INKUBIS: Jurnal Ekonomi dan Bisnis
Volume 8, Issue 2, 602-616
e_ISSN: 2775-3913
https://inkubis.polteksci.ac.id/index.php/ink/index
DOI: doi.org/10.59261/inkubis.v8i2.134

Improving Work-Life Balance via Tactical Approaches: Insights from the Automotive Industry

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Article Info :

Article history:
Received: April 12, 2026
Revised: May 19, 2026
Accepted: May 25, 2026

Keywords:
automotive industry; employee retention; importance-performance analysis; tactical decisions; work-life balance

Abstract

Background: *Work-life balance* (*WLB*) is increasingly recognized as a critical factor in employee well-being and organizational performance, particularly in high-demand industries such as the automotive sector, where operational pressures often conflict with employees' personal needs.
Objective: This study aims to evaluate how employees in the automotive industry perceive *work-life balance* (*WLB*) and to determine the critical aspects requiring improvement to ensure that organizational policies more effectively meet workforce needs.
Methods: This study used a quantitative survey of 128 employees in the automotive sector to assess the perceived importance and actual performance of various *WLB* factors. The data were analyzed using *Importance–Performance Analysis* (*IPA*) to identify priority areas and correlations among *WLB* components.
Results: The findings revealed that organizational performance (M = 3.74) exceeded the importance attributed to *WLB*dimensions (M = 3.63), indicating that overall organizational delivery met employee expectations. *IPA* revealed two critical gaps in Quadrant I (high importance/low performance) requiring immediate intervention, while six attributes in Quadrant II represented key organizational strengths. Correlation analysis identified eleven statistically significant tactical strategies linking organizational strengths to priority improvement areas.
Conclusion: This study offers a novel integration of *IPA* and correlational analysis to generate eleven evidence-based tactical decisions for *WLB* enhancement in the automotive sector, thereby advancing both theoretical understanding and practical human resource management.

To cite this article: Serpian, S., Utami, D. G., & Syamsuddin. (2026). Improving Work-Life Balance via Tactical Approaches: Insights from the Automotive Industry. *INKUBIS: Jurnal Ekonomi dan Bisnis*, 8(2), 602–616. https://doi.org/10.59261/inkubis.vx8i2.134

INTRODUCTION

It is essential for companies to maintain high levels of performance while ensuring long-term success by keeping employees motivated and productive. Achieving this requires fostering employee motivation. At the same time, employees must balance the demands of their professional responsibilities with their personal lives—identities that cannot be solely defined by workplace activities (de Oliveira et al., 2023; Garg et al., 2019; Lin, 2024). In response, many organizations have implemented work-life balance (WLB) programs to promote employee well-being, reduce stress, and remain competitive by attracting and retaining top talent. These initiatives are a direct response to the growing need for holistic employee support.

Due to rapid transformations in the global automotive industry, employee expectations have become increasingly demanding (Sonko, 2024). Dadashi (2021) and Zheng (2024) note that pressure to meet increasingly high performance standards often results in heavier workloads, elevated stress levels, and reduced leisure time, all of which negatively affect individual well-being

(La Nafie et al., 2016). Without effective WLB, employees face a higher risk of burnout, reduced productivity, and even resignation. Moreover, unmanaged stress stemming from poor WLB can lead to internal conflict within organizations, particularly in hierarchical structures in which both managers and employees may struggle to fulfill their respective roles. Mpody (2021) and Serpian (2024) highlight that such environments ultimately impede organizational productivity. Therefore, cultivating a supportive work culture that fosters collaboration and helps employees manage stress is crucial for sustaining workforce effectiveness.

In uncertain environments, challenges related to decision-making, risk-taking, innovation, and networking can strain employee well-being (Pradana et al., 2023). The automotive industry, which relies heavily on highly skilled labor, has increasingly recognized the strategic importance of maintaining healthy WLB practices. Although numerous studies have emphasized the benefits of WLB, Bhende (2020) and Nabawanuka (2022) there remains a shortage of actionable solutions for practical implementation. Supporting employees in achieving balance between personal and professional commitments not only enhances individual well-being but also strengthens organizational resilience. A perceived imbalance, particularly when employees feel overworked or disengaged, significantly increases the likelihood of turnover, leading to higher recruitment and training costs.

Maintaining high performance standards without compromising employee well-being presents a major challenge for automotive firms striving to remain competitive. Excessive responsibilities often disrupt work-life balance, causing stress and conflict that compel employees to prioritize their careers over personal or family commitments (Bellmann & Hübler, 2021; Matli, 2020). Evidence shows that promoting WLB enhances job satisfaction, reduces turnover, and strengthens employee loyalty—factors that are critical for sustaining organizational growth and innovation (Bagis & Adawiyah, 2022; Yee et al., 2024). Favorable WLB practices also safeguard physical and mental health (Lee & Lee, 2021; Serpian et al., 2023; Vonderlin et al., 2021). Employees who are less stressed and more satisfied positively influence their families and communities, thereby improving social well-being and enhancing organizational attractiveness and performance.

Survey data further emphasize the importance of WLB in employee retention and satisfaction. A 2022 study conducted in Southeast Asia revealed that 73% of Indonesian workers were dissatisfied with their jobs, as reported in a JobStreet.com survey involving 17,623 participants. Key concerns included job-education mismatch, limited professional development opportunities, poor supervisory practices, and, most notably, inadequate WLB. WLB was cited as the primary reason for leaving jobs by 85% of respondents, and 62% reported sleep disturbances caused by work-related stress. A follow-up JobStreet survey in 2023 found that 43% of Indonesian respondents considered WLB their top priority when choosing an employer. These findings align with academic evidence that poor WLB significantly reduces job satisfaction and increases voluntary turnover intentions among Indonesian employees (Prabowo et al., 2023; Santoso & Fitriani, 2022).

Despite the growing body of WLB literature, a critical research gap persists: most studies identify WLB challenges but fail to provide operationally specific, data-driven tactical interventions tailored to manufacturing contexts (Adisa et al., 2022; Shirmohammadi et al., 2022). The present study addresses this gap by integrating Importance–Performance Analysis (IPA) with correlational analysis to generate actionable tactical decisions—an approach not previously applied in the automotive sector. This dual-method framework constitutes the primary novelty of the research, offering a transferable model for human resource (HR) practitioners seeking evidence-based WLB improvements.

This study aims to explore the implementation of WLB strategies in the automotive sector by offering effective tactical recommendations to improve employee well-being, enhance engagement, and support long-term organizational success. Addressing WLB enables businesses in this industry to reduce turnover, boost morale, and create a work environment that reflects the evolving demands of modern life and the dynamic nature of the automotive sector.

METHODS

Sampling

This study explored perceptions of work-life balance (WLB) within the automotive sector, focusing on a sample of 128 employees comprising 26 contract workers and 102 permanent staff members. The objective was to examine differences in WLB perceptions across employment categories. Previous research suggested that larger sample sizes enhanced the robustness of findings and that a sample size of at least 100 was sufficient for generating meaningful insights (Kennedy, 2022; Kyriazos, 2018; Price et al., 2014). Initially, 140 responses were collected; however, 12 were excluded because of inconsistencies or implausible information—for example, a 23-year-old respondent reporting 20 years of professional experience.

This careful screening process ensured the reliability and validity of the data, enabling the study to provide statistically sound and meaningful conclusions regarding WLB in the automotive industry. Participants were selected using a purposive random sampling technique, whereby all permanent and contract employees in operational roles within an automotive firm in South Sulawesi, Indonesia, were included in the sampling frame. Random selection was then applied within this defined population to ensure representativeness while maintaining feasibility. This approach was chosen because it allowed the systematic inclusion of employees across employment categories (permanent versus contract), ensuring that both groups were adequately represented for comparative analysis (Etikan et al., 2016).

Data Collection

The data for this study were collected through a cross-sectional survey administered via Google Forms and distributed electronically. The survey link was sent to randomly selected personnel working in operational roles within the automotive sector in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The digital dissemination of the questionnaire enabled the researchers to efficiently reach and engage the target population.

Instrument

This study employed questionnaire instruments developed by Vijayakumar (2020) Agha (2021), and Berglund (2021), which had been extensively validated and widely used in previous research to assess both relevance and performance dimensions. These instruments provided a robust and comprehensive framework for evaluating key factors, thereby ensuring the reliability and validity of the collected data.

Table 1. WLB Statement Items

No	Statement
	Work Interference with Personal Life **(WILP)**
1	After work, I need sufficient rest before engaging in desired personal activities.
2	I have the ability to allocate time for personal life despite having a lot of work at the office.
3	I can manage personal activities even when facing work demands.
4	I find balancing work demands and personal life to be a challenge for me.
5	I make the best use of my working hours to ensure I still have valuable free time.
6	I take the initiative to manage my time well to balance work and personal life.
7	I have an adequate amount of time to carry out personal life activities.
	Personal Life Interference with Work **(PLIW)**
8	I can balance my energy between work and personal life.
9	I set aside personal needs to effectively complete work tasks at the office.
10	I maintain focus while working without involving personal matters.
11	I complete work within the available time so that I can attend to my personal life.
	Work Personal Life Enhancement **(WPLE)**
12	My personal life motivates me to perform my job.
13	My work gives me enthusiasm to engage in personal activities.
14	I feel my mood at work improves because things in my personal life are going

	well.
15	My mood in personal life improves because my work is going well.

Source: Fisher (2009), Vijayakumar (2020), Agha (2021), and Berglund (2021)

The results of the validity test conducted using SPSS version 29 indicated that all items in the instrument were valid, as each calculated r value exceeded the critical r value of 0.297. Furthermore, the reliability analysis confirmed the consistency of the instrument, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.884 for the work-life balance variable (X). Since a Cronbach's alpha value above 0.60 is generally accepted, this result demonstrated that the instrument was highly reliable. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), which has been widely adopted in WLB research to capture subjective employee perceptions (Fisher et al., 2009). The detailed validity test results for each item are presented in Table 1a below.

Analytical technique

This study adopted a multi-method approach by combining Importance–Performance Analysis (IPA) with correlational analysis. Following the application of IPA, correlation analysis was conducted to enrich the interpretation of the results. Specifically, elements categorized in Quadrant II were analyzed for potential correlations with those in Quadrant I, thereby providing deeper insights to support the formulation of effective tactical decisions.

Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA)

IPA is a widely used, cost-effective decision-making tool that is both simple and accessible because it does not require complex statistical computations. Its applicability spans multiple industries, including hospitality, education, and human resource management (Albayrak, 2015; Glaveli et al., 2024). The methodology is based on two core assumptions: first, that importance and performance are independent variables; and second, that a linear and symmetrical relationship exists between attribute performance and overall satisfaction or effectiveness (Feng et al., 2014).

Within Human Resource Management (HRM), IPA is utilized to evaluate HR practices from employees' perspectives, allowing organizations to identify critical skill gaps and assess their impact on organizational performance (Ravi & Sumathi, 2023). This framework enables companies to identify essential HR attributes that affect employee satisfaction and to measure the effectiveness of HR strategies, thereby facilitating data-driven decisions that enhance both employee well-being and organizational outcomes (Gao & Zhang, 2022; Glaveli et al., 2024).

For optimal results, HRM strategies must be aligned with both organizational goals and employee expectations (Townsend et al., 2012). When HR policies are ambiguous or misaligned, they may create a disconnect between management and employees, thereby reducing performance outcomes. IPA helps address these misalignments by identifying gaps between employee expectations and organizational delivery, offering actionable insights for HR improvements (Glaveli et al., 2024).

The IPA framework presents findings using a two-dimensional matrix divided into four quadrants: "Keep Up the Good Work," "Concentrate Here," "Low Priority," and "Possible Overkill (Deng & Pierskalla, 2018; Hassan et al., 2020; Silalahi, 2020). These quadrants guide organizations in prioritizing areas requiring improvement, maintaining high-performing elements, and optimizing resource allocation.

- The "Keep up the good work" quadrant contains attributes with high importance and high performance, indicating that current practices should be sustained.
- The "Concentrate here" quadrant identifies critical but underperforming factors that require immediate attention.
- The "Low priority" quadrant consists of attributes with low importance and low performance, suggesting minimal resource allocation.
- The "Possible overkill" quadrant represents attributes with low importance but high performance, indicating potential areas for resource reallocation.

This study analyzed IPA from the standpoint of a company offering work-life balance (WLB) services to its employees. The findings supported the formulation of targeted tactical

strategies that align with the key areas identified through IPA. While IPA lacked a universal mathematical formula, its strength lay in the graphical plotting of data onto a two-dimensional matrix, which supported visual assessment and informed decision-making. The method typically involved two main phases:

1. **Importance Score**: The importance score is calculated based on respondents' assessments or perceptions of the importance of each attribute or factor being analyzed. This can be calculated using the average or aggregate score of the relevant items.

$$Importance\_Score = \frac{\sum X_i}{n} \quad (1)$$

   Where:
   - *Xi* is the importance score for each attribute.
   - *n* is the number of respondents or items being assessed.
2. **Performance Score**: The performance score is calculated based on respondents' assessments or perceptions of the company's or organization's performance on the same attributes.

$$Performance\_Score = \frac{\sum Y_i}{n} \quad (2)$$

   Where:
   - *Yi* is the performance score for each attribute.
   - *n* is the number of respondents or items being assessed.

Correlational analysis was frequently used in strategic management research to examine the relationships between constructs and organizational outcomes. Numerous studies employed this approach to determine how strategic factors such as alignment, direction, and planning affected performance measures in diverse organizational contexts. Strategic management consistently improved employee motivation, organizational performance, and financial sustainability.

Several studies demonstrated how correlational analysis could reveal these relationships. Lees (2021) found a positive correlation between manager credibility, strategic alignment, and employee motivation using Spearman's correlation. Ngaruiya (2023) discovered a moderate positive association between strategic direction and pharmaceutical organizational performance, demonstrating that strategic direction influenced performance.

Previous studies also showed a positive relationship between strategic planning and implementation and organizational performance. For example, Mwangi (2020) and Okwemba (2021) provided evidence supporting this relationship. The findings of their studies highlighted that improvements in strategic management practices directly correlated with enhanced organizational outcomes. Additional evidence was provided by a study conducted by Kuhe (2021) which showed that strategic direction and financial sustainability were significantly correlated in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and commercial banks, respectively.

Non-parametric Spearman's Correlation equations:

$$\rho = 1 - \frac{6\sum d^2}{n(n^2-1)} \quad (3)$$

Where:
- ρ is the Spearman's correlation coefficient.
- *d* is the difference in ranks between the two variables for each data pair.
- *n* is the number of data pairs.

Generating Tactical Decisions. The researcher consulted the IPA results when developing the tactical decisions. The IPA subsequently divided the data into four quadrants, with a primary emphasis on Quadrants 1 and 2. Items in Quadrant 2 that exhibited a correlational relationship with items in Quadrant 1 served as the foundation for the development of tactical decisions. Consequently, the items in Quadrant 2 were essential for improving the efficacy of the items in Quadrant 1. Empirical data compiled and pertinent literature formed the foundation of the resulting tactical recommendations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The insights derived from the Importance–Performance Analysis (IPA)—which assessed the alignment between employee expectations and organizational performance—constituted a key outcome of this study. To further enrich these insights, correlations between specific IPA items were analyzed to determine the strength and nature of their relationships. This correlation analysis informed the development of actionable tactical decisions. The findings from both the IPA and the correlation analysis were integrated to construct a comprehensive tactical decision-making framework. This framework was intended to guide the formulation of implementable strategies aimed at enhancing organizational performance and overall success.

The Result of IPA Analysis

Importance–Performance Analysis (IPA) was employed to assess the performance and significance of various attributes, with the aim of identifying which elements required improvement and which should be maintained. This analysis categorized the attributes into three primary dimensions: Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL), Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW), and Work–Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE). These dimensions were then plotted on a Cartesian coordinate graph to visually represent the factors contributing to employee satisfaction. The mean scores for both the importance and performance of each attribute were calculated based on the survey responses. The results of these calculations are presented in the table below.

Table 2. Average Scores for Importance and Performance

No	Dimensions	Items	Performance X	Importance Y
1	*Work Interference with Personal Life*	Item 1	3.75	3.66
2		Item 2	3.76	3.57
3		Item 3	3.64	3.59
4		Item 4	3.74	3.35
5		Item 5	3.96	3.80
6		Item 6	3.72	3.76
7		Item 7	3.72	3.58
8	*Personal Life Interference with Work*	Item 8	3.61	3.52
9		Item 9	3.46	3.48
10		Item 10	3.73	3.70
11		Item 11	3.85	3.68
12	*Work personal life enhancement*	Item 12	3.76	3.75
13		Item 13	3.65	3.60
14		Item 14	3.84	3.71
15		Item 15	3.84	3.76
Average			**3.74**	**3.63**

The attributes were plotted on a Cartesian diagram using an average performance score of 3.74 and an importance score of 3.63. This visual representation, based on respondents' perceptions, aided in evaluating the extent to which the performance of each item aligned with its perceived importance. The four quadrants of the Cartesian diagram provided distinct insights regarding the performance and relevance of the evaluated attributes.

Quadrant I included attributes with high importance but low performance. This discrepancy highlighted a gap between expectations and actual outcomes, indicating that these attributes should be prioritized for improvement. Although deemed critical by respondents, their underperformance necessitated immediate intervention to enhance satisfaction.

Quadrant II comprised attributes rated highly in both importance and performance. These attributes met or exceeded expectations and should be maintained to preserve satisfaction levels. They also served as benchmarks for improving other areas.

Quadrant III reflected attributes with both low importance and low performance. Respondents did not consider these attributes a priority; thus, allocating fewer resources to them

was justified and more efficient.

Quadrant IV featured attributes with low importance but high performance. This suggested a potential over-allocation of resources to areas not considered highly significant by respondents. Similar to the concerns raised in Quadrant I, a reassessment of resource distribution was considered necessary to ensure strategic alignment.

A more detailed examination of the data presented in Table 4 showed variations in performance and importance across specific attributes. The overall average performance score (3.74) exceeded the average importance score (3.63), suggesting that, in general, performance aligned with or surpassed respondents' expectations. For example, in the Work Interference with Personal Life dimension, Item 1 had a performance score of 3.75, slightly above its importance score of 3.66, indicating that this attribute performed better than expected. Conversely, in the Personal Life Interference with Work dimension, Item 9 scored 3.46 in performance, slightly below its importance score of 3.48, suggesting the need for targeted improvement.

Recommendations for tactical decisions derived from the IPA emphasized enhancing attributes in Quadrant I, where improvement was most urgently needed. Meanwhile, attributes in Quadrant II should be consistently monitored and maintained to sustain high standards. Examining Quadrant IV supported more efficient resource allocation by redirecting efforts from overperforming, less important attributes to those with higher strategic value. Ongoing evaluation and monitoring were considered essential, particularly for attributes that significantly influenced employee satisfaction. The corresponding Cartesian diagram is presented below:

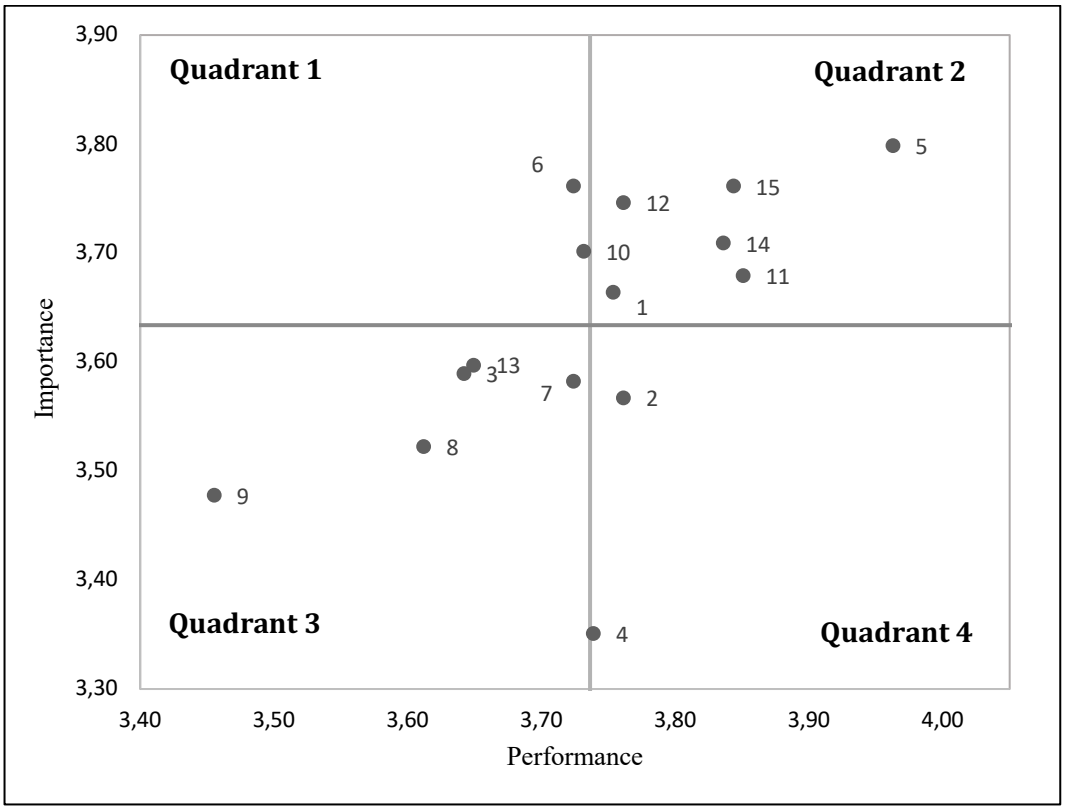

Figure 1. Results of the Cartesian Diagram from IPA

Table 3. Correlation Analysis Result

Spearman's rho		Q1_ITEM6	Q1_ITEM10
Q2_ITEM1	Correlation Coefficient	.259**	.164
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.064
	N	128	128
Q2_ITEM5	Correlation Coefficient	.360**	.325**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001

	N	128	128
Q2_ITEM11	Correlation Coefficient	.381**	.360**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001
	N	128	128
Q2_ITEM12	Correlation Coefficient	.427**	.309**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001
	N	128	128
Q2_ITEM14	Correlation Coefficient	.200*	.175*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.024	.049
	N	128	128
Q2_ITEM15	Correlation Coefficient	.228**	.252**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.004
	N	128	128
Q1_ITEM6	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.204*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.021
	N	128	128
Q1_ITEM10	Correlation Coefficient	.204*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.021	.
	N	128	128

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis revealed the absence of negative relationships among the variables under investigation, as all detected correlations were positive. This finding suggested that increases in one variable were generally accompanied by increases in another. However, the strength of these correlations varied. These positive associations indicated a directional alignment among the variables, reflecting a beneficial pattern of interrelatedness. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the strength of these relationships ranged from weak to moderate, necessitating further exploration to better understand the underlying dynamics.

Using Spearman's rho correlation analysis, variations were observed in both the strength and significance of the correlations among the examined variables. Most variables demonstrated positive associations, with correlation coefficients ranging from mild to moderately strong. A notable correlation was identified between Q2_ITEM12 and Q1_ITEM6, with a coefficient of 0.427, indicating a statistically significant positive relationship at the 1% significance level.

Conversely, a weaker yet still statistically significant positive correlation was identified between Q1_ITEM6 and Q1_ITEM10, with a coefficient of 0.204, remaining significant at the 5% level. Other variable pairs, such as Q2_ITEM5 and Q2_ITEM11, also exhibited moderate positive correlations with Q1_ITEM6 and Q1_ITEM10, with coefficients ranging from 0.325 to 0.381.

However, some relationships were found to be statistically insignificant. For instance, the association between Q2_ITEM1 and Q1_ITEM10 yielded a p-value greater than 0.05, indicating no statistically significant correlation. In summary, although several meaningful relationships were detected, most correlations were within the weak-to-moderate range, suggesting positive associations without evidence of a dominant linear relationship.

IMPORTANCE-PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

IPA MATRIX	Quadrant 1 (Concentrate Here)

		Item6	Item10
Quadrant 2 (KeepUp the Good Work)	Item1	TACTICAL_DECISION_1 Item1 promoting Item6	Not correlated
	Item5	TACTICAL_DECISION_2 Item5 promoting Item6	TACTICAL_DECISION_7 Item5 promoting Item10
	Item11	TACTICAL_DECISION_3 Item11 promoting Item6	TACTICAL_DECISION_8 Item11 promoting Item10
	Item12	TACTICAL_DECISION_4 Item12 promoting Item6	TACTICAL_DECISION_9 Item12 promoting Item10
	Item14	TACTICAL_DECISION_5 Item14 promoting Item6	TACTICAL_DECISION_10 Item14 promoting Item10
	Item15	TACTICAL_DECISION_6 Item15 promoting Item6	TACTICAL_DECISION_11 Item15 promoting Item10

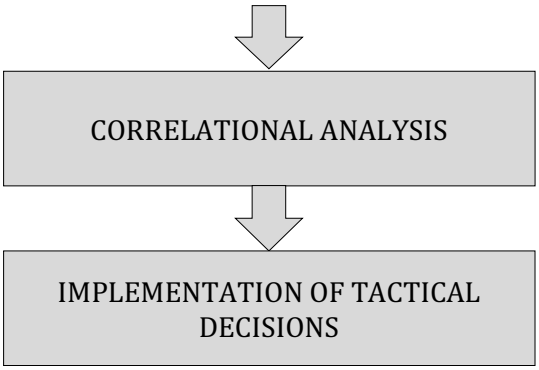

Figure 2. The integration of IPA and Correlational Analysis

Foundation for Tactical Decision Development:

The study's findings were derived from both the Importance–Performance Analysis (IPA) and correlational analysis. The IPA focused on Quadrant II (attributes of high importance and high performance, considered organizational strengths) and Quadrant I (attributes of high importance but low performance, requiring improvement). Quadrant II attributes were utilized to support and enhance those in Quadrant I, and the relationships were structured into a matrix format. Concurrently, a correlational analysis was conducted to examine associations between six items in Quadrant II and two items in Quadrant I. These integrated findings serve as the basis for formulating actionable tactical decisions. A comprehensive summary of the results is illustrated in the figure below.

Tactical Decision Implementation

The implementation of tactical decisions centers on two key items identified in Quadrant I, which demand immediate and focused intervention. Simultaneously, six attributes from Quadrant II, recognized as organizational strengths, serve as supporting elements in developing comprehensive strategies. Irrelevant or statistically insignificant items were excluded from consideration to maintain strategic precision.

The organization places considerable emphasis on time management and mental health support to enhance employee concentration and productivity. In line with this, Tactical Decision 1 mandates a 15–30-minute break following the completion of major tasks, aimed at restoring cognitive focus before employees resume work or personal activities (Eriksson et al., 2022). Tactical Decision 2 involves training employees in the Eisenhower Matrix method, enabling them to prioritize tasks more effectively and manage schedules more efficiently.

Tactical Decision 3 introduces the timeboxing technique to promote timely task completion by allocating specific time slots for each activity. This method supports rapid and organized work processes (Chan & Tay, 2021; Vijayanand, 2023). To promote work–life integration, Tactical Decision 4 offers flexible working arrangements, including adjustable hours and remote work options, allowing employees to harmonize professional responsibilities with personal commitments (Eniola, 2023).

Acknowledging the critical role of a supportive workplace in mental well-being, Tactical Decision 5 focuses on developing a conducive office environment through the incorporation of green spaces, indoor plants, and recreational areas (Singh & Chawla, 2024). These facilities contribute to a more energizing and pleasant work atmosphere.

Tactical Decision 6 emphasizes the implementation of structured recognition systems, such as the "Employee of the Month" program and real-time acknowledgment of achievements. These initiatives aim to foster morale and reinforce sustained high performance (Al-Harthi et al., 2023; Buba, 2024).

To further optimize efficiency and promote a healthy work–life balance, Tactical Decision 7 incorporates the time-blocking method, utilizing digital tools such as Google Calendar and Trello to structure daily work routines. This approach improves task focus and execution (Pawlicka et al., 2020; Yoo et al., 2021). Meanwhile, Tactical Decision 8 promotes task automation using platforms such as Asana and Monday.com. Automating repetitive duties enables employees to dedicate more time to strategic activities, thereby enhancing productivity and operational effectiveness (Jones et al., 2021; Limatujuh, 2023).

Recognizing that personal well-being directly affects job enthusiasm, Tactical Decision 9 institutionalizes flexible work policies—such as flextime and remote work—enabling employees to align work demands with their personal needs. This integration supports overall job satisfaction and performance. Tactical Decisions 10 and 11 reinforce this approach by ensuring that mental and physical wellness resources—such as counseling services, relaxation areas, and biophilic office designs—are readily accessible. These initiatives cultivate an emotionally supportive work environment, which not only promotes employee morale but also sustains optimal performance.

Discussion

Developing a Tactical Decision Framework for the Automotive Industry

The development of a Tactical Decision Framework aimed at enhancing organizational success within the automotive industry necessitates a robust foundation. This foundation is effectively established through the integration of findings derived from Importance–Performance Analysis (IPA) and correlation analysis. Quadrant II, characterized by high importance and high performance, highlights critical organizational strengths such as supportive employee systems, dependable production schedules, and efficient operational workflows. These features are pivotal, as they directly influence employee satisfaction and productivity—two determinants crucial for maintaining a sustainable competitive edge in the automotive sector (Macpherson et al., 2023).

To optimize the impact of these strengths, benchmarking against industry best practices is recommended. This comparative approach ensures that employee well-being programs and work-life balance initiatives remain both competitive and contextually relevant (Gellatly, 2019). Moreover, fostering a positive organizational culture is of paramount importance, as it enhances employee engagement, reduces turnover rates, and ultimately contributes to heightened organizational performance (Cherian et al., 2023).

Conversely, improvement efforts should be concentrated on Quadrant I, which reflects high-priority areas currently exhibiting low performance. These areas commonly pertain to persistent work-life balance challenges within the automotive industry, such as extended working hours and rigid production demands. Addressing these issues requires the implementation of targeted interventions, including comprehensive employee well-being initiatives, mental health support systems, and stress management programs.

Empirical evidence suggests that workplace mental health promotion initiatives significantly reduce both absenteeism and presenteeism, thereby contributing to improved overall productivity (Cocker et al., 2013). This integrated Tactical Decision Framework underscores the strategic necessity of incorporating mental health considerations into broader organizational planning. By doing so, firms are better positioned to develop a high-performing, resilient, and well-balanced workforce capable of meeting the demands of the dynamic automotive industry. These findings are theoretically grounded in Boundary Theory (Ashforth (2000) and Clark (2000), which posits that individuals actively manage the boundaries between work and personal life domains. The IPA results showing Quadrant I items (Items 6 and 10)—related to time management initiatives and sustained focus at work—as underperforming suggest

that employees experience boundary permeability that impairs role transition and cognitive segmentation. The correlational links between Quadrant II strengths (particularly Items 12 and 5) and these Quadrant I gaps further support the theoretical argument that personal life enrichment and effective time use serve as critical boundary resources. This study thereby extends Boundary Theory to the automotive manufacturing context, demonstrating how domain-specific tactical interventions can reinforce boundary management capacity, consistent with previous findings on flexible work arrangements and WLB outcomes (Shirmohammadi et al., 2022; Wood et al., 2020; Patel et al., 2013).

Theoretical and Managerial Implication

This study underscores the pivotal role of Work–Life Balance (WLB) in cultivating a productive and sustainable work environment within the automotive sector. The implementation of tactical decisions—such as flexible work arrangements, structured time management training, and comprehensive employee well-being support—proves instrumental in enhancing job satisfaction and mitigating occupational stress.

Furthermore, the introduction of performance recognition systems and the strategic optimization of organizational resources—guided by the findings of Importance–Performance Analysis (IPA)—enable targeted improvements in key WLB dimensions. These efforts contribute not only to employee morale but also to operational effectiveness.

To ensure long-term impact, organizations must institute continuous policy evaluation mechanisms and leverage technological advancements. This integrative approach supports the development of a balanced, efficient, and resilient workplace, thereby strengthening competitiveness in an increasingly demanding industry landscape.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates how organizations can enhance Work-Life Balance (WLB) through the development of targeted tactical interventions. The Importance–Performance Analysis (IPA) identified two high-priority issues (Quadrant 2) requiring immediate attention to meet employee expectations, alongside six additional areas (Quadrant 1) signaling potential improvement opportunities. These insights were synthesized into a Tactical Decision Matrix, resulting in twelve proposed strategies. However, subsequent correlation analysis validated the statistical significance of only eleven of these initiatives. The refined tactical decisions predominantly advocate flexible work arrangements, mental health support systems, and structured performance recognition as pragmatic approaches to improving both WLB and employee productivity, reflecting strategic alignment between employee needs and organizational performance goals.

Nonetheless, this research is subject to certain limitations. The study was conducted within the automotive manufacturing context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other industries or cultural settings, and the use of a cross-sectional design restricts the ability to infer causality among the examined variables. Future research should therefore replicate this framework across diverse sectors using longitudinal approaches. The primary novelty of this research lies in its dual-method integration of IPA and Spearman's correlation analysis to generate sector-specific, statistically validated tactical decisions for WLB—an approach not previously employed in the automotive manufacturing literature. Unlike prior WLB studies that identify challenges without prescribing operationally precise interventions, this framework offers a replicable, data-driven model applicable across industries characterized by high operational demands, while also advancing the application of Boundary Theory in non-Western manufacturing contexts and providing a methodological template for future WLB research in Southeast Asian and global automotive industries.

ACKNOWLEGMENT

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all individuals and organizations who played a role in the success of this research. We also recognize the valuable facilities support from Politeknik Negeri Ujung Pandang, which enabled the completion of this project.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors contributed equally to this work. Serpian conceptualization, methodology, data collection, and original draft preparation. Dian Gita Utami data analysis, visualization, and review and editing. Syamsuddin supervision, validation, and final manuscript approval. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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