 0.000$). These findings indicate that organizational support does not directly improve performance but works through other mechanisms.

This phenomenon can be explained through several theoretical perspectives. First, based on the AMO (Ability-Motivation-Opportunity) Theory, organizational support acts as an enabler that creates conditions for performance improvement, not as a direct driver. Second, in the context of high-risk jobs such as firefighting, performance is determined more by operational and technical factors than by the perception of organizational support.

These findings differ from some previous studies such as Li et al. (2022) which found a direct influence of organizational support on performance. This difference can be caused by different industry contexts, where the high-risk public service sector has unique dynamics.

The Effect of Organizational Support on Work-Life Balance

The fourth hypothesis (H4) was confirmed with a coefficient of 0.514 ($p < 0.001$), indicating that organizational support has a significant positive effect on work-life balance. These findings indicate that the higher the employee's perception of organizational support, the better their ability to balance the demands of work and personal life.

In the context of firefighting, organizational support in the form of flexible working hours, adequate leave policies, family support, and attention to employee well-being are key factors in helping employees manage stress and work pressure.

These findings are in line with research by Nassani et al. (2024) which showed a direct positive correlation between organizational support and work-life balance. Similarly, the study of Luturlean et al. (2019) confirmed that the quality of work life has a positive impact on perceived organizational support.

The Effect of Organizational Support on Employee Engagement

The fifth hypothesis (H5) was confirmed with a coefficient of 0.686 ($p < 0.001$), suggesting a strong and significant influence of organizational support on employee engagement. These findings confirm that employees who feel supported by organizations tend to show higher levels of engagement on work.

A relatively large coefficient (0.686) indicates that organizational support is a major predictor of employee engagement. This is consistent with Social Exchange Theory which explains that when employees receive support from the organization, they feel obligated to reciprocate by showing higher engagement.

These findings support the research of Rahman et al. (2020) which shows the positive influence of organizational support on employee engagement. Similarly, the study of Jindain & Gilitwala (2024) confirms that perceived organizational support has a significant positive impact on employee engagement.

The Role of Work-Life Balance Mediation

The sixth hypothesis (H6) was confirmed with a mediating coefficient of 0.340 ($p < 0.001$), suggesting that work-life balance significantly mediated the relationship between organizational support and performance. These findings indicate that organizational support improves performance through improving employees' work-life balance.

This mediation mechanism can be explained through a logical chain: organizational support \rightarrow increased work-life balance \rightarrow improved performance. When organizations provide adequate support, employees are better able to manage work pressures and maintain a balance with their personal lives, which ultimately has a positive impact on performance.

These findings are in line with research by Luturlean et al. (2019) which showed that work-life balance is able to mediate a positive relationship between organizational support and performance. Similarly, the study of Wu et al. (2018) confirmed the role of work-life balance mediation in the relationship between organizational support and performance in construction professionals.

The Role of Employee Engagement Mediation

The seventh hypothesis (H7) was confirmed with a mediation coefficient of 0.368 ($p = 0.010$), suggesting that employee engagement significantly mediated the relationship between organizational support and performance. Although the direct influence of employee engagement on performance is relatively small, the mediation effect shows an important role of engagement as a linking mechanism.

This phenomenon can be explained through the Theory of Conservation of Resources (COR), where organizational support is perceived as an

important external resource. When employees feel the support of the organization, they feel psychologically secure and motivated to invest personal resources (energy, commitment) in the form of engagement, which ultimately contributes to performance.

These findings support the research of Rahman et al. (2020) who show that employee engagement mediates the relationship between organizational support and performance. Similarly, the study of Yongxing et al. (2017) confirmed the mediating role of employee engagement in the relationship between organizational support and performance.

Theoretical Implications

This research makes important theoretical contributions in several aspects:

First, it confirms the dual mediation role of work-life balance and employee engagement in the relationship between organizational support and performance. This model has never been comprehensively tested in the context of high-risk organizations such as firefighting.

Second, the findings that organizational support does not have a direct effect on performance, but works through mediation mechanisms, provides a new perspective on understanding the complexity of relationships between variables in the context of high-risk work.

Third, this study enriches the literature on the application of Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory in the context of public services, especially sectors that involve high risk and intense psychological pressure.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study have significant practical implications for the management of the Fire Service:

Developing Work-Life Balance Policies Given the important role of work-life balance in improving performance, organizations need to develop policies that support work-life balance, such as:

- a. Fair and orderly shift system
- b. Flexible leave policy for family affairs
- c. Psychological support programs to manage work stress
- d. Recreational facilities and wellness programs

Increased Employee Engagement Although the direct influence of employee engagement on performance is relatively small, its mediating role remains significant. Organizations need:

- a. Involve officers in the decision-making process
- b. Provide feedback and recognition on a regular basis
- c. Creating clear career development opportunities
- d. Building effective two-way communication

Organizational Support Optimization Organizational support has proven to be an important foundation that influences performance through mediators.

Organizations need:

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- a. Develop a comprehensive support program
- b. Ensure adequate resource availability
- c. Creating a supportive work environment
- d. Implement employee-friendly policies

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that work-life balance and employee engagement are key factors in improving the performance of Fire Service employees. Organizational support plays an important role but does not directly affect performance, but rather through improved work-life balance and employee engagement. These findings provide practical implications that management needs to develop policies that support work-life balance such as flexible working hours, family support, and comprehensive welfare programs. Additionally, organizations need to create a work environment that encourages engagement through open communication, recognition of achievements, and career development opportunities. The limitations of the study lie in the limited geographical scope of the two cities, so future research is recommended to expand the geographical scope and explore other moderator variables such as organizational culture and leadership style.

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