



Phenomenological Study on Employee Experience of Work-Life Imbalance and Burnout at PT NT Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of work-life imbalance and burnout is a real problem in the modern work environment, especially in the manufacturing sector with a dense work system and high production targets. This study aims to deeply understand the experiences of PT NT Indonesia employees in dealing with the imbalance between work and personal life and its impact on their psychological condition. The approach used is qualitative with a phenomenological method, through in-depth interviews with employees who have worked for at least two years. The results of the study show that work-life imbalance is experienced due to long working hours, frequent overtime, and high production demands. Employees feel like they're losing time for family and personal lives, and experience repetitive physical and emotional burnout. Burnout appears in the form of extreme fatigue, loss of work morale, and the desire to resign. However, employees still try to survive with simple strategies such as taking a break on the weekends, enjoying entertainment, or enjoying time with family. These findings show that burnout is not only an individual problem, but also related to the company's work structure and policies. Therefore, attention and managerial policies that are more in favor of employee welfare are needed to create a healthy balance between work and personal life.

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1. Introduction

In a highly competitive manufacturing sector, organizations must increase productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness in order to thrive in the midst of fierce market competition. A common tactic used is to increase work intensity, either by increasing the workload or by applying overtime to meet production targets. PT NT Indonesia, an automotive component manufacturer located in Cikarang, West Java, is also facing similar pressure. The need to achieve production targets requires most of the workforce to undergo a dense shift work system with erratic working hours. This situation encourages an imbalance between work and personal life demands (work-life imbalance), which in many cases leads to the phenomenon of burnout.

The issue of burnout is not new in the industrial sector, but it is now an increasingly significant phenomenon. These problems are getting more and more serious attention. Burnout

not only affects the psychological condition and mental well-being of employees, but also negatively impacts work performance and production quality. Adi, et al. (2021) refer to burnout as a complex psychological condition characterized by emotional exhaustion, feelings of isolation from work (depersonalization), and decreased self-achievement. These three dimensions are reflected in the Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS), a widely used measurement tool to systematically assess burnout levels in the workplace.

The theory of burnout is further clarified through the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model approach, which states that burnout occurs when the workload (job demands) significantly exceeds the available job resources both individually and in the work environment. Factors such as high workload, lack of control over tasks, lack of social support, and an uncondusive work environment are the main triggers for burnout. In the context of PT NT Indonesia, this challenge is exacerbated by production pressures, work shift patterns, and prolonged overtime practices that erode employees' ability to adapt to the ever-increasing workload.

On the other hand, the theory of work-life balance raised by Wardani and Firmansyah (2021) plays an important role in identifying the root causes of burnout, especially in industrial worker groups. They argue that work-life balance is an ideal state when individuals can harmoniously balance the demands of work and personal life. This imbalance between these two aspects often triggers chronic stress and a decrease in quality of life, which ultimately accelerates the onset of burnout. In their study, it was stated that long working hours, inadequate rest time, and disruption to biological rhythms were the main factors of conflict between work roles and personal life.

Both theoretical frameworks are relevant to the initial findings in this study. Many workers at PT NT Indonesia reported limited time for personal life due to increased workload and overtime schedules during peak production periods. This is in line with the findings of Hartini et al. (2024), who stated that shift systems and high work pressure are the main factors causing physical and mental fatigue among industrial workers. Work-life imbalances usually arise when individuals have difficulty balancing work responsibilities with social, family, and personal life roles. Some of the main causes include long working hours, lack of time flexibility, high frequency of overtime, and lack of support from the company in maintaining this balance. A rotating work pattern that disrupts biological rhythms also exacerbates this condition (Nelson et al., 2023).

This imbalance can be recognized from three main indicators: time constraints, dominance of work roles over personal roles, and dissatisfaction with the role being held. When one aspect is disrupted, the risk of psychological disorders such as stress increases, and in the long run can trigger burnout. Burnout itself is a condition of total fatigue that includes physical, emotional, and mental aspects due to prolonged accumulation of work pressure. Pujiyanto (2021) found that burnout has an impact on declining performance, increased attendance, and low job satisfaction levels. Burnout also brings physiological consequences, such as sleep disturbances, chronic headaches, and constant fatigue. Galis and Puspitadewi (2023) showed a significant negative correlation between work-life balance and the risk of burnout, the worse the balance, the greater the risk of fatigue.

This phenomenon is real at PT NT Indonesia. Preliminary observations and interviews show that employees have serious difficulties in balancing professional and family life obligations. They express prolonged feelings of fatigue, loss of time for themselves, and mental stress due to strict work systems and high production targets. This confirms that the problems of work-life imbalance and burnout can no longer be ignored, given their significant impact on the well-being and productivity of the workforce.

Based on the above explanation, this study is directed to answer two main questions: What are the factors that cause work-life imbalance among employees of PT NT Indonesia? and What

is their subjective experience in dealing with work-life imbalance and burnout? The purpose of this study is to deeply understand the experiences of PT NT Indonesia employees in dealing with the imbalance between work and personal life and its impact on their psychological condition. The findings of this study are expected to be the basis for the formulation of work policies that are more oriented towards employee welfare.

2. Research Methods

This study was conducted at PT NT Indonesia, an automotive component manufacturer located in Cikarang, West Java. The study focused on employees who have had at least two years of work experience and have encountered issues related to work-life balance or fatigue. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, which aims to ensure that informants are able to provide rich and informative insights, a strategy emphasized in qualitative research to achieve data saturation (Purwanto, 2022). The main technique used was semi-structured in-depth interviews, which allowed for a flexible and open-ended approach to uncover deeper insights from the participants. Furthermore, the researcher conducted observations and collected internal documentation to improve the triangulation of the method, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings (Purwanto, 2022).

Data analysis adheres to a structured model as outlined by Lester and Cho (2020), which involves three primary stages:

1. **Data organization** begins with gathering and preparing the data, ensuring that it is suitable for analysis by categorizing and labeling information relevant to the research questions.
2. **Data coding** is the process of sorting through the data, labeling chunks of text, and identifying categories or themes that are significant for understanding the research context.
3. **Drawing conclusions** involves interpreting the data patterns and themes to build insights that directly address the research problems, which are continually refined as new patterns emerge throughout the analysis process (Lester & Cho, 2020).

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this study uses a triangulation method, by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documentation.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 General Portrait of Work and Employee Experience

The two participants, AA and TS, are employees of PT NT Indonesia, each has a working period of more than 2 years, and shows first-hand experience with a very high workload. AA describes its responsibilities in the visual section, which is responsible for ensuring the quality of the product. "His work is to ensure product quality, be able to find NG products and distribute FG products," he said. In contrast, TS is involved in the LA retention process segment, shouldering responsibilities related to the maintenance of component dimensions and quality. The protracted duration of work is a condition faced by both individuals. TS confirmed that he had been employed for 8.7 years, while AA reported a service period of 2.8 years. The duration shows that both have enough experience to provide a credible picture of operational practices and dynamics within the organization.

3.2 Work-Life Imbalances: Reality on the Ground

Balancing personal life and work commitments seems to be the main challenge faced by informants. AA commented, "I work in the morning and can't go anywhere to take care of other

things, let alone high work planning. Leave at 7 am, return home at 8 pm every day." This shows that despite functioning in a non-shift framework, work-related pressures remain large and consume almost the entire daily productive hours. TS also faces common challenges, albeit in a more complicated context, as she also fulfills the role of a housewife. She stated: "It's difficult to manage time with family because every day I'm told to work 12-hour overtime and on weekends as well. So, I don't pay much attention to my family because my work hours take up a lot of my time." This imbalance is further intensified by the dual responsibilities she must manage after returning home from work, such as childcare and housework. The findings of Schieman, Badawy, and Hill (2020) support this, as they emphasize that when employees have limited control over their work schedule, it can lead to significant health consequences and work-family conflicts, which in turn affect both personal well-being and family dynamics.

FORM ABSENSI DAN PERINTAH KERJA MINGGUAN

Departemen : QA		No. Dokumen : FR-HRD-011	APPROVAL PLANNING			
Bagian : VISUAL		Tanggal Dibuat : 27 Feb 2025	HR/ GA	APPROVED	Asst. Mgr./ Mgr.	Prepared by
Shift : Shift 2		Tanggal Revisi				
Periode : 09-juni-2025 ~ 15-juni-2025		Sign PIC Doc.				

No	Emp Code	Nama Karyawan	Aktifitas/ Proses	Senin 09-Jun		Selasa 10-Jun		Rabu 11-Jun		Kamis 12-Jun		Jumat 13-Jun		Sabtu 14-Jun		Minggu 15-Jun	
				Plan	Aktual	Plan	Aktual	Plan	Aktual	Plan	Aktual	Plan	Aktual	Plan	Aktual	Plan	Aktual
1	16093	Opi SRI Sopiah	Leader (Cuti Melahirkan)														
2	16107	Kholifatul Jannah	LK	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2	07.30-19.50 2	07.30-19.50 10.5	07.30-19.50 10.5	20.00-07.30	10		
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5	15065	Reysita Mubarroch	VI P4 Head (DT)	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2	07.30-19.50 2	07.30-19.50 10.5	07.30-19.50 10.5	20.00-07.30	10		
6	17164	Ida Saputri	VI P4 Head (DT)	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2	07.30-19.50 2	07.30-19.50 10.5	07.30-19.50 10.5	20.00-07.30	10		
7	25483	Jannah M	VI P4 Head (DT)	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2	07.30-19.50 2	07.30-19.50 10.5	07.30-19.50 10.5	20.00-07.30	10		
8	16110	Rika Natasya	VI P4 Head (DT)	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2	07.30-19.50 2	07.30-19.50 10.5	07.30-19.50 10.5	20.00-07.30	10		
9	17159	Dessy Retno Kurniawati	VI P4 Head (PP)	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2.5	07.30-19.50 2	07.30-19.50 2	07.30-19.50 10.5	07.30-19.50 10.5				
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JENIS ABSENSI													FINAL APPROVAL			
ALFA	STD	UN	UNK	SKD	CT	CTK	TL	PC	RG	BM	MR	H	WFH	DSP	HR/ GA	Asst. Mgr./ Mgr.
Mangkir/ Sakit Tanpa Surat	Sakit Dengan Surat	Ijin Dengan Ijin Keluar	Ijin Keluar	Sakit Dengan Surat Keterangan	Cuti Tahunan	Ijin Dengan Surat Cuti Khusus	Terlambat	Pulang Cepat	Rengis	Belum Masuk	Maternity/ Melahirkan	Hadir	Work From Home	Dispensasi		

Figure 1. Weekly Attendance and Work Order Forms
Source: PT NT Indonesia Internal Documents

3.3 Main Causes of Imbalance

Both informants agreed that overtime was a significant factor that hindered their life balance. AA explained that "the working hours are indeed 8 hours but the actual overtime is 12 hours in the factory, sometimes on weekends, the production target is high." Meanwhile, TS emphasized that "if productivity increases, employees must be ready to work overtime on a daily or on weekends." This illustrates that even though companies officially enforce an 8-hour workday, actual implementation often exceeds reasonable time thresholds due to increased production targets. As a result, employees lose the opportunity for rest and the maintenance of a healthy social existence.

3.4 The Physical and Emotional Impact of Workload

The increasing demands of work have a great influence on the physical and psychological well-being of employees. AA admits that he often experiences a state of exhaustion. "Often if

there is a lot of overtime," he said. In fact, when faced with difficult working conditions, he stated, "I want to cry. It's sad, work is not focused." In this context, TS stated, "It's sad because it really interferes with my work, I can lose focus when I'm in a one-cycle process and I'm afraid to stream NG products." These observations show that fatigue not only damages productivity but also increases the likelihood of operational errors that can affect product quality.

3.5 Personal Strategies to Cope with Stress and Fatigue

Despite the considerable stress they experience, informants attempt to manage their stress independently. AA said that during the weekend, he tries to "get a full night's sleep, buy good food, sometimes take a vacation even if he doesn't work on weekends." Engaging in activities such as watching YouTube after work serves as a form of respite for AA from daily fatigue. Instead, TS prefers to spend time with his family. "By spending time with family, it was a cure for my stress and fatigue," she said. This implies that family connections serve as a significant work-related stress reduction for the majority of employees.

3.6 Psychological Impact: Loss of Enthusiasm and Motivation

Both informants have experienced instances where they have experienced a drop in their work enthusiasm as a direct consequence of excessive workload. He said: "When you're feeling tired, it's hard to give up, but it's hard to keep up with the times." It exemplifies the difficulties employees face between the need for financial stability and the excessive burden of job responsibilities. TS found himself in a comparable predicament when he accidentally let NG's products pass the next process. "There I felt like a failure and lost enthusiasm for work," he said. Mistakes in the workplace not only incite feelings of guilt but also have a detrimental impact on employee self-esteem and motivation.

3.7 Company Employee Expectations

Both informants hold high hopes for the improvement of the company's work system. AA explicitly articulates, "Please fix the work system again and also think about employees having a life outside of work." Meanwhile, TS anticipates that the company "continues to pay attention to its employees so that they can work according to their abilities." This perspective underscores the demand for a more humane and just labor policy, which not only emphasizes the output of production but also recognizes the well-being of the individuals who contribute to that production process.

3.8 Discussion of Findings with Literature

Christina Maslach is widely known as a pioneer in the development of the concept of burnout, and her thoughts are still a major reference in various scientific discussions about psychological distress in the world of work. In the book *Burnout Management: Concepts and Implementation* by Ali, et al. (2021) it is explained that Maslach views burnout as a syndrome that arises from continuous work pressure, especially in jobs that involve intense social interaction (p. 22). Maslach identifies burnout through three key elements: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a decreased sense of personal accomplishment. Emotional burnout describes a situation in which a person feels physically and emotionally drained due to the high and repetitive demands of work. Individuals in this condition are usually no longer able to provide energy and empathy in work interactions. In this study, the dimension became apparent in the experiences of informants such as TS and AA who had to work for 12 hours every day under high production pressure. One of them stated, "I want to cry," as an illustration of how heavy the emotional burden was felt (p. 25).

The second dimension, depersonalization, occurs when an individual begins to develop an apathy or cynical attitude towards his or her work and those around him. People who experience this tend to maintain emotional distance and think of their work as just a meaningless routine. In the book it is explained that individuals at this stage also begin to view colleagues negatively (p. 26). This symptom is in line with the statement of the informant who admitted to losing his morale after experiencing a mistake in the production process, indicating a shift in attitude towards work.

Meanwhile, a decrease in a sense of personal achievement reflects a person's decreased self-confidence in completing tasks. He feels incompetent and less motivated, which is often the result of an inability to balance workload with self-capacity. Ali, et al. (2021) said that this condition often appears in work situations that do not provide opportunities for reflection or psychological recovery (p. 27). This feeling is illustrated through AA's informant who expressed his desire to resign due to too heavy a workload, but still persisted due to economic needs.

Maslach emphasized that burnout is not just a personal problem, but a reflection of a dysfunctional work system. Organizations that do not provide emotional support, fail to offer recovery time, and demand excessive results tend to create work environments that trigger collective burnout (Ghahramani, Lankarani, & Yousefi, 2021). Similarly, Ayachit and Chitta (2022) highlight that in high-demand environments, such as healthcare and hospitality, the lack of work-life balance and continuous stress contribute to burnout among employees. In research conducted at PT NT Indonesia, continuous overtime and the lack of time for personal life are evidence that the work system plays a significant role in creating psychological pressure and burnout, as workers struggle to meet both work and personal demands (Ghahramani, Lankarani, & Yousefi, 2021; Ayachit & Chitta, 2022).

In relation to gender issues, Rahmayati (2021) in her article in *Juripol: Journal of the Ganesha Polytechnic Institution Medan* discusses work-life balance as a structural challenge that is very felt by working women. In the study conducted by Rahmayati (2021), the issue of work-life balance is presented as a multidimensional challenge, especially for women working in the industrial and service sectors. The study underlines that working women often have to meet two demands simultaneously: professional work and the domestic roles that are socio-culturally imposed on them. This combination often triggers difficulties in maintaining harmony between the two roles (Rahmayati, 2021, p. 130).

Theoretically, Rahmayati emphasizes that the concept of work-life balance does not solely focus on the aspect of time management, but more broadly encompasses the sense of control, inner satisfaction, and the quality of individual involvement in the two main domains of his life: work and family. When one domain is excessively dominant, there will be conflicts between work and personal life (work-life conflict) which can cause psychological stress, emotional exhaustion, and degradation in social relationships (Rahmayati, 2021, p. 132). In the narration of the TS informant who said that he had difficulty in spending time with the children because of the burden of overtime that lasted every day until weekends. This reflects a form of time-based conflict, where long working hours directly hinder the role of the family (Rahmayati, 2021, p. 133). Another informant, AA, also experienced a similar thing, namely that his personal time was almost completely taken up by the workload, which showed a frustrating condition in achieving a life balance.

In addition, the study highlights that women are generally more vulnerable to the psychological effects of this imbalance, as cultural norms still demand that they be optimal in carrying out parenting and household management roles. The double burden that arises not only interferes with the physical aspect, but also has a serious impact on emotions and work morale (Rahmayati, 2021, p. 135). The reflection of this condition is evident in the narrative of

informants who feel that they have lost focus and work performance due to pressure coming from two realms at once.

Rahmayati also proposed conceptual solutions in the form of the need for support from work institutions, such as flexible working hours policies, reducing the intensity of overtime, and recognizing the emotional and social needs of female employees. In this study, the aspirations of informants who expect more attention from companies to workers' personal lives show that there is alignment with a more inclusive and gender-sensitive approach to work management (Rahmayati, 2021, p. 138).

4. Conclusion

This study aims to explore in depth the experience of PT NT Indonesia employees in dealing with work-life imbalance, as well as how it impacts their psychological condition, especially in the form of chronic work fatigue or burnout. With a phenomenological approach, this study explores the meaning that employees give to these experiences as well as the strategies they use to deal with them in their daily lives.

The findings indicate that work-life imbalances are generally caused by excessive workload pressure, working hours that exceed normal limits, and systemically imposed overtime policies, even outside of normal working days. Although the official working hours are set at eight hours, many employees work up to twelve hours per day, and still have to be present at the company at the time that should be used to rest or gather with family. This situation is felt even more difficult by employees who also have domestic responsibilities, such as women who are also housewives.

This imbalance has an impact not only on the physical aspect, but also on the emotional and psychological state. Employees experience burnout, decreased morale, and feelings of not being able to meet expectations both at work and in other social roles. Symptoms such as prolonged sadness, loss of concentration at work, and decreased work performance reflect symptoms of burnout.

Even so, employees still try to maintain balance in various ways, such as spending time with family, enjoying simple entertainment, or taking a short vacation. However, this coping mechanism has only a limited impact if it is not accompanied by structural changes in the work environment that support sustainable life balance.

Overall, the work-life imbalance and burnout experienced by PT NT Indonesia's employees cannot be separated from the company's structure and work culture that has not fully paid attention to the welfare of the workforce. Therefore, a more empathetic managerial approach, a rearrangement of working hours, and respect for employees' personal time are needed. Companies need to realize that the sustainability and quality of the organization are highly dependent on the psychological condition and life balance of its employees.

The researcher presented a number of practical suggestions as a contribution to improving employee welfare and maintaining productivity. It is recommended that the company's management re-evaluate the work system policy, especially in terms of overtime duration and daily workload. Although the achievement of production targets is important, a balance must still be maintained so as not to sacrifice the mental and physical health of employees. It is important for companies to instill empathetic leadership values in the organization's culture. Leaders who are able to respond to fatigue signals and are open to employee aspirations will create healthy and productive working relationships. By implementing these recommendations, PT NT Indonesia is expected to build a more balanced and sustainable workplace. Employee welfare is not only an indicator of the success of HR management, but also the main key to the competitiveness and growth of the organization in the future.

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