

EXAMINE THE ROLE OF WORK ETHIC IN STRENGTHENING THE INFLUENCE OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND COMPETENCE ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

The Probolinggo Correctional Institution Class IIB plays a vital role in the implementation of correctional functions. Employee performance is a key factor in the success of any institution; therefore, work-life balance and competence are considered crucial in influencing work ethic and overall productivity. This study aims to examine the impact of work-life balance and competence on the performance of employees at Probolinggo Class IIB Prison, as well as the mediating role of work ethic in this relationship. The research employed a quantitative survey approach, involving a sample of employees from Probolinggo Class IIB Prison. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the WarpPLS statistical tool. The results indicate that work-life balance and competence have a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Additionally, work-life balance and competence positively and significantly influence employee work ethic. Work ethic was found to mediate and strengthen the relationship between work-life balance, competence, and performance improvement. Therefore, work ethic is a critical factor linking competence and work-life balance to the performance of prison employees. It is recommended that prison management implement ongoing programs that support work-life balance and competency training to achieve optimal professionalism and productivity.

INTRODUCTION

The quality of human resources (HR) is the main element in an organization or company. Effective HR management is essential to achieving organizational goals

efficiently, by harnessing employees' full potential and giving them the opportunity to grow. In an era of rapid change, companies are required to be able to adapt and optimize various aspects to maintain competitiveness (Widodo & Yandi, 2022). In an increasingly competitive business environment, innovation is one of the key factors to achieve excellence. The development of competent human resources enables the company to compete in the global market and produce outputs that are in line with the company's goals (Hidayat, 2022). Therefore, human resource management through planned and structured human resource management (HR) is very necessary to get maximum results. However, the decline in the quality of the workforce in Indonesia is a serious concern because it can hinder national economic growth (Firdausyi, 2022). Every organization is established to achieve predetermined goals, one of the determinants of an organization's success in achieving its goals is the human resource aspect.

One of the factors that plays a very significant role in influencing employee performance is work-life balance or known as *Work-life balance* (Thalia et al., 2024). Work-life balance can be interpreted as a person's ability to manage and balance between the demands and needs of work and activities in his personal life, work-life balance is a condition in which individuals can meet the demands of work without sacrificing personal or family needs, thus creating harmony between the two aspects (Sari, 2025). Research conducted by (Permatasari et al., 2024), (Hutapea et al., 2025) and (Faruk, 2025) revealed that employees who are able to maintain work-life balance tend to have higher productivity and lower absenteeism rates compared to employees who experience an imbalance. Conversely, work-life imbalances can lead to physical and mental fatigue, which ultimately lowers the quality and quantity of employee performance (Naim & Daga, 2024).

In addition, employee competence is also a crucial aspect in determining the success of the implementation of tasks in the land environment. Competencies that include knowledge, skills, and professional attitudes are needed so that employees are able to cope with the dynamics and complexity of daily tasks, from inmate coaching to administrative management. However, these two factors do not necessarily directly improve employee performance (Silalahi et al., 2021). Competence is the ability, knowledge, skills, and attitudes possessed by a person to carry out his duties and responsibilities effectively (Spencer, 1993). Prison employees who have high competence tend to be able to complete tasks well, understand work procedures, and have adequate knowledge and skills to carry out their duties (Radista & Edalmen, 2024).

One of the variables that can strengthen or mediate a relationship is work ethic. Work ethic is a mental attitude, values, and work ethic that is reflected in daily work behavior (Bayu et al., 2024). According to (Kasmir, 2019), Work ethic is a set of positive behaviors born from a fundamental belief in the meaning of work. Work ethic as an intervention variable plays a role in shaping employee attitudes, motivation, and commitment in carrying out tasks, so as to improve overall performance (Aries Saputra et al., 2023). Previous research has shown that work ethic has a significant contribution to employee performance, either directly or as a mediating or intervention variable (Zalogo et al., 2024). Employees with a high work ethic will show greater dedication, responsibility, and work ethic, thus being able to maintain or even improve performance even in stressful work conditions (Dwinanda et al., 2023).

There is a gap Previous research on the role of work ethic as an intervention variable in the relationship between work-life balance and competence to performance is still underexplored (Scott, 2021). Previous research has tended to look at the direct influence of work-life balance on performance, or the effect of workload on job satisfaction, without taking into account how work ethic can strengthen or weaken those relationships (Arifin et al., 2023), (Hidayat, 2022) (Pujianti et al., 2025) and (Harefa & Veri, 2024). In fact, a high work ethic can be an important factor in improving employee performance, especially in stressful working conditions. Some studies show different results regarding the influence of *Work-life balance* on performance (Putra & Indrawijaya, 2024). There are studies that have found positive and significant influences (Kumar, 2022), (Dawn, 2024) and (Kurniasari & Bahjahtullah, 2022), while other studies have shown no influence or even negative influence if work-life balance is not properly managed (Permatasari et al., 2024), (Subari & Sawitri, 2022) and (Indradewa & Prasetio, 2023). This suggests that there are other variables to consider, such as work ethic, that can intervene in the relationship between *Work-life balance* and performance (Azizah et al., 2023). This condition indicates the need to consider other variables, such as work ethic, that can act as intervention variables in the relationship between *Work-life balance* and performance (Azizah et al., 2023). Therefore, this research that examines the role of work ethic in depth is needed to provide a comprehensive understanding and support efforts to improve employee performance effectively.

Employee performance is one of the key factors that determine the success of an organization, including in Correctional Institutions (Lapa). In carrying out their duties, prison employees are not only required to have adequate technical skills, but also must be able to manage work pressure and maintain motivation to remain productive. This condition has become increasingly complex considering the challenges faced, such as the high workload, limited facilities, and *overcapacity situations* that often occur in the Probolinggo Class IIB Prison. The following table describes the conditions and challenges faced by Probolinggo Class IIB Prison employees related to the variables of work-life balance, competence, work ethic, and performance:

Table 1. Observation of Research Phenomena

Variable	Target	Realization	Performance
Improving prisoner/inmate/child custody services, controlling infectious diseases and improving the quality of life of inmates participating in narcotics rehabilitation in the region	100%	90%	10% Not Achieved
Improving Personality Development Services, Vocational Training, Education and Handling of High-Risk Prisoners	100%	78%	22% Balum Achieved
Security Service Enhancement and Orders in the region as per the standards	100%	90%	10% Not Achieved
Improving Support for Task Force Management Services	100%	100%	Achieved

Source : Data processed by researchers (2025)

Table 1. Describe the real phenomenon experienced in the field. Of the four variables measured, only the support of work unit management services managed to achieve the target of 100%, while inmate care services, infectious disease control, improvement of the quality of life of narcotics rehabilitation inmates, personality development services, vocational training, education, handling of high-risk inmates, and security and order services in new areas reached between 78% and 90%, so they still did not meet the set target. requires further improvement efforts. This is the basis of the importance of research to understand how work-life balance and competence affect performance, as well as how work ethic can intervene in this relationship. The Probolinggo Class IIB Correctional Institution (Lapas) is one of the government institutions that has a strategic role in fostering and protecting inmates. In carrying out their duties, prison employees are faced with various challenges, such as high occupancy rates (*overcapacity*), limited resources, and high work pressure. This condition requires employees to have optimal performance so that services and coaching for inmates can run effectively and efficiently.

The phenomenon of research related to employee performance at the Probolinggo Class IIB Prison shows that there are a number of challenges that affect their work performance. One of the main phenomena is its condition *Excess capacity* or significant overcrowding in prisons, resulting in heavy overwork for employees. This condition causes employees to work harder in managing inmates and carrying out complex coaching, supervision, and administrative tasks, on the other hand, efforts to improve employee performance continue to be carried out, such as through regular evaluations and training (*bimtek*) which aim to improve employee competence and morale. However, the balance between work demands and employees' personal lives is also an important issue that needs to be considered so that work stress does not reduce productivity and performance quality (Ananda & Hadi, 2023).

Based on the *gap research* found in the previous study and the results of the performance appraisal table, the urgency of this research is getting stronger to be conducted. Previous research has shown that the influence of *work-life balance* on employee performance still produces various findings, both positive, negative, or insignificant, depending on the context and mediation variables used. Most research focuses more on the mediation of variables such as job satisfaction, while the role of work ethic as an intervention variable in the relationship between work-life balance and competence to performance is still very minimally explored. In addition, the results of employee performance assessments in a number of organizations show that performance is not optimal, which is reflected in the aspects of quality, quantity, working time, and cooperation that still need to be improved. This problem is also relevant to the situation in the Probolinggo Class IIB Prison, where challenges such as *excess capacity*, limited resources, and high work pressure require a further understanding of the factors that affect employee performance.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses exploratory quantitative research methods and conclusively with an approach *Explanatory Research*. According to Sujarweni, (2014) Quantitative research is a type of research that produces discoveries that can be achieved using statistical

procedures or other quantitative methods, especially this research aims to better understand the role of work-life balance and competence in the performance of Probolinggo Class IIB Prison employees with work ethic as an intervention variable. The total population in this study is 58 Class IIB Probolinggo Prison Employees. The sample in this study is Employees, namely 58 Probolinggo Class IIB Prison Employees. Sampling in this study used *Probability Sampling* with techniques *Saturation sampling*. According to Sugiyono (2016) What is meant *Probability Sampling* is a sampling technique that provides an equal opportunity or opportunity for each element or member of the population to be sampled. According to Sugiyono (2016) Technique *Saturation sampling* is a sampling technique when all members of the population are used as samples. In this study, to test the hypothesis, the study used *Structural Equation Modeling* (SEM) with statistical tools *SmartPLS*. Equation Modeling *Structural* (SEM) is an integrated approach between factor analysis, structural modeling, and path analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Validity Test

The validity test criteria is to use the loading factor criteria (*Cross-loading factor*) with a value of more than 0.70 and *Average variance extracted* (AVE) with a value greater than 0.50 for testing *Convergent validity* and *Discriminatory validity* using the AVE root comparison with the correlation between variables. The AVE value of the construct must be higher than the correlation between the variables. The AVE value of the construct should be higher compared to the correlation between latent variables (Ghozali, 2018). The results of WarpPLS 8.0 are as follows:

Table 2. Combined load and cross-loading

	X1	X2	Z	Y	Type (As Specified)	ONE	P value
X1.1	(0.918)	0.189	0.251	0.246	Reflective	0.091	<0.001
X1.2	(0.896)	0.297	0.106	0.048	Reflective	0.092	<0.001
X1.3	(0.908)	0.161	0.105	0.138	Reflective	0.092	<0.001
X1.4	(0.895)	0.018	0.126	0.169	Reflective	0.092	<0.001
X1.5	(0.889)	0.189	0.201	0.077	Reflective	0.092	<0.001
X2.1	0.124	(0.877)	0.488	0.164	Reflective	0.093	<0.001
X2.2	0.252	(0.899)	0.469	0.107	Reflective	0.092	<0.001
X2.3	0.221	(0.900)	0.124	0.206	Reflective	0.092	<0.001
X3.4	0.162	(0.918)	0.498	0.055	Reflective	0.092	<0.001
X4.5	0.026	(0.908)	0.040	0.025	Reflective	0.092	<0.001
Z1	0.038	0.178	(0.906)	0.119	Reflective	0.092	<0.001
Z2	0.033	0.031	(0.912)	0.058	Reflective	0.092	<0.001
Z3	0.434	0.770	(0.912)	0.121	Reflective	0.092	<0.001
Z4	0.111	0.173	(0.899)	0.096	Reflective	0.092	<0.001
Z5	0.146	0.089	(0.885)	0.119	Reflective	0.093	<0.001
Y1	0.287	0.264	0.269	(0.906)	Reflective	0.092	<0.001
Y2	0.279	0.285	0.020	(0.918)	Reflective	0.092	<0.001

Y3	0.041	0.155	0.153	(0.895)	<i>Reflective</i>	0.092	<0.001
Y4	0.093	0.026	0.230	(0.915)	<i>Reflective</i>	0.092	<0.001

Source : Data-processed research (2025)

The criterion of a *cross-loading factor* with a value of more than 0.70 is said to be high, while a value of 0.50 – 0.60 can be considered sufficient. In the results of the WarpPLS 8.0 calculation in table 2. The above indicates that a *cross-loading* value above 0.70 is considered high and 0.50–0.60 is sufficient. The results of WarpPLS 8.0 showed all *cross-loading* values above 0.50 with a significance of $p < 0.001$, suggesting that these factors significantly affected the related variables and met the convergent validity criteria well.

2. Reliability Test

Reliability testing is carried out with the aim of ensuring that the research instrument used can present the measurement concept consistently without bias (Scott, 2016). The results of WarpPLS 8.0 data processing are as follows:

Table 3. Reliability Test
Composite reliability coefficient

X1	X2	Z	Y
0.978	0.977	0.975	0.961

Cronbach alpha coefficient

X1	X2	Z	Y
0.974	0.974	0.971	0.951

Source : Data-processed research (2025)

The basis used in the reliability test is its value *Composite recapability coefficient* and *Cronbach alpha coefficient* above 0.7. Results in table 3. It shows that the questionnaire instrument in this study has met the requirements of the reliability test.

3. Calculation of Direct Influence Path Coefficient

Table 4. Direct Influence Path Coefficient Value

Hypothesis	Path coefficient	P value	Information
X1 > Z	0.213	0.036	Significant
X2 > Z	0.727	<0.001	Significant
X1 > Y	0.390	<0.001	Significant
X2 > Y	0.391	<0.001	Significant
Z > Y	0.183	0.004	Significant

Source : Data-processed research (2025)

Results in Table 4. is the result of PLS analysis which will then be interpreted to answer the hypothesis proposed. The explanation of the results of the hypothesis test can be stated as follows:

- a. The effect of work-life balance (X1) on work ethic (Z) resulted in a *path coefficient* value of 0.213 with a *p value* of 0.036. Since *p-value* is lower than the significance level of α ($0.036 < 0.05$) Therefore, based on the results obtained, it can be concluded that there is an effect.
- b. The effect of competency (X2) on work ethic (Z) resulted in a path coefficient value of 0.727 with a *p value* of <0.001 . Since *p-value* is lower than the significance level of α ($0.001 < 0.05$) Therefore, based on the results obtained, it can be concluded that there is an effect.
- c. The effect of the work balance (X1) on employee performance (Y) resulted in a path coefficient value of 0.390 with a *p value* of <0.001 . Since *p-value* is lower than the significance level of α ($0.001 < 0.05$) Therefore, based on the results obtained, it can be concluded that there is an effect.
- d. The effect of competency (X2) on employee performance (Y) resulted in a path coefficient value of 0.391 with a *p value* of <0.001 . Since *p-value* is lower than the significance level of α ($0.001 < 0.05$) Therefore, based on the results obtained, it can be concluded that there is an effect.
- e. The influence of work ethic (Z) on employee performance (Y) resulted in a path coefficient value of 0.183 with a *p value* of 0.063. Since *p-value* is lower than the significance level of α ($0.004 < 0.05$) Therefore, based on the results obtained, it can be concluded that there is an effect.

Sec. 4. Calculation of indirect influence paths

Table 5. Value of the Indirect Influence Path Coefficient

Hypothesis	<i>Indirect and total effects</i>	<i>P-value for the sum of indirect effects</i>	Information
X1 > Y > Z	0.329	0.039	Significant
X2 > Y > Z	0.061	0.033	Significant

Source : Data-processed research (2025)

The results given in table 5. above show the indirect influence of variables X1 (work balance), X2 (competence), on variables Y (employee performance) through Z (work ethic) as follows:

1. The indirect influence from X1 (work-life balance) to Y (employee performance) was significant with a path coefficient value of 0.329 and a *p value* of 0.039. Because *the p-value* is lower than the significance level of α ($0.039 < 0.05$). This shows that there is a significant positive influence of work-life balance (X1) on employee performance (Y) through a pathway involving the Z variable (work ethic).
2. The indirect influence from X2 (competence) to Y (employee performance) has a path coefficient of 0.061 with a *p value* of 0.033. Because *the p-value* is lower than the significance level of α ($0.033 < 0.05$). This shows that there is a significant

positive influence of competency (X2) on employee performance (Y) through a path involving the Z variable (work ethic).

5. Coefficient of Determination R2

Table 6. Test Research Model

<i>Adjusted R-squared coefficient</i>			
X1	X2	Z	Y
		0.860	0.886

Source : Data-processed research (2025)

The above determination coefficient is presented in the form of *the adjusted R-squared coefficient* in the table. Based on the r-square value in table 6. showed that work-life balance and competence were able to explain the work ethic variable of 86.0% or categorized as a good correlation, and the remaining 14.0% were explained by other constraints other than those studied in this study. Meanwhile, work-life balance and competence were able to explain the employee performance variable of 88.6% or categorized as a good correlation, and the remaining 11.4% was explained by other constraints than those studied in this study.

DISCUSSION

1. Work-life balance has a Positive and Significant Effect on the Performance of Probolinggo Class IIB Prison Employees

The results of the study showed that work-life balance had a positive and significant influence on the performance of Probolinggo class IIB prison employees, Probolinggo Class IIB prison employees who were able to manage time effectively between work tasks in prison and personal life had a more optimal level of performance. Good time management allows employees not to sacrifice rest time and time with family, thus maintaining physical and mental health and productivity. This time balance plays an important role in reducing fatigue and improving concentration at work, which ultimately contributes positively to employee work outcomes.

Employees who are able to maintain a balanced commitment and focus between work and social life are less likely to feel burdened with work tasks. This proportionate commitment reduces the risk of burnout and burnout. This study shows that employees who are able to maintain healthy engagement with both remain motivated in carrying out prison duties, which significantly improves the quality and quantity of their performance. With balanced engagement, employees can give their full attention to their tasks while maintaining their social connections. Employee satisfaction arises when the division of time and involvement between work and personal life is balanced. This condition reduces the level of stress experienced by employees and improves work morale. The results of the study revealed that employees who are satisfied with this balance tend to show better work performance. Job satisfaction is an important mediator that strengthens the influence of work-life balance on employee performance, so that work-life balance improvement programs will have a positive impact on overall performance.

Work pressure in the Probolinggo Prison environment, such as inmate

supervision and high workload, can cause stress and fatigue. Research highlights the importance of effective workload management to reduce those levels of tension. A well-managed strain will lower the risk of fatigue and health problems that can degrade the quality of performance. Therefore, there is a need for an adequate support system and stress management strategy to maintain the mental condition of employees so that performance remains optimal. Enough energy is the foundation for employees to carry out their work duties while maintaining their personal lives. This research shows that employees with high energy levels are able to maintain productivity and maintain consistent work quality. This energy is closely related to the ability to rest and a good work-life balance, which supports employees in dealing with various work demands without compromising their health and social functioning.

Theoretically, these findings strengthen and expand the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) framework in the context of corrections by showing how personal and organizational resources, particularly time management, social support, and workload management programs, moderate the influence of job demands on performance. In particular, this study confirms the role of job satisfaction as a mediator that links work-life balance to performance outcomes, thus adding empirical evidence that emotional and cognitive mediation pathways (satisfaction, motivation) are important in explaining how work-life balance impacts organizational output. The novelty of the research lies in its application in the prison environment, which is a setting that has high emotional demands and safety but is relatively rarely studied in the work-life balance literature. These findings provide contextual evidence that work-life balance improvement interventions (e.g., schedule flexibility, energy recovery programs, and internal support systems) are not only relevant in the corporate sector but are also effective in improving performance in correctional institutions. Therefore, this study opens up advanced research paths to test mediation and moderation models (e.g. organizational support roles, work control, and job characteristics) as well as to design contextual interventions that can be tested experimentally or quasi-experimentally.

Previous studies have supported these findings. (Baskoro et al., 2024) and emphasizing that a good work-life balance can significantly improve employee performance and well-being. In addition, a study by (Ramdhani & Rasto, 2021), (Faustina & Julianti, 2024) and (Bayu et al., 2024) shows that a balanced work engagement with personal life can reduce stress and increase work motivation. This scientific support strengthens the importance of managing work-life balance as the main strategy in improving the productivity and quality of employee performance in various institutions, including the Probolinggo Class IIB Prison.

2. Competence has a positive and significant effect on the performance of Class IIB Probolinggo Prison Employees

The results of the study show that competence has a positive and significant influence on the performance of Probolinggo Class IIB Prison employees, Probolinggo Class IIB Prison employees who have adequate knowledge about correctional procedures, inmate data management, and regulations related to their duties, tend to have good performance. Adequate knowledge allows employees to carry out tasks appropriately and efficiently in accordance with operational rules and standards, thereby

improving the quality and accuracy of the work performed. With a strong understanding of technical and regulatory aspects, employees can avoid mistakes and improve service to inmates.

Employees' understanding of prison operational information and instructions, including supervision procedures and the implementation of coaching programs, has been shown to make a significant contribution to performance improvement. Employees who are able to clearly understand their responsibilities and work procedures are likely to be able to carry out their duties more effectively and respond to various changes in the situation. Good understanding also helps them in making the right decisions and strengthens coordination between employees in carrying out correctional functions. In addition, technical and practical skills also play an important role in supporting the performance of Probolinggo Prison employees. Employees who are skilled in operating correctional database systems, as well as have practical skills in securing and serving inmates, can complete work more quickly and accurately. These skills not only increase the effectiveness of carrying out daily tasks, but also reduce the risk of operational errors so that they have an impact on improving overall performance. In addition, values such as integrity, professionalism, and responsibility upheld by Probolinggo Prison employees are the moral foundation in the implementation of duties. The results of the study show that employees who internalize these values tend to have better performance because they have a high ethical awareness and sense of responsibility. These values also reinforce a positive work culture and encourage employees to work to a higher standard. A positive mental attitude, including discipline, responsibility, and high dedication, has also been shown to have a significant effect on improving employee performance. This attitude fosters motivation from within, encourages maximum contribution to work, and helps create harmonious working relationships and a conducive work environment, so that the achievement of performance targets can take place optimally.

Theoretically, these findings strengthen the competency model as a predictor of performance by emphasizing that competencies are multidimensional including knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that work synergistically to improve work outcomes. The results of the study support a competency literature that combines technical and non-technical aspects (soft skills and values) in explaining performance variability, while emphasizing the mechanism of how procedural understanding and technical skills improve operational effectiveness. The novelty of the research lies in the context of applications in correctional institutions, namely settings that have high safety demands, strict regulations, and emotional burdens but relatively little attention in competency studies. By providing empirical evidence in the context of Class IIB Prisons, this study offers a new contribution to organizational competency theory and opens up opportunities for the development of contextual competency models that consider factors of safety, task pressure, and professional ethics in the correctional environment.

Previous studies have also supported these findings. For example (Hutosoit et al., 2023) and (Putri et al., 2023) states that competencies that include knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes are the main basis in determining employee performance. In addition, a study by (Suswati et al., 2021) and (Suswati et al., 2021) emphasizing that integrated competencies are able to improve work effectiveness and overall organizational results. Thus, comprehensive competency development is very important

in an effort to increase the capacity and performance of Class IIB Probolinggo Prison employees.

3. Work-life balance has a Positive and Significant Effect on the Work Ethic of Class IIB Probolinggo Prison

The results of the study show that work-life balance has a positive and significant effect on the work ethic of the prison class IIB Probolinggo Study, this confirms that a good work-life balance has a major role in forming a disciplined, responsible, and highly dedicated work attitude. With balanced working conditions, employees are able to maintain their physical and mental well-being, thereby increasing motivation and consistency in carrying out correctional duties.

Employees who are able to effectively manage time between work duties in prison and personal life have a better work ethic. Proportionate time management allows employees not to sacrifice rest time and the quality of family relationships, thus maintaining physical and mental health. This condition encourages employees to be more disciplined and responsible for their work because they are in optimal conditions and are not burdened by time disruptions. Employees who are able to maintain a balanced commitment and focus between work and social life tend to have a stronger work ethic. This balance of engagement helps employees feel motivated to carry out their duties without feeling burned out or stressed. With healthy engagement in both aspects, employees can be more consistent and enthusiastic in fulfilling their responsibilities, thereby increasing loyalty and dedication to the institution gradually.

The satisfaction arising from a balanced division of time and involvement between work and personal life has been shown to contribute significantly to an increase in work ethic. Satisfied employees tend to have high work motivation and greater enthusiasm in carrying out their duties. This sense of satisfaction also reduces stress levels, so that employees can work more focused and responsible, which directly strengthens the positive work culture at the Class IIB Probolinggo Prison. High work pressures, such as inmate supervision and heavy workloads, can lead to stress and burnout, which can potentially lower employee work ethic. This research shows that effective workload management and management support for stress reduction are essential to maintain employee mental stability. By lowering the level of tension, employees can maintain high morale and remain disciplined in carrying out correctional duties. Employees who have enough energy are proven to be able to maintain a strong work ethic in carrying out their duties while maintaining balance in their personal lives. Sufficient energy allows employees to appear productive and quality at work, without experiencing fatigue that can interfere with work commitments. Therefore, energy management through adequate rest and a good work-life balance is essential in increasing employees' motivation and dedication to their duties.

These findings strengthen the framework of the relationship between work-life balance and work behavior, specifically work ethic, by demonstrating a mechanistic pathway: time balance with satisfaction and work ethic. This study confirms that the effects of work-life balance not only affect individual well-being but also shape work dispositions (discipline, responsibility, dedication) that impact organizational performance. The novelty of the research lies in its application in a correctional setting

that has safety pressure, emotional burden, and strict regulations that are still relatively rarely analyzed in the work-life balance literature. By providing empirical evidence from the Class IIB Probolinggo Prison, this study expands the generalization of work-life balance theory and opens up further research opportunities to test contextual interventions (e.g. task rotation, structured rest schemes, family support) as well as relevant mediation/moderation models in high-risk environments.

The findings of this study are in line with previous research that emphasizes the importance of work-life balance in forming a positive work ethic. For example, Research by (Ismi Kusuma Dewi et al., 2023), (Prince, 2024) and (Rahmayati, 2021) explains that work-life balance has a direct impact on a person's motivation and work commitment. In addition, studies by Beauregard and (Nurjana et al., 2022) and (Zaky, 2022) states that effective stress and tension management can improve employee well-being and support the achievement of a high work ethic. Thus, the application of the principle of work-life balance in the Probolinggo Class IIB Prison environment is very important to build a productive and sustainable work ethic.

4. Competencies Have a Positive and Significant Effect on the Work Ethic of Probolinggo Class IIB Prison

The results of the study show that Competence Has a Positive and Significant Influence on the Work Ethic of Probolinggo Class IIB Prison, competencies consisting of knowledge, understanding, skills, values, and attitudes are crucial components that form the foundation of a strong work ethic. With good competence, employees are not only able to carry out tasks professionally but also demonstrate a high work attitude and motivation, which in turn strengthens their work ethic in a demanding work environment.

The results of the study showed that employees of the Probolinggo Class IIB Prison who have adequate knowledge about correctional procedures, inmate data management, and regulations related to their duties tend to have a stronger work ethic. Good knowledge makes employees more confident and ready to carry out their work, thus encouraging them to work more disciplined, diligent, and responsible. In addition, a good understanding of prison operational information and instructions, such as inmate supervision procedures and the implementation of coaching programs, also plays an important role in establishing a high work ethic because employees can carry out their duties more carefully, carefully, and in accordance with their responsibilities. Technical and practical skills, such as the ability to operate correctional database systems and secure and serve inmates, also have a positive impact because they help employees work more effectively, diligently, and professionally. In addition, values such as integrity, professionalism, and responsibility that employees uphold become the moral foundation that strengthens their work ethic, so that they have a sense of pride in their work and show an honest, consistent, and committed attitude. A positive mental attitude, especially discipline, responsibility, and high dedication, also supports the formation of a work culture that is conducive, productive, and able to maintain the quality of performance in a sustainable manner.

These results reinforce the perspective of multidimensional competencies as determinants of work ethic, with evidence that the technical (knowledge, skills) and non-technical (values, attitudes) dimensions work together to form a stable work disposition.

The findings confirm the mechanisms by which competencies increase confidence, task readiness, and intrinsic motivation which in turn strengthens work ethic. The novelty of the research lies in its application in the context of a correctional institution, an environment with high safety and regulatory pressure, which is still relatively rarely studied in the study of competencies and work ethic. This study offers empirical contributions that help extend the generalization of competency theory to the correctional setting and encourage the development of competency strengthening programs that take into account the technical, ethical, and psychological resilience needs of employees.

The findings of this study are in line with the results of research by (Irawan et al., 2023), (Dinda Permatasari et al., 2024) and (Dwinanda et al., 2023) which affirms that competencies, which include knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes, are key factors in building a strong and consistent work ethic. In addition, (Ramdhani & Rasto, 2021) and (Hidayat, 2022) He also added that comprehensive competency development is essential to form a productive work attitude and have a positive impact on organizational performance. Thus, strengthening the competence of Probolinggo Class IIB Prison employees is a strategic key in fostering a professional and highly dedicated work ethic.

5. Work ethic has a positive and significant effect on the performance of Probolinggo prison employees class IIB

The results of the study show that work ethic has a positive and significant influence on the performance of class IIB Probolinggo prison employees. A strong work ethic is the main foundation in improving productivity and service quality in the land environment. Work attitudes that include hard work, discipline, honesty, responsibility, and perseverance play a very important role in supporting the successful implementation of security duties and services for inmates.

The results of the study showed that Probolinggo Class IIB Prison employees who applied hard work and high discipline in carrying out security duties and services to inmates had better performance. Honest, responsible, and diligent attitude encourages employees to work optimally and consistently, so as to increase work effectiveness and create a safe and orderly work environment. In addition, the ability to establish harmonious working relationships with colleagues and inmates, accompanied by initiatives in solving problems in prisons, also supports the creation of superior performance. Good interpersonal skills facilitate communication and teamwork, while a reliable attitude fosters trust and security in the execution of tasks. The study also confirms that employees who not only work hard with full responsibility and integrity, but also work smartly through public service innovations, such as complaint services and online visit registration, show higher performance. This sincere and innovative approach can improve the efficiency and quality of service, as well as provide added value for the institution in meeting the needs of inmates and the community. In the midst of challenges such as excess capacity and high service demands, employees who have resilience, unyielding spirit, independence, and adaptability to changes in working conditions have proven to be able to maintain productivity and work effectiveness in a sustainable manner.

These findings reinforce the causal relationship between work ethic and performance in the context of public organizations with high operational pressure. This

study supports a theory of work behavior that places values and dispositions (e.g., integrity, discipline, perseverance) as the main predictors of operational performance, and asserts that adaptive ability and initiative reinforce the effect of work ethic on work outcomes. The novelty of the research lies in its application in the correctional environment—a setting that demands safety, regulatory compliance, and risk management but is relatively rarely the focus of work ethic studies. With empirical evidence from the Class IIB Probolinggo Prison, this study extends the generalization of work ethic theory to high-risk contexts and shows the importance of combining moral dimensions (values), behavior (discipline, hard work), and adaptive capabilities (innovation, resilience) in efforts to improve performance.

The findings of this study are in line with the results of research by (Journal et al., 2024) & Ramadhani, 2022), highlighting that a strong work ethic including hard work, discipline, and responsibility are important factors that significantly affect employee performance. In addition, research by (Maharani & Kambara, 2025) and (Silalahi et al., 2021) It also emphasizes the importance of a resilient attitude and adaptability in dealing with the dynamics of the work environment to maintain and increase work productivity. Therefore, strengthening work ethic is the main strategy in improving the quality and professionalism of Class IIB Probolinggo Prison employees.

6. Work-life balance has a positive and significant effect on the performance of probation class IIB prison employees, through work ethic

The results of the study show that work-life balance has a positive and significant influence on the performance of Probolinggo class IIB prison employees, through work ethic. Work-life balance not only has a direct impact on productivity, but also significantly strengthens employees' attitudes, motivation, and dedication which is reflected in their work ethic. Thus, work-life balance is a key factor in maintaining quality and consistency of performance in a dynamic and stressful prison environment.

Work-life balance, which includes a proportionate balance between prison and personal life, has an important impact on employees, as it allows them to better maintain their physical and mental health. When work time and personal time can be managed in a balanced way, employees tend to feel calmer, less easily tired, and able to maintain focus while carrying out official duties. This keeps them productive, disciplined, and has a strong work ethic in carrying out their responsibilities. In addition, a balance between work and social life helps employees avoid excessive work pressure, reduce the risk of burnout, and maintain their enthusiasm and commitment to work. These conditions also support the formation of more positive attitudes, such as responsibility, perseverance, and consistency in completing work. On the other hand, the balance of satisfaction that arises from a balanced division of time and engagement plays a role in lowering stress levels and improving work morale, so that employees can work with a more stable mood and better motivation. Effective tension management is also very important because it can reduce the risk of stress and fatigue that has the potential to reduce the quality of work. With a more stable mental state, employees are better able to maintain a positive attitude, maintain good working relationships, and perform tasks optimally. In addition, sufficient energy is the main foundation for employees to work with dedication, consistency, and a high sense of responsibility. Ultimately, a good work-life balance not

only helps employees survive work pressures, but also improves the productivity, effectiveness, and overall performance quality of prison employees.

These findings reinforce the mediating model between work-life balance, work ethic (or work involvement/attachment), and performance. This study confirms that work-life balance affects performance not only directly but mainly through psychological mechanisms such as satisfaction, energy, and work disposition (work ethic). The novelty of the research lies in its application in a correctional setting with safety demands, emotional distress, and strict regulations that are relatively rarely analyzed in the work-life balance literature. With empirical evidence from the Probolinggo Class IIB Prison, this study expands the generalization of work-life balance theory and opens up opportunities for the development of contextual intervention models (e.g., special scheduling arrangements, energy recovery programs, family support) that can be further tested to improve work ethic and performance in high-risk environments.

These findings are supported by previous research, such as research conducted by (Arvian Azhril Rahmadani, 2023) and (Lestari et al., 2024) which emphasizes that a balance between job demands and personal resources is essential to maintaining strong work engagement or engagement. In addition, research by (Idris & Alam, 2024) and (Andarista & Latif, 2024) It also shows that high work engagement acts as a mediator between work-life balance and positive performance outcomes. This study reinforces the argument that work ethic as a manifestation of employee engagement plays an important role in translating work-life balance into optimal performance. Therefore, effective management of work-life balance is very important to support the continuous improvement of the performance of Probolinggo Class IIB Prison employees.

7. Competence has a positive and significant effect on the performance of prison employees in class IIB Probolinggo, through work ethic

The results of the study show that competence has a positive and significant influence on the performance of class IIB Probolinggo prison employees, through work ethic. Work-life balance not only has a direct impact on productivity, but also significantly strengthens employees' attitudes, motivation, and dedication which is reflected in their work ethic. Thus, work-life balance is a key factor in maintaining quality and consistency of performance in a dynamic and stressful prison environment.

Work-life balance that includes a proportionate timetable between prison and personal life has an important impact on employees because it helps them maintain better physical and mental health. When the division of work time and personal time can be balanced, employees tend to be calmer, less easily fatigued, and able to maintain focus and productivity in carrying out tasks. This condition also supports the formation of a strong work ethic, which is reflected in the attitude of discipline, responsibility, perseverance, and enthusiasm for work. Additionally, a balance between engagement in work and social life helps employees avoid excessive stress and keep their motivation and commitment stable. That way, a positive work ethic can grow better and encourage employees to work optimally in the prison environment. On the other hand, the balance of satisfaction that arises from the division of time and balanced involvement plays a role in lowering stress levels and increasing work morale, so that employees feel more satisfied and better prepared to carry out their duties. Effective tension management is

also very important because it can reduce the risk of stress and fatigue that has the potential to decrease motivation and work discipline. When work pressure can be controlled, employees are better able to maintain mental stability and a positive attitude at work. Sufficient energy is also the main foundation for employees to carry out their duties with dedication, responsibility, and consistency, so that in the end work-life balance contributes to increasing the productivity, effectiveness, and quality of overall performance of prison employees.

These findings enrich the mediation model between competence, work ethic, and performance by adding the role of moderation/support of work-life balance. This study shows that competence affects performance primarily through psychological mechanisms (work ethic), but this effect is amplified when employees have a good work-life balance and adequate energy levels and satisfaction. The novelty of the research lies in the integration of two important pathways (competence and work-life balance) in the context of a high-risk setting, strict regulation, and emotional burden that are rarely analyzed together in the literature. With empirical evidence from the Class IIB Probolinggo Prison, this study offers a new contribution: a conceptual model that combines individual capabilities (competence), welfare conditions (work-life balance, energy, satisfaction), and work disposition (work ethic) as determinants of performance in high-pressure environments. The findings open up further research to examine the role of moderation (e.g., organizational support, work control) and to design interventions oriented towards strengthening competencies while improving work-life balance.

These findings are supported by previous research, such as research conducted by (Sundari & Putri, 2023), (Silalahi et al., 2021) and (Azizah et al., 2023) who emphasize that a balance between job demands and personal resources is essential to maintain strong work engagement or engagement. In addition, research by (Angin, S. A. P., & Ramadhani, 2022) It also shows that high work engagement acts as a mediator between work-life balance and positive performance outcomes. This study reinforces the argument that work ethic as a manifestation of employee engagement plays an important role in translating work-life balance into optimal performance. Therefore, effective management of work-life balance is very important to support the continuous improvement of the performance of Probolinggo Class IIB Prison employees.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that the work-life balance and employee competence both have a positive and significant effect on the performance of Probolinggo Class IIB Prison employees. A good work-life balance, which is reflected in the ability to manage time, engagement, satisfaction, and tension between work and personal life, can increase employee productivity and work quality. On the other hand, competencies that include knowledge, understanding, skills, values, and attitudes also support the implementation of tasks effectively and professionally so that they have an impact on improving work results. In addition to having a direct effect on performance, work-life balance and competence have also been proven to improve employee work ethic. Work-life balance encourages the emergence of high motivation, discipline, and work morale, while adequate competence strengthens a positive work attitude, dedication, and discipline. The work ethic itself has a positive and significant effect on

performance, because the attitude of hard work, honesty, responsibility, having interpersonal skills, and being proactive helps to improve the effectiveness and quality of work. Thus, work-life balance and competence not only have a direct impact on performance, but also exert an indirect influence through work ethic as a mediating variable.

ADVICE

Based on the results of this study, several suggestions can be proposed for future research, namely by developing other variables that may affect the performance of prison employees, such as work motivation, job satisfaction, quality of the work environment, and workload, as well as using more comprehensive and valid research instruments so that the results of the analysis are more accurate. Further research is also recommended to extend the location and population of the study to other prison classes or different geographic areas so that the findings obtained can provide a broader picture and have a stronger degree of generalization. In addition, the use of a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative and qualitative data can help provide a deeper and holistic understanding of the influence of work-life balance and competence on employee work ethic and performance. Longitudinal research can also be an alternative to determine the long-term influence of these two variables and capture the dynamics of changes that occur over time. In addition, further research can be directed to intervention studies, for example through the development of programs to improve work-life balance and competencies, then evaluate the effectiveness of the program on the work ethic and performance of prison employees. Finally, subsequent research may explore the mediating and moderating roles of other factors, such as organizational support, employee mental health, and work stress levels, in the relationship between work-life balance, competence, work ethic, and performance.

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