



WORK-LIFE BALANCE AMONG MARRIED INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS: EXPERIENCES AND INFLUENCING FACTORS

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Abstract

This literature study examines the experience of work-life balance among married IT professionals with family responsibilities. Through a qualitative thematic synthesis of academic works, the analysis addresses two focal points. First, it explores how IT workers experience and manage the tension between professional demands and family obligations, identifying strategies such as temporal separation, compensation, rotational prioritization, and selective technology use. Second, it investigates the organizational and individual factors that facilitate or hinder the achievement of balance. The study concludes that work-life balance is not a static state but a dynamic process requiring continuous adaptation to changing work demands and family life stages. Facilitating factors include flexible organizational policies, supervisory and peer support, time management skills, and physical and mental health. Hindering factors encompass workplace culture that glorifies overtime, policy inconsistency, perfectionism, digital boundary difficulties, and economic constraints. The findings underscore the necessity of integrated approaches that address both individual capabilities and organizational structures to support the well-being of married IT professionals in achieving sustainable work-life balance.

Keywords: Work-life balance; IT professionals; married employees; work-family conflict; boundary management; organizational support; role strain

Introduction

Discussions about the balance between professional and personal life have become a major concern in modern labor studies. Structural changes in the workplace, including the spread of flexible working hours and boundless digital connectivity, have blurred the separation between work space and private space. For workers in the information technology sector, this condition feels more intensive given the nature of their work, which heavily relies on digital devices and communication networks. The demands to always be available, complete projects with tight deadlines, and adapt to rapid technological changes create their own psychological burdens. Family responsibilities demand physical and emotional presence that cannot be compromised (Rao, 2024). Positive psychological factors are known to strengthen an individual's engagement and commitment to work tasks, so the pressure from dual roles that erodes these factors has the potential to reduce the quality of worker performance (Darmawan & Mardikaningsih, 2022). The gap between these two demands becomes a central issue that requires a deeper understanding of how married IT workers navigate their daily lives.

The work environment in the information technology sector has distinct characteristics. The work culture in many technology companies often glorifies total dedication, with the expectation that workers will give extra time and energy to achieve innovation targets. Practices such as long working hours, weekend availability, and quick responses to work communications become unwritten norms. For workers who are already married, this norm creates ethical and practical dilemmas (Chandran, 2022). They want to demonstrate commitment and professionalism; they must be present for their spouses and children. This dual-role conflict, as explained in role conflict theory, occurs when pressures from one role interfere with the performance of another role. The impact is felt not only by the individual, but also by the family and the organization where they work. Productivity decreases, job satisfaction diminishes, and the risk of burnout increases over time. Leadership that pays attention to employee well-being has been proven to increase organizational productivity, so the neglect of workers' family needs risks hindering the achievement of that productivity (Darmawan, Jahroni, Irfan, & Al Hakim, 2022).

Data shows that stress and burnout rates among technology professionals are relatively high compared to other sectors (Stărică et al., 2023). Heavy cognitive loads, demands for complex problem-solving, and pressure to continuously update skills add a significant layer of stress. When this stress is brought home, the quality of family interactions can drop drastically. Spouses may feel neglected, children lose attention, and marital relationships become vulnerable to conflict. Mental health is now beginning to be viewed as part of the work environment design itself, rather than merely an individual's private matter, so human resource management needs to take a strategic role in preventing the accumulation of such pressure early on (Issalillah & Khayru, 2025). Research on dual roles shows that social support from spouses and supervisors can act as a protective factor that reduces negative impacts. Nevertheless, the availability of this support varies greatly across sectors and even across organizational cultures. Good quality of working life, including knowledge management and support provided by organizations, has been proven to contribute to the level of employee commitment to the company (Eddine, Darmawan, Mardikaningsih, & Sinambela, 2023). Companies with clear work-life policies tend to exhibit better employee retention and higher job satisfaction. This indicates that work-life balance is not a secondary iss

This phenomenon becomes increasingly relevant along with the increasing number of IT workers entering the phase of marriage and child-rearing. Millennials and Gen Z in the technology sector are now at a productive age to start families, and they bring different expectations and values from previous generations (Santos et al., 2024). Balance between career and personal life has become a top priority in their career decisions. Many are willing to accept lower compensation for a work environment that supports flexibility and well-being. This shift in preferences signifies a major transformation in the psychological contract between workers and organizations. Such preference shifts also drive the reconfiguration of human resource management, where work flexibility and the reinforcement of employer branding become important strategies to attract and retain young talent (Mardikaningsih, 2025). Organizations that fail to respond to this change risk losing their best talent to more progressive competitors. Thus, understanding work-life balance in the

technology sector is not only an academic interest but also a practical necessity for the survival of the industry itself.

The fundamental problem faced by married IT workers is the inability to strictly separate work time and family time. The digital nature of technology work makes access to work possible anytime and anywhere. Smartphones, laptops, and collaboration tools allow workers to stay connected with the office even while physically at home. Technology that is essentially designed to facilitate work can actually turn into a source of pressure if its use is not balanced with the setting of strict boundaries (Gardi & Darmawan, 2024). The existence of technology that should be a helpful tool often becomes a shackle because it creates high expectations of responsiveness. An IT worker who is spending time with family on the weekend can be interrupted by work notifications requiring immediate attention, ruining moments of togetherness that should be of high quality. This condition blurs the boundaries between professional and personal roles, making workers feel like they are never truly away from work, even when they are at home. The loss of these boundaries leads to prolonged cognitive and emotional exhaustion, as the mind continuously works without adequate breaks. Ultimately, both work and family receive divided attention, and the quality of both declines simultaneously.

Another problem is the lack of recognition and support from organizations for the family needs of IT workers. Although many large technology companies claim to have work-life balance policies, their implementation often does not align with daily practices. A competitive and results-oriented work culture makes employees reluctant to utilize available flexible policies for fear of being perceived as less dedicated or weakening their position within the team (Chung, 2025). Direct managers also often lack sufficient training to support team members who have family responsibilities, so decisions regarding project assignments and performance evaluations do not take dual-role burdens into account. Cross-functional training designed to strengthen team collaboration should also equip managers with sensitivity to the personal needs of their team members, but such approaches are still rarely implemented evenly (Fared & Darmawan, 2021). Consequently, married IT workers feel they must struggle alone to balance conflicting demands. Regulatory gaps regarding legal protection for workers with flexible working patterns

further weaken the position of employees in demanding policies that truly favor family needs (Hambodo & Darmawan, 2024). This unequal access to support creates disparities between workers who have supportive partners and those who do not, as well as between those who work in progressive organizations and conservative ones, thereby widening inequality in workplace well-being.

The information technology sector is the backbone of a rapidly growing digital economy, with a massive contribution to gross domestic product and job creation in various countries (Frederick, 2023). The sustained growth of this sector heavily depends on the availability of a healthy, productive, and motivated workforce. However, stress and turnover rates in this industry are a serious concern, as the recruitment and training costs for skilled IT workers are very high. A positive work experience in a digital environment is one of the main concerns of human resource management because it is closely related to employee retention rates (Putra et al., 2022). Losing a talented IT worker not only incurs financial losses but also reduces the organization's innovation capacity. Therefore, understanding the root causes of work-life imbalance and its impact on employee retention is key to maintaining the competitiveness of technology companies amid increasingly fierce global competition. This study is important to identify best practices that can optimize worker well-being and organizational productivity simultaneously.

Workforce demographic changes indicate that an increasing number of IT workers are entering the ages of marriage and child-rearing. Today's younger generation has different expectations regarding life balance compared to previous generations (Mohammed, 2025). They no longer view career success as the sole measure of a meaningful life, but instead desire satisfaction across various aspects of life in a balanced manner. The readiness of human resource management to face the new generation of workers raised in a digital environment needs to be prepared early on so that organizations are not left behind in responding to this shift in values (Gani & Darmawan, 2023). Organizational failure to accommodate this shift in values can result in the loss of potential talent to other sectors or more progressive companies. Flexible organizational structures are considered capable of enhancing a company's adaptability to environmental dynamics, including changes in the values and preferences of the new generation

workforce (Darmawan & Mardikaningsih, 2023). Furthermore, social demands for gender equality also drive the need for policies that support both male and female workers in performing dual roles. Society is beginning to realize that family responsibilities are not merely domestic affairs, but rather part of a social order that requires structural support. Studies on work-life balance in the technology sector thus become highly relevant to responding to broader social transformations.

This literature study aims to deeply explore the subjective experiences of married IT workers in navigating the demands of dual roles, as well as identify key factors influencing their ability to achieve work-life balance. Specifically, this research seeks to map the adaptive strategies developed by IT workers to manage the tension between work and family, including the use of technology, time management, and negotiation with partners and supervisors. Furthermore, this study aims to analyze how organizational policies, work culture, and social support from coworkers and family contribute to the perception of balance. The theoretical contribution of this research is enriching the conceptual framework of dual roles by incorporating the uniqueness of the information technology sector, while its practical contribution is providing evidence-based recommendations for managers and policymakers in tech companies to design interventions that are more responsive to the needs of married workers.

Method

This systematic qualitative literature study aims to conduct a thematic synthesis of key concepts and empirical findings regarding work-life balance among married information technology workers. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is highly suitable for exploring the complexity of meaning, interpretive processes, and social construction inherent in the experience of dual roles, as advocated by researchers such as Denzin and Lincoln (2005). The thematic synthesis method, systematically developed by Braun and Clarke (2006), serves as the primary guideline in the process of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns of meaning emerging from the collection of academic texts reviewed. This approach allows for the extraction of coherent insights from various sources to answer the formulated research questions, with an emphasis on the iterative recognition of patterns and themes through six phases: data

familiarization, initial coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing the report.

The literature search strategy was conducted systematically to ensure comprehensive and relevant coverage. Primary searches were performed on prominent academic databases such as Scopus and Google Scholar. The analysis process began with initial coding of selected texts, which were then grouped into broader candidate themes based on their similarities and conceptual relationships. To ensure the quality and credibility of the analysis, this study implemented an audit trail by documenting all decisions throughout the selection, coding, and theme development processes. In addition, theoretical data source triangulation was conducted by comparing perspectives from various disciplines such as industrial psychology, family sociology, and human resource management.

Result and Discussion

Experiences and Strategies for Managing Dual-Role Tension

Married IT workers face multi-dimensional and continuous dual-role tensions. This tension does not arise as a single event, but rather as an accumulation of small demands piling up throughout the day. An IT worker who must complete system debugging at night while their child needs attention for schoolwork experiences simultaneous conflict. The time allocated for one role automatically reduces availability for another role, creating an inevitable dilemma (Urs & Schmidt, 2018). Employees' perceptions of work-life balance and the adaptive efforts they make in a work environment supported by digital technology are clear reflections of this dilemma (Eddine & Darmawan, 2025). The project-based nature of IT work with tight deadlines exacerbates this condition, because work pressure often peaks at unexpected times, thereby disrupting family plans that have been made beforehand. A systematic risk management approach in information technology projects can actually help reduce this kind of deadline uncertainty, although its implementation does not necessarily reach the aspect of workers' personal life balance (da Silva, Darmawan, & Gardi, 2022). Consequently, married IT workers are in a state of high vigilance against the possibility of disturbances from both domains, which subsequently drains their psychological energy slowly but surely.

The management strategy most commonly adopted is physical and temporal time separation. Many IT workers try to establish strict working hours and avoid bringing work home. However, this strategy often fails due to the remote-accessible nature of the work (Devaraj et al., 2024). The ease of technological access and increasingly widespread digital skills in this era further widen the gap between work and personal time, because work becomes reachable from anywhere (Arifin & Darmawan, 2021). Laptops and smartphones brought home become constant reminders of unfinished work. Some workers develop a compensation strategy, which is working harder on weekdays to be able to spend more time with family on weekends. This approach is effective in the short term but risks causing exhaustion because high work intensity is not balanced with adequate recovery. The effectiveness of such a strategy is also influenced by the personality characteristics of each worker, since certain personality dimensions are known to be closely related to a person's work performance achievements (Darmawan, 2017). Other workers choose a rotating priority strategy, where they give full attention to work during certain periods, and then switch completely to family during subsequent periods. The application of consistent and structured management principles has essentially proven capable of improving operational performance in various types of work, so a similar logic can be applied to the arrangement of work and family time (Barzani et al., 2022). This strategy requires careful planning and clear communication with spouses and supervisors to avoid misunderstandings.

Communication with a spouse is a crucial element in managing dual-role tension. Spouses who understand the demands of IT work and provide emotional support can act as a buffer that reduces the negative impact of role conflict. Conversely, spouses who feel neglected or unappreciated can exacerbate existing tension. Many IT workers report that daily negotiations on the division of household chores and child-rearing are a significant source of stress, especially when both partners work (Mortejo, 2024). Inequality in domestic burdens is often a recurring point of conflict, although in many cases male IT workers are beginning to be more involved in domestic affairs compared to previous generations. This change reflects a broader shift in gender values, but has not fully resolved the structural inequalities that still exist in the workplace and at home.

The use of technology as a management tool represents an interesting paradox. A culture of innovation capable of balancing technological speed with the depth of human consideration is the key to ensuring that technology truly provides benefits without sacrificing the personal side of its users (Darmawan, 2023). Technology enables flexibility in work location and hours, which can potentially help IT workers adjust their work schedules to family needs. The ability to work from home when a child is sick or to set non-standard working hours provides leeway not available in other sectors. The same technology becomes the main source of the inability to detach oneself from work. Notifications continuously pouring in from work communication apps create a constant stream of disruption, even when workers are physically together with their family (Basile et al., 2022). Continuous interaction through digital platforms also shapes the social perception and self-identity of its users, so the presence of digital devices in the family room is not merely a technical disruption but also influences how workers perceive themselves (da Costa et al., 2022). To overcome this, some workers develop digital detox strategies by turning off notifications outside working hours, although this strategy requires the courage to face potential criticism from coworkers or supervisors who expect a quick response. The heavy flow of information in the digital space that cannot always be well-filtered further adds to the cognitive load of workers, making efforts to limit digital exposure outside working hours a quite reasonable step (Sinambela, 2022).

Another significant strategy is building social support networks in the workplace. Coworkers with similar experiences can be a source of empathy and practical advice on how to navigate dual-role demands (Liang, 2025). This kind of experience exchange is essentially a form of knowledge management that can become a source of advantage for technology companies, because practical knowledge on how to deal with work pressure is distributed and can be utilized together (Darmawan, 2023). Support from direct supervisors, such as understanding the need for flexibility or task leniency during critical family times, proves to be very decisive in reducing worker stress levels. Leadership that upholds ethical values is known to play an important role in shaping a positive and sustainable organizational culture, so the intended supervisor support actually stems from the quality of that leadership (Mardikaningsih et al.,

2022). IT workers who have supportive managers report higher levels of job and family satisfaction compared to those who do not. The optimization of digital leadership in driving team collaboration and operational efficiency becomes one of the efforts that can strengthen such support more evenly across various levels of the organization (Mardikaningsih et al., 2025). However, the availability of this support varies greatly depending on the organizational culture and leadership at the team level. Innovation in human resource management is truly needed to answer the demands of organizational competitiveness in the global era, including in designing support systems that workers can access without hesitation (Abdullah et al., 2021). In competitive organizations, workers may be reluctant to ask for support for fear of being perceived as weak or less committed, so they choose to bear the burden themselves, which actually worsens their mental health condition in the long run.

Gender differences significantly influence the management strategies and experiences of dual-role tension. Female IT workers often face heavier dual burdens because social expectations still place domestic responsibilities and child-rearing primarily on women (Maharani & Arsi, 2024). They must fight harder to prove their professional competence while meeting the standards of the roles of mother and wife expected by society. The conflicts they experience tend to be more intense and of longer duration, with more damaging impacts on psychological well-being. Meanwhile, male IT workers also experience pressure, but that pressure often comes from the expectation to be the primary breadwinner and the demand to always be available for work. The culture of masculinity in the workplace often pushes men not to show vulnerability or difficulty in balancing roles, leaving them with less of the support they need. Technology itself plays a dual role in the issue of gender equality in the workplace, as it can open up fairer access for women while potentially reinforcing existing patterns of bias if not managed carefully (Darmawan, 2024). This pattern indicates that the experience of dual-role tension is not universal and requires a gender-sensitive approach in interventions and policies.

The career trajectory of married IT workers is also influenced by family life phases. Newlywed couples without children may have greater flexibility compared to those with young children or elderly parents requiring care. Every transition in the family life cycle, such as the birth of

a child or a child starting school, brings changes in the dynamics of role demands and requires adjustments to new management strategies (Ji, 2014). IT workers often have to make strategic career decisions, such as refusing promotions that require frequent business travel or sacrificing time-consuming training opportunities, in order to maintain family balance. An individual's work readiness, including the mastery of digital skills, helps determine the extent to which they have the flexibility to refuse certain opportunities without sacrificing their competitiveness in the labor market (Darmawan, 2025). This sacrifice can create feelings of loss or frustration, especially when they see coworkers without family responsibilities soaring ahead in their careers. However, many workers report that commitment to family provides a deeper meaning in their lives and serves as motivation to work more efficiently and with greater focus.

Financial aspects also play an important role in the experience of dual-role tension. IT workers with high incomes have access to resources that can reduce burdens, such as domestic helpers, childcare, or food delivery services. Such services largely operate through algorithmic-based digital platforms that automatically manage their work, a working model that on one hand facilitates consumers but at the same time is prone to reducing the human side of the workers within it (Darmawan, 2024). The ability to buy these services provides invaluable time flexibility, allowing them to allocate more energy to work and family without having to sacrifice either. Conversely, workers with limited incomes face additional pressure because they must choose between paying for services or doing them themselves, which ultimately reduces rest and recovery time (Wang, 2024). This economic inequality creates stratification in the experience of work-life balance, where well-being becomes a commodity that can be bought by those who can afford it, while others must struggle with minimal resources.

Psychological resilience and emotion regulation are important individual factors in coping with dual-role tension. IT workers who possess the ability to manage stress, maintain optimism, and view challenges as opportunities to grow tend to be more resilient against the negative impacts of role conflict (Urs & Schmidt, 2018). They are also more capable of bouncing back after experiencing failure or disappointment in balancing roles. The ability to regulate emotions enables them to remain calm and rational in conflict situations, both at work and at home, thereby achieving

more constructive resolutions. However, resilience is not a fixed innate trait, but rather can be developed through training and social support. A number of key factors are known to play a role in enhancing organizational effectiveness, and the provision of self-development programs for employees is one of the elements included therein (Darmawan, 2024). Organizations that provide self-development programs and counseling can help IT workers strengthen their psychological capacity, which in turn enhances their ability to manage dual-role demands more adaptively.

Self-identity as an IT worker and family member also influences how individuals interpret and respond to dual-role tension. Workers with a strong professional identity may be more inclined to prioritize work and accept the consequences on family life, whereas those with a dominant family identity will do the reverse (Rao, 2024). As some routine tasks begin to be replaced by automated systems, workers need to continuously update their knowledge and engagement so that their professional identity remains relevant, a process that further adds to psychological pressure amidst family demands (Darmawan, 2024). However, most married IT workers strive to maintain a balance between these two identities, creating a self-narrative that acknowledges the importance of both roles. When conflict occurs, they often feel that their identity is threatened, both as a competent professional and as a responsible family member. This identity negotiation process is ongoing and can be a significant source of stress, but it can also become a driver for personal growth when individuals successfully integrate both roles into a coherent whole.

Corporate policies such as parental leave, flexible working hours, and remote work options have a major influence on the work-life balance experience, but their effectiveness heavily depends on how those policies are implemented and perceived by employees. Policies that are available but not supported by a supportive organizational culture are often left unused because employees worry about negative consequences. Conversely, policies supported by role models from top management and assessed fairly can create a psychologically safe environment for employees to utilize them. Some companies have even started incorporating spiritual values into employee development programs as part of digital transformation, an approach that places employees' inner well-being on par with performance achievements (Putra et al., 2025). IT workers report

that the clarity and consistency of policies are factors more important than merely their existence. Companies that regularly evaluate and improve their work-life policies based on employee feedback demonstrate a greater commitment to the well-being of their workers, which subsequently increases their workforce's loyalty and productivity.

The experience of married IT workers in managing dual-role tension is a complex, dynamic, and highly personal process. They develop various adaptive strategies, ranging from time separation and communication with spouses to the use of technology and social support, all of which are tailored to the specific conditions of their lives. The success of these strategies heavily depends on the interaction between individual factors such as resilience and identity, relational factors such as spouse and coworker support, and organizational factors such as policies and work culture. Dual-role tension cannot be completely eliminated, but it can be better managed through a combination of personal efforts and supportive structural changes, enabling IT workers to achieve a more meaningful and prosperous life in both domains that matter to them.

Driving and Inhibiting Factors of Work-Life Balance

The factors that facilitate the achievement of work-life balance for married IT workers can be grouped into two main categories: organizational factors and individual factors. At the organizational level, flexible working policies are the most significant driving factor. Companies that allow employees to determine their own working hours or work remotely provide invaluable autonomy for IT workers who must adjust their professional schedules to family needs. This autonomy allows workers to attend their children's school events, accompany partners to the doctor, or simply be present at important family moments without having to sacrifice work productivity (Amrany et al., 2024). Studies on remote work indicate that this work pattern can indeed affect work dynamics, psychological well-being, and employees' social relationships, so its implementation needs to be balanced with attention to these aspects so that the benefits are truly felt (Darmawan, 2023). However, flexibility policies alone are not enough if they are not accompanied by a change in organizational culture that supports their utilization. The role of technology in human resource development also serves as a determinant of the sustainability of such

policies, because digital innovation applied appropriately can strengthen consistency between written policies and practices in the field (Mardikaningsih & Wardoyo, 2024). Companies that truly support work-life balance demonstrate consistency between written policies and daily practices, including in performance appraisal systems that do not penalize employees for exercising their right to flexibility.

Support from direct supervisors proves to be the strongest predictor of perceived work-life balance among IT workers. Managers who understand dual-role challenges and are willing to adjust work expectations to employees' personal conditions create a psychologically safe environment. A digitally oriented leadership style is known to play an important role in driving operational efficiency and team collaboration, so superiors' sensitivity to employees' personal conditions can actually be built through this kind of leadership approach (Darmawan & Gardi, 2024). When workers feel that their supervisors care about their overall well-being, not just their work output, stress levels decrease significantly (Kutty et al., 2024). This support can manifest in simple forms such as not sending emails outside working hours, granting leniency during family emergencies, or actively inquiring about employee needs. Authentic leadership has been proven to shape a positive work climate and encourage organizational citizenship behavior, a condition relevant to IT workers' need for supervisors who are truly present emotionally (Mardikaningsih et al., 2022). Conversely, managers who ignore employees' personal lives and focus solely on deadlines create destructive pressure. Managers' insensitivity to workers' family situations is often the main reason for employees' decisions to leave the organization, regardless of the compensation offered.

Support from coworkers is another frequently underestimated driving factor. A solid and mutually supportive team allows for the sharing of workloads when a team member experiences family pressure. In such an environment, workers do not feel guilty when they have to leave the office early or take sudden leave, because they know that their coworkers will cover their work. The dynamics of a solid digital teamwork do not form by themselves, but require certain development strategies so that team members truly support one another, including in situations of personal pressure (Mardikaningsih et al., 2020). Conversely, an individualistic and

competitive work culture makes workers reluctant to show vulnerability or ask for help, for fear of being perceived as incompetent (Ueda & Kurosawa, 2012). Solidarity among IT workers with similar experiences also creates a space to share strategies and gain emotional validation. Informal discussion groups or internal communities within companies can be effective forums to build this support network, reducing the isolation often experienced by workers struggling with dual-role demands.

The most influential individual factor is the ability to manage time and priorities. IT workers who are skilled in managing schedules, setting boundaries, and sorting important tasks from less important ones tend to experience lower role conflict. They are able to allocate time efficiently for work and family without feeling overwhelmed. Productivity measurement in the digital era actually needs to take into account elements of human creativity and innovation, not merely the working hours spent, so the ability to manage time efficiently is more valuable than simply working longer (Darmawan, 2023). This skill does not emerge naturally, but is developed through practice and experience, and often requires high self-discipline (Urs & Schmidt, 2018). Self-efficacy has also been proven to be an important predictor of employees' ability to adapt to technological changes in the workplace, so strong self-belief further supports workers' success in managing time and priorities (Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2022). Many IT workers report that they have to learn time management skills autodidactically, as no formal training is provided by their organization (Lemmetty, 2023). The ability to say "no" to non-urgent requests, whether from supervisors or family members, is a critical skill that distinguishes those who successfully achieve balance from those who remain constantly burdened.

Physical and mental health also act as fundamental driving factors. IT workers who maintain adequate sleep patterns, exercise regularly, and have healthy diets possess greater capacity to face dual-role pressures. Prime physical condition provides the energy and endurance needed to navigate busy days, while good mental health enables more effective emotion regulation in facing conflict. Ironically, high work demands often lead IT workers to neglect their own health by working overtime, consuming fast food, and reducing sleep time (Zhou, 2019). This behavior creates a negative cycle where declining health leads to reduced productivity, which

subsequently triggers more work pressure and less time for recovery. Employee engagement is known to affect organizational performance, especially amidst conditions full of distractions, so the decline in workers' health conditions ultimately is not just an individual issue but also impacts overall organizational performance (Putra & Arifin, 2025). Thus, investment in health is an essential prerequisite for the achievement of sustainable work-life balance.

The inhibiting factors of work-life balance are quite diverse and interrelated. A work culture that values physical presence and long working hours is the most difficult structural barrier to overcome. In many technology companies, especially those still led by founders or first-generation management, the belief persists that success can only be achieved through extreme sacrifices of time and energy. The narrative about company founders sleeping in the office or working 80 hours a week becomes a myth that both inspires and pressures. For married IT workers, this cultural expectation places them in a difficult position: if they follow the culture, their family relationships will suffer; if they refuse, they risk losing career opportunities or even their jobs (Nissen & Termer, 2019). The pressure to conform to this dominant culture often forces workers to hide their family responsibilities, creating a dangerous internal tension.

The lack of transparency and consistency in organizational policies is also a significant barrier. Many companies have well-written work-life balance policies in official documents, but their implementation varies widely across departments or managers. This inconsistency creates perceived unfairness among workers, where some employees receive leeway while others do not, without clear justification (Casper et al., 2024). Consequently, workers who need flexibility feel that they must negotiate individually with their managers, the outcome of which relies heavily on personal relationships rather than fair policies. This negotiation process itself is an additional source of stress, because workers must constantly prove that they deserve leniency, while other coworkers might obtain similar facilities without needing to ask.

The organization's inability to provide supporting infrastructure, such as lactation rooms, on-site childcare, or counseling services, also hinders work-life balance. In developing countries, these facilities are often considered unimportant luxuries, even though their impact on employee

productivity and retention is enormous (Amah & Ogah, 2021). Attention to the special needs of specific employee groups, such as senior workers in applying digital technology, shows a similar pattern: organizations willing to invest in their employees' specific needs tend to reap positive impacts on retention and job satisfaction (Darmawan, 2023). IT workers who must spend hours commuting between childcare locations and the office, or who have to express milk in a restroom because there is no lactation room, experience a significant decline in energy and motivation. The principle of sustainability in organizational resource management, as known in resource management in general, asserts that investments appearing burdensome at first often provide much greater long-term benefits (Mardikaningsih & Nuraini, 2022). Investment in this supporting infrastructure, although requiring initial costs, proves to provide high returns through increased job satisfaction and reduced absenteeism and employee turnover.

The most common individual inhibiting factor is perfectionism and the tendency to take on excessive responsibilities. Many IT workers have extremely high performance standards and are reluctant to lower the quality of work even if it means sacrificing family time. They feel that every task must be completed perfectly, and every request from supervisors must be met without delay. This attitude, although appreciated in the short term, creates unsustainable pressure in the long term. Perfectionistic workers often experience difficulty in delegating tasks or asking for help, because they believe that only they can do the work correctly. Consequently, their workload continues to increase while family time diminishes further, creating an increasingly severe spiral of role conflict.

Difficulty in establishing boundaries between work and personal life is an increasingly relevant barrier in the digital era. IT workers often feel that they must always be available because their work can be accessed at any time. The expectation to respond to emails or instant messages outside working hours, even on weekends, eliminates valuable recovery time. Many workers report checking their phones before sleep and immediately upon waking up, creating a never-ending cycle of work. The inability to mentally detach from work is just as damaging as the inability to physically detach, because the mind continuously processes work issues even when spending time with family. To overcome this, some workers attempt to

establish "tech-free zones" at home, but these efforts often fail due to pressure from supervisors or coworkers expecting a quick response.

Economic limitations also function as a significant barrier for many IT workers. Although salaries in the technology sector are relatively high compared to other sectors, the cost of living in major cities that serve as technology industry hubs is also very high (Tambe & Yang, 2024). IT workers with family dependents must allocate a large portion of their income to basic needs such as housing, education, and healthcare, leaving little room for services that can help ease domestic burdens. This financial pressure forces many workers to take on additional projects or work overtime to increase their income, further reducing family time. Ironically, additional work undertaken to improve family well-being actually reduces the quality of family relationships, creating a painful paradox that is difficult to resolve without broader policy support.

The family life stage also acts as a factor influencing the availability of resources to manage dual-role demands. IT workers with young children or elderly parents requiring care face heavier burdens compared to those without dependents. Each life stage brings different challenges, ranging from sleep deprivation due to newborns to worries about adolescent children's education (Ji, 2014). Transitions between life stages are often the most difficult periods, as workers must adjust the management strategies they have previously built. Without adequate support from organizations and extended families, workers at this life stage are at high risk of experiencing prolonged exhaustion and role conflict. Therefore, organizational policies sensitive to workers' life stages are essential to support them across every phase of their family journey.

Work-life balance for married IT workers is determined by the complex interaction between driving and inhibiting factors at various levels. The strongest driving factors include supportive organizational policies, support from supervisors and coworkers, individual time management skills, as well as good physical and mental health. Meanwhile, the biggest barriers stem from a work culture that values time sacrifice, policy inconsistencies, perfectionism, difficulty in setting digital boundaries, and economic limitations. Success in achieving balance requires simultaneous efforts at the individual and organizational levels, with the awareness that these factors reinforce or weaken one another. Effective policies must be designed by

considering the overall system, not just addressing a single factor in isolation, but creating an environment that holistically supports the well-being of married IT workers in all aspects of their lives.

Conclusion

Married IT workers face multi-dimensional and continuous dual-role tensions that require various adaptive strategies to manage them. The strategies developed include physical and temporal time separation, compensation by working more intensively on weekdays, rotating priorities between work and family, and the selective use of technology. The success of these strategies heavily depends on driving factors such as flexible organizational policies, support from supervisors and coworkers, individual time management skills, as well as good physical and mental health. Conversely, inhibiting factors such as a work culture that values time sacrifice, policy inconsistencies, perfectionism, difficulty in setting digital boundaries, and economic limitations significantly reduce workers' ability to achieve balance. This research asserts that work-life balance is not a static state that can be achieved once and for all, but rather a dynamic process that requires continuous adjustment according to changing job demands and family life stages. The interaction between individual, relational, and organizational factors shapes the unique experience of each worker, making a one-size-fits-all universal approach inadequate.

The findings of this study have important implications for various stakeholders. For organizations in the technology sector, the results of this study emphasize the need to design work-life policies that are not only written but also implemented consistently and supported by a positive organizational culture. Companies need to invest resources into manager training to be more sensitive to the needs of married workers, as well as provide supporting infrastructure such as remote work options, flexible working hours, and childcare facilities. For IT workers themselves, this study highlights the importance of developing time management and boundary-setting skills, as well as building strong social support networks at work and at home. For public policymakers, the implication of this research is the need for regulations that protect workers' rights to have adequate recovery time, especially in the era of boundless digital

connectivity, as well as incentives for companies that implement labor practices supporting work-life balance.

Thus, organizations are encouraged to regularly conduct employee satisfaction surveys encompassing the dimensions of work-life balance and use the results for continuous policy improvement. Collaboration between academics, industry practitioners, and policymakers needs to be enhanced to create an employment ecosystem that more sustainably supports the well-being of married IT workers.

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