



The Dynamics of Work-Life Balance: A Phenomenological Exploration of the Demands and Resources of Female Workers Toward Sustainable Human Resource Management

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Abstract

Background: Work-life balance among female workers in the hand-rolled clove cigarette industry is a critical issue because manual production work demands precision, physical stamina, and meeting production targets, while female workers also shoulder domestic responsibilities within their families.

Objective: This study aims to identify the state of work-life balance among female workers at Perusahaan Rokok Gagak Hitam Bondowoso, analyze the interaction between job demands and job resources, explore female workers' subjective experiences in balancing work and family roles, and formulate a conceptual model that supports sustainable human resource management.

Methods: This study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach, with data collected through interviews, observation, and document review.

Results: The findings show that female workers face several demands, including production targets, physical fatigue, repetitive work, limited rest time, and the burdens of juggling dual roles. However, work-family balance can still be managed through family support, solidarity among coworkers, supportive relationships with supervisors, and flexible leave policies provided by the company. In this context, work-life balance is not merely understood as time allocation, but as a process of social, emotional, and economic adaptation.

Conclusion: These findings highlight the importance of gender-responsive work policies that are realistic given workers' conditions and aligned with the principles of sustainable human resource management.

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INTRODUCTION

The tobacco industry has experienced rapid expansion since the late 19th century when cigarette rolling machines began to be used, enabling mass production. This technology reduced production costs, expanded market reach, and strengthened the dominance of cigarettes in the global economy and consumer culture (Hirao, 2017).

From an employment perspective, women have played a historically significant role in the tobacco industry. Since the early days of industrialization, female workers have been considered

more meticulous and efficient in the production process, particularly in manual rolling.

The role of women in the tobacco industry can even be found in conflict zones (Carmona González et al., 2024). show that female workers in Montes de María, Colombia, not only achieve economic stability but also play a role in the process of social reconciliation through their production activities. On the other hand, female workers still face various challenges, ranging from the double burden of work and household responsibilities, exposure to pesticides and tobacco dust, to stress resulting from strict quotas, monotonous work, and long working hours (Kumar, 2021; Kusumadewi & Kartini, 2021). Health risks such as cardiovascular, respiratory, and musculoskeletal disorders are also on the rise due to inadequate occupational safety protections. These conditions are exacerbated by low wages and limited social protection for tobacco workers (Ravi et al., 2024).

In Indonesia, the cigarette industry holds a strategic position because it contributes significantly to government revenue and provides numerous jobs. East Java is the main hub of national tobacco production, with a volume of 188.6 thousand metric tons per year and an export value of US\$106.3 million in 2022 (Pratama et al., 2025). This province has the highest concentration of tobacco industries, ranging from large corporations to small and medium-sized enterprises spread across tobacco-producing districts (Setiartiti & Dewanti, 2024).

In the context of labor-intensive industries, production workers are operational-level employees directly involved in the production process and have distinct work characteristics compared to managerial or professional-level workers. Research (Noordin et al., 2023) indicates that workers in the manufacturing sector generally operate within a target-based production system characterized by a high work pace, which can potentially lead to work-related stress and impact workers' work-life balance. Within the organizational structure of the manufacturing industry, production workers are at the operational level carrying out direct production activities, while supervisory and decision-making functions reside at higher managerial levels (Rusdhiyansyah & Solih, 2025). Furthermore, research Rahmawati & Kurniawati (2025) also indicates that female workers are heavily involved in manual production work within the manufacturing industry, which is often accompanied by challenges in balancing work demands and domestic responsibilities.

This condition is also reflected in Perusahaan Rokok Gagak Hitam Bondowoso, one of the hand-rolled clove cigarette factories. The hand-rolled clove cigarette industry in this company still relies heavily on manual labor, particularly female workers in the rolling section. The following table presents the number of workers at Perusahaan Rokok Gagak Hitam Bondowoso from 2015 to 2025. The data are categorized into two groups, namely SKT workers and SKM workers, with the total number of workers shown for each year.

Table 1

Number of Workers at Perusahaan Rokok Gagak Hitam Bondowoso from 2015 to 2025

Year	SKT Workers	SKM Workers	Total
2015	235	30	265
2016	225	32	257
2017	200	32	232
2018	100	25	125
2019	70	20	90
2020	50	15	65
2021	70	20	90
2022	90	25	115
2023	90	30	120
2024	110	35	145
2025	100	28	128

Source: Perusahaan Rokok Gagak Hitam Bondowoso (2026)

Based on the table, the number of workers experienced a significant decline from 2015 to 2020, decreasing from 265 workers to only 65 workers. However, the number began to increase

again from 2021 to 2024, before slightly decreasing in 2025. Overall, SKT workers consistently represent the majority of the workforce compared to SKM workers throughout the observed period.

The Gagak Hitam Bondowoso Cigarette Company is one of the largest hand-rolled kretek cigarette (SKT) factories in the Besuki region, located in Gunungsari Village, Maesan Subdistrict. The work schedule at the Gagak Hitam Cigarette Company is organized into three shifts. The duration of each shift is not entirely uniform: Shift I and Shift III last eight hours, while Shift II lasts only seven hours, meaning the work schedule does not always meet the standard of eight hours per shift. These variations in work duration, combined with production target pressures and a piecework wage system, drive workers to work at an intense pace, particularly during the high-demand period from August through December, and have the potential to increase work-related fatigue and compromise work-life balance, especially among female workers who face a double burden.

This aligns with previous research indicating that long working hours, a strict work pace, and limited control over working hours are associated with increased stress and chronic fatigue, particularly among female workers ([ILO, 2022b](#)). On the other hand, the quality of the physical work environment such as ventilation, lighting, sanitation facilities, and spaces for worship or rest has a significant impact on comfort, psychological well-being, and work-related stress. An inadequate work environment has been shown to increase psychosocial stress and worsen the balance between work demands and personal life ([WHO, 2010](#)).

Work systems in the tobacco industry, including at Gagak Hitam Tobacco Company, demonstrate a strong orientation toward efficiency and the achievement of production targets, which function as a key mechanism driving work intensification. From the perspective of strategic human resource practices, these conditions need to be balanced with strategic human resource practices that focuses not only on short-term productivity but also on the long-term health, well-being, and work capacity of the workforce. This approach emphasizes that intensified work without adequate resource support has the potential to lower workers' quality of life and disrupt work-life balance.

The research gap in this study, based on the previous studies attached, indicates that, from a sectoral perspective, there remains a lack of research on work-life balance in traditional labor-intensive industries based on manual production and piecework systems, as most studies have focused on the modern formal sector or technology-based corporations. Methodologically, work-life balance studies are dominated by quantitative approaches that emphasize the measurement of variables and statistical relationships; consequently, in-depth exploration of the subjective experiences of female production workers through a phenomenological approach remains relatively limited. Conceptually, there is still a scarcity of research that integrates the Job Demands–Job Resources (JD-R) framework, organizational gender theory, and a phenomenological approach to comprehensively understand women's work experiences. These three perspectives are necessary to examine how job demands, organizational structures shaped by gender relations, and workers' subjective experiences are interrelated particularly within the context of labor-intensive industries based on production targets, which function as a key mechanism driving work intensification, at the local level. Geographically, research on women's work-life balance in Indonesia's traditional manufacturing sector particularly the tobacco industry in East Java remains scarce compared to urban contexts and the service sector. Furthermore, from the perspective of power relations, few studies have directly examined how production-target systems and piece-rate wages influence the ways in which female workers manage and negotiate their work-life balance within organizational structures shaped by gender role differences.

Based on this research gap, the novelty of this study lies in several important and interrelated aspects. Contextually, this study examines the work-life balance of female workers in the labor-intensive Hand-Rolled Kretek Cigarettes (SKT) industry in East Java, which employs a three-shift system and piece-rate wages a context that has yet to be studied in depth. Theoretically, this study integrates the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) framework, work-family conflict theory, gendered organization theory, and a phenomenological approach into a single

interpretive framework to understand women's work experiences more holistically. From a structural-gender perspective, this study views work-life balance not merely as a psychological outcome at the individual level, but as a negotiation process occurring within local capitalist work structures shaped by gender relations. Methodologically, this study employs a phenomenological approach to capture the lived experiences of female workers within a production-target-based work system. Furthermore, from a practical standpoint, this study offers policy recommendations tailored to the conditions of traditional labor-intensive industries, rather than those based on the context of the modern service sector or digital work areas that have been the focus of most previous work-life balance research.

Based on this background, this study will explore the dynamics of work-life balance from the perspective of production-line workers at the Gagak Hitam Cigarette Company in Bondowoso. The research focuses on the subjective experiences of female workers regarding labor-intensive working conditions, the burden of dual roles, and the adaptation strategies they employ to cope with work demands. In addition, this study also examines the role of the company as an enterprise through its work systems, time management, and organizational policies that may either support or hinder female workers' ability to achieve work-life balance. The findings of this study are expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of work-life balance for female workers in the context of work demands and resources, as well as their implications for strategic human resource practices. This study is also expected to serve as a foundation for the company in formulating work policies that are more gender-responsive and support the principles of strategic human resource practices, particularly in maintaining the well-being, health, and sustainability of female workers' labor capacity in the labor-intensive industrial sector.

Based on this background, the research question is: What are the conditions, forms, and dynamics of work-life balance among female workers in the production department at Gagak Hitam Cigarette Company in Bondowoso from the perspective of work demands and resources, and what are the implications for workplace well-being and strategic human resource practices?

The objectives of this study include: 1) To identify the conditions and characteristics of work-life balance among female workers at the Gagak Hitam Cigarette Company in Bondowoso. 2) To analyze the dynamics of work-life balance among female workers based on the interaction between job demands and job resources. 3) To explore female workers' subjective experiences in interpreting and negotiating work-life balance in their work and domestic life. To formulate a conceptual model of work-life balance relevant to the context of the Hand-Rolled Kretek Cigarette (SKT) industry and supportive of strategic human resource practices.

This study is expected to contribute to the development of work-life balance research, particularly among female workers in labor-intensive industries. Additionally, this study enriches the literature by integrating a phenomenological approach, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, and the perspective of strategic human resource practices. The findings of this study are expected to serve as a basis for management at the Gagak Hitam Bondowoso Cigarette Company in formulating human resource management policies particularly regarding work schedules, target-based work systems, and organizational support to improve the well-being of female workers and implement the principles of strategic human resource practices.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach. The phenomenological approach also allowed the researcher to interpret social reality as experienced and understood by the workers, including how they balanced job demands (targets, working hours, and physical and psychological pressures) with family life and personal responsibilities.

The research location was the Gagak Hitam Bondowoso Cigarette Company, a tobacco-processing industry located in Pakuniran Village, Maesan Subdistrict, Bondowoso Regency, East Java. This location was selected based on its relevance and suitability to the research focus on the dynamics of work-life balance in a labor-intensive work environment.

This study used two types of data, primary and secondary, which complemented each

other in providing a comprehensive picture of the dynamics of work-life balance at the Gagak Hitam Bondowoso Cigarette Company. Primary data were obtained directly from field sources through interactions with production workers and management, while secondary data were derived from company documents, production reports, sales figures, and scientific literature relevant to the research topic. The use of these two types of data aimed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of work-life balance within the context of the labor-intensive cigarette industry.

The informants in this study were individuals who possessed knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in operational activities at the Gagak Hitam Cigarette Company in Bondowoso. The informants were selected because they were deemed capable of providing relevant, factual, and in-depth information regarding the dynamics of work-life balance at the company. The selection of informants was conducted using a purposive approach, taking into account their positions, responsibilities, and strategic roles within the company's organizational structure. This approach enabled the researcher to obtain comprehensive data on working conditions, management systems, and worker well-being in this labor-intensive work environment.

This approach was expected to yield a holistic understanding of work-life balance at the Gagak Hitam Cigarette Company in Bondowoso from both managerial and frontline worker perspectives, thereby providing an in-depth and objective portrayal of the actual conditions on the ground.

In qualitative research using a phenomenological approach, data validity verification is a crucial step in ensuring that the collected data accurately reflect the experiences and realities of the research subjects. Data validity was essential to ensure that the research findings regarding the dynamics of work-life balance among female workers at the Gagak Hitam Cigarette Company in Bondowoso were scientifically sound. This study used triangulation as the primary technique for data validity assessment. Triangulation was conducted by comparing and confirming data through variations in methods, sources, and timing of data collection to achieve a consistent and in-depth understanding.

The data analysis technique used in this study was qualitative data analysis with an interactive model. The analysis was not conducted linearly but took place simultaneously and repeatedly throughout the field research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

General Overview and Social Context of the Organization

The production system implemented at the Gagak Hitam Cigarette Company in Bondowoso still relies on a manual production system that depends on workers' skills at every stage of the cigarette-making process. This system assigns workers to specific sections according to the division of labor established by the company, ensuring that each production stage proceeds sequentially and in a coordinated manner. This reflects the labor-intensive nature of the Hand-Rolled Kretek Cigarette (SKT) industry.

Based on data analyzed by the researcher in 2026, the target-setting mechanism employs a demand-oriented production system.

Based on interview results, the work motivation of female cigarette rollers at the Gagak Hitam Cigarette Company in Bondowoso is dominated by economic factors, namely helping to meet family needs and earning additional income. Additionally, the proximity of the workplace to their homes is an important consideration because it makes it easier for female workers to balance their roles as workers and family members.

Based on the interview results, female workers at the Gagak Hitam Cigarette Company in Bondowoso demonstrated good social relationships among their peers. These relationships are not limited to interactions during work hours but are also manifested through a spirit of mutual support when a worker faces difficulties or needs assistance.

Based on the interview results, the relationships among female workers at the Gagak Hitam Cigarette Company in Bondowoso are generally good and are grounded in the values of togetherness, family, and mutual support. These relationships are reflected in their concern for

coworkers facing difficulties, misfortunes, or other social needs. This situation indicates strong social solidarity in the workplace, which ultimately fosters a comfortable and harmonious work environment for the workers.

Based on the findings, the norms and values of togetherness among female workers are reflected in attitudes of mutual assistance, concern for coworkers facing difficulties, and the habit of engaging in informal interactions outside of production activities. These values foster social solidarity, which serves as the foundation for harmonious inter-worker relationships within the workplace at the Gagak Hitam Cigarette Company in Bondowoso.

Based on interview results, female workers' experiences with production targets, which function as a key mechanism driving work intensification, at the Gagak Hitam Cigarette Factory tend to be adaptive. Most workers no longer view production targets, which function as a key mechanism driving work intensification, as obstacles, as they have become accustomed to the demands of their jobs. These findings suggest important patterns in how work condition structures workers' experiences.

The research findings indicate that female workers' working hours at the Gagak Hitam Cigarette Factory average around eight hours per day, with occasional overtime as needed to meet production demands. Although overtime is not performed on a routine basis, its occurrence still affects workers' rest time and domestic activities. This situation highlights the need for female workers to make adjustments in order to balance their productive roles at work with their reproductive roles within the family.

Based on interviews with informants, female workers generally rated the physical working facilities at the Gagak Hitam Cigarette Factory as quite good.

The fulfillment of workers' normative rights at the Gagak Hitam Cigarette Factory is not only reflected in company policies but is also directly experienced by female workers in their daily work activities. The ease of obtaining leave when facing illness, family needs, or emergency situations demonstrates the company's efforts to provide protection and understanding of the characteristics and specific needs of female workers.

A Phenomenological Exploration of Work Demands and Resources

Based on interview findings, the physical strain experienced by female workers at the cigarette factory is characterized by stiffness, pain, and fatigue in the hands, back, waist, and neck after work. Although most workers consider these conditions normal because they have been accustomed to this work for years, recurring complaints indicate ergonomic risks that require attention. These conditions indicate that cigarette rolling work still has the potential to cause musculoskeletal disorders due to static work postures and repetitive activities performed over long periods.

Based on the interview results, production target pressure on female workers in cigarette factories is relatively low. Most informants view production targets, which function as a key mechanism driving work intensification, as a normal part of the job because they have been dealing with them for years. Although there is concern when targets are not met or when they are physically fatigued, this pressure is generally manageable through work experience and established habits. Thus, production targets, which function as a key mechanism driving work intensification, are not perceived as a primary source of stress, but rather as work demands that have become part of workers' daily routines.

Based on the interview results, all informants have experienced mental and emotional strain due to juggling dual roles as both workers and homemakers. The forms of strain experienced include feelings of being overwhelmed, mental exhaustion, stress, a divided focus between work and family, and worry when a family member falls ill. Although most informants view these conditions as normal, these findings indicate the existence of a dual-role conflict that has the potential to affect the psychological well-being of working women if it persists over time.

Based on the findings, female workers view piece-rate wages as a means to meet family needs, fund their children's education, and help maintain household economic stability. Financial motivation has proven to be one of the main reasons driving them to continue working and persevere in their jobs despite facing various physical challenges and the burden of dual roles.

Thus, the wages they receive not only have economic value but also carry social and familial significance, as they represent women's tangible contribution to improving household well-being.

The research findings indicate that access to flexible work schedules is one of the forms of organizational support most strongly felt by female workers. The ease of obtaining time off, tolerance for family needs, and supervisors who understand workers' circumstances provide them with the space to continue fulfilling their domestic roles amid the demands of their jobs. Thus, flexible work schedules function not only as an administrative policy but also as a social support mechanism that helps female workers maintain a balance between their work and family lives.

Based on interviews with female workers, the factory facilities and policies they found most beneficial were not only physical amenities but also flexibility and ease in obtaining leave when facing family needs, health issues, or other urgent matters. For female workers who juggle dual roles as breadwinners and household managers, this kind of flexibility serves as a crucial form of organizational support in helping them balance the demands of work and family life. Organizational support that allows workers to meet their family needs has been shown to contribute to achieving work-life balance ([Andra et al., 2022](#)).

Based on the findings, the instrumental family support received by female workers takes the form of various practical forms of assistance, such as sharing domestic chores, caring for children, managing household affairs, managing family economic activities, and providing assistance when urgent needs arise. This support enables the informants to continue working at the factory without having to neglect their family responsibilities. Thus, the family particularly the husband serves as the primary support system that helps women cope with the demands of juggling multiple roles in daily life. These findings reinforce the view that family support is one of the key factors in achieving work-family balance for working women ([Rahmadhani et al., 2025](#)).

Based on the interview results, emotional support from coworkers is an important social resource for female factory workers. This support is manifested through encouragement, the habit of sharing stories, concern for coworkers' personal circumstances, and a strong sense of solidarity and camaraderie. The presence of this emotional support helps workers cope with fatigue and work-related stress while creating a more comfortable and supportive work environment. These findings reinforce the view that social support from coworkers plays a crucial role in enhancing psychological well-being and helping workers cope with job demands more effectively ([Rauschmayr et al., 2023](#)).

Based on the interview results, support from supervisors in the form of understanding, ease in obtaining leave, providing guidance, and tolerance toward workers' circumstances is one of the factors that helps create a comfortable work environment for female workers at the Gagak Hitam Cigarette Company in Bondowoso. These findings indicate that harmonious working relationships between workers and foremen constitute a form of social support that contributes to the well-being and job sustainability of female workers ([Huo et al., 2019](#)).

Based on the findings, the time-management strategies employed by female cigarette rollers include waking up earlier, prioritizing essential household chores, reducing break times, gradually adjusting their work pace, separating their focus between work and domestic responsibilities, and leveraging support from their husbands and families. These strategies serve as coping mechanisms that enable the informants to sustain their dual roles as workers and household managers. These findings demonstrate that successfully managing dual roles depends not only on an individual's ability to manage time but also on family support and effective task division within the household.

Based on the interview results, SKT workers segment their thoughts or emotions in two main ways. First, they focus their attention on work while at the factory by putting off thinking about household issues. Second, they continue to fulfill their family roles after returning home from work through communication, attention to their children, and the completion of domestic chores. Although this is not always entirely successful especially when a child is sick or an urgent family problem arises these strategies help female workers maintain a balance between the productive and reproductive roles they undertake every day ([Cunha et al., 2022](#)).

The Meaning of Work-Life Balance for Female Workers

Based on the findings, the perception of a lack of time among female cigarette rollers stems from the high demands of the dual roles they fulfill daily. After finishing work at the factory, the informants still had to carry out various domestic chores and child-rearing responsibilities; some even had to manage additional work such as tending rice fields. As a result, time for themselves, rest, and time with family became extremely limited. These findings demonstrate that time-based work-family conflict remains a persistent reality in the lives of women workers in the industrial sector ([Agustiari & Darma, 2022](#); [Kamalia et al., 2025](#); [Whillans & West, 2022](#)).

The research results indicate that all informants have experienced a shift in attention from work to family matters, particularly when a child is sick or household problems arise. However, the majority of informants employ the same strategy: prioritizing work while at the factory and postponing the resolution of family issues until the workday ends. These findings suggest that female workers are able to manage the conflict between family and work demands through attention control, role separation, and self-regulation. Nevertheless, the persistent presence of family-related mental burdens during work hours suggests that the experience of being both a worker and a homemaker continues to present psychological challenges that cannot be entirely eliminated ([Huang et al., 2024](#); [LePine & Yoon, 2023](#); [Riski & Ticoalu, 2024](#)).

Interview results show that the majority of female workers still strive to provide attention and emotional closeness to their children after returning home from work. The most common forms of emotional presence include talking with their children, asking about their activities, paying attention to their children's needs, and taking the time to eat together. These simple activities are forms of interaction that strengthen the parent-child bond while also serving as a means to understand the children's well-being after their daily activities ([Gaspar et al., 2022](#); [Sloover et al., 2023](#)).

The findings of this study indicate that although female workers experience physical fatigue after work, they still strive to be emotionally present for their children. This presence is manifested through communication, attention to their children's needs, shared mealtimes, and support during learning activities. These forms of interaction demonstrate that parenting roles are actively maintained despite time and energy constraints resulting from work demands ([Li & Guo, 2023](#)).

The research findings indicate that all informants tend to prioritize their children's interests when facing conflicts between work and important family activities. This prioritization is manifested through requesting time off from work, utilizing family support, and communicating with the company. These findings show that although the informants work within a production-target system that demands high discipline, their identity and responsibilities as mothers remain the primary foundation for decision-making regarding family matters. This situation indicates that the fulfillment of maternal roles is not only manifested through daily physical presence but also through a willingness to make decisions that prioritize children's needs when conflicts arise between work and family demands ([Kadir et al., 2023](#)).

The research findings indicate that satisfaction as breadwinners among female cigarette-rolling workers stems from their ability to help meet family needs and improve household well-being. Although the work is performed under exhausting conditions and under a piece-rate wage system, all informants still view the income they earn as a source of pride and satisfaction because it contributes to the family's economic sustainability. This finding reinforces the view that working women not only fulfill domestic roles but also play a strategic role in supporting and strengthening the family's economy ([Fauzah et al., 2023](#)).

Based on the interview results, all informants expressed a generally positive self-assessment of their ability to juggle dual roles. Despite facing various limitations and physical exhaustion due to their factory work, the female workers felt that they had done their best to fulfill both roles. Gratitude emerged as the primary form of self-acceptance regarding the circumstances they faced ([Rahayu & Rifayani, 2024](#)).

The research findings indicate that the key factors supporting female workers' success in achieving a balance between work and family are support from their husbands, families, children, and coworkers, as well as company policies that provide flexibility and ease of obtaining leave.

This support serves as a social resource that helps women reduce the pressures of dual roles while enhancing their ability to fulfill their roles as workers and family members. These findings reinforce the view that work-family balance is determined not only by individual capabilities but also by the availability of support from family and organizational environments.

The consequences of the imbalance experienced by female cigarette-rolling workers include an increased need for rest, the emergence of musculoskeletal complaints such as soreness in the hands, back, waist, and neck, reduced rest time due to domestic chores that must still be performed, and a decrease in the frequency of interactions with family members. These findings indicate that work-related fatigue not only impacts physical health but also affects the quality of life for female workers who juggle dual roles ([Riski & Ticoalu, 2024](#)).

The Relationship Between Work-Life Balance and strategic human resource practices (SHRM)

Research results show that production targets, which function as a key mechanism driving work intensification, during peak season are managed through equitable work distribution, realistic target adjustments, intensive coordination with workers, better preparation of raw materials, and limited overtime. These strategies reflect the company's efforts to maintain a balance between production demands and worker well-being so that production targets, which function as a key mechanism driving work intensification, can be met without compromising workers' health.

Based on the findings, workers' loyalty to the company is largely built on a comfortable work environment, close social relationships with coworkers, the proximity of the workplace to their homes, and the economic benefits they receive to support their families' needs. These factors create a strong bond between workers and their workplace, leading workers to choose to stay even though cigarette rolling requires high precision and is both physically and temporally demanding.

The findings of this study indicate that the significance of organizational support for workers lies in the ease of obtaining leave, flexibility when facing family emergencies, and the understanding shown by foremen and company management. This support fosters a sense of being valued and cared for, thereby generating a willingness to remain loyal and dedicated to the company in the long term. These findings align with the Perceived Organizational Support theory, which states that the higher workers' perception of the organization's care, the higher their commitment and desire to remain part of the organization ([Franselina et al., 2025](#); [Ngwa & Bayram, 2026](#); [Rubel et al., 2023](#)).

The research results indicate that the primary triggers for absenteeism among cigarette rollers stem more from family factors than from work-related factors. A sick child or family member is the most dominant reason, followed by important family events, childcare needs, and other economic obligations such as agricultural work. These findings indicate that work-family balance is a critical aspect in ensuring the sustained attendance of female workers in labor-intensive industries ([Kaila-Kangas et al., 2023](#); [Zhang et al., 2023](#)).

Based on the interview results, gender-sensitive work policies at the Gagak Hitam Cigarette Company in Bondowoso are implemented through three main forms: flexible leave policies for family needs, the setting of realistic work targets aligned with employees' capabilities, and supervisors' understanding of the domestic circumstances faced by female workers. These policies demonstrate the company's efforts to accommodate female workers' dual roles without neglecting the company's productivity goals. Thus, the practices implemented by the company can be viewed as a form of organizational support oriented toward work-family balance, which has the potential to enhance well-being, loyalty, and the sustainability of employment relationships ([ILO, 2022a](#); [Susanto et al., 2022](#)).

The voices and expectations of female workers in this study indicate appreciation for the company's policies, which have consistently provided flexibility in granting leave when urgent family needs arise. The hopes expressed are largely focused on the continuation and improvement of existing policies, particularly regarding leave flexibility, attention to workers' well-being, and an understanding attitude from management. These findings indicate that organizational support for family needs is a key factor that helps female workers maintain a balance between work and

family life, enabling them to work with greater peace of mind and productivity.

Based on the interview results, female workers at the factory generally have relatively easy access to rest breaks and sick leave (United Nations, 2023).

Interview results show that female workers at the Gagak Hitam Cigarette Factory in Bondowoso feel they have relatively easy access to leave when facing family needs, health issues, or other domestic matters.

The interview results indicate that factory work has had a positive impact on women's economic empowerment. Female workers not only serve as household managers but also play a vital role in meeting family needs. The income they earn enhances the family's ability to meet basic needs, fund children's education, and address other socioeconomic requirements. These findings are consistent with research showing that women's participation in economic activities contributes to increased household income, family well-being, and the strengthening of women's positions in family economic decision-making (Andari et al., 2022; Buvinic et al., 2022).

DISCUSSION

Overview and Social Context of the Organization

The Gagak Hitam Bondowoso Cigarette Company exhibits the characteristics of a labor-intensive Hand-Rolled Kretek Cigarette (SKT) industry organization that relies on manual production and is heavily dependent on the skills of female workers. The structured work system (from attendance tracking, raw material retrieval, rolling, to meeting production targets) reveals an organizational pattern that emphasizes discipline, order, and operational efficiency. However, the organization's social context is shaped not only by production mechanisms but also by the socioeconomic conditions of female workers, who generally work to help meet their families' needs. The proximity of the workplace to their homes is a crucial factor, as it allows workers to continue fulfilling their domestic roles after work. In this context, factory work is not merely viewed as an economic activity but also as a family strategy to maintain household stability. Social relationships among workers characterized by a sense of family, mutual aid, and support serve as social capital that enhances workplace comfort. Therefore, the organization cannot be understood solely as a place of production but also as a social space where female workers build solidarity, a work identity, and coping mechanisms to face economic demands and domestic responsibilities.

A Phenomenological Exploration of Work Demands and Resources

Research findings indicate that female workers' work experiences are not only related to physical demands but also to psychological and social pressures arising from dual roles. The primary work demands are evident in repetitive winding tasks, which require precision, are performed over extended periods, and are oriented toward meeting production targets, which function as a key mechanism driving work intensification. These conditions lead to physical fatigue, such as soreness in the hands, back, waist, and neck, primarily due to static work postures and repetitive movements. Additionally, female workers experience mental strain from family responsibilities that remain a constant burden even while they are at work. However, these demands do not exist in isolation, as there are work-related and social resources that help workers manage them. Flexibility in taking time off, good relationships with supervisors, support from coworkers, and assistance from family are key factors that reduce work-related stress. From the Job Demands–Job Resources perspective, female workers' work-life balance is shaped by the interaction between job demands and the availability of supportive resources. Thus, their work experiences demonstrate that work-life balance is not a static condition but rather an adaptive process that is continually negotiated in daily life.

The Meaning of Work-Life Balance for Female Workers

For female workers at the Gagak Hitam Cigarette Company in Bondowoso, work-life balance is understood not only as a balance of time between work and family but also as the ability to simultaneously fulfill two primary roles. Female workers view their jobs as a form of economic contribution to the family, particularly to help meet household needs, children's education, and daily expenses. However, this meaning coexists with the domestic responsibilities they continue

to shoulder after returning home from work. This situation indicates that balance does not always mean an equal division of roles, but rather the ability to persevere, adapt, and maintain the family's functioning amid limited time and energy. The strategies employed by female workers include time management, prioritizing essential household tasks, leveraging family support, and separating their focus between work and domestic responsibilities. Despite experiencing fatigue, female workers continue to strive to maintain emotional closeness with their children and families. Thus, work-life balance in this study carries a strong subjective meaning, namely, as a form of struggle, responsibility, and pride for women in fulfilling both their productive and reproductive roles.

The Relationship Between Work-Life Balance and strategic human resource practices (SHRM)

The relationship between work-life balance and strategic human resource practices is evident in the importance of organizational policies that are not only oriented toward achieving production targets, which function as a key mechanism driving work intensification, but also toward the sustainable well-being of female workers. In labor-intensive industries such as SKT, productivity is highly dependent on workers' physical, psychological, and social capacities. If work demands continue to rise without adequate support, the risks of burnout, absenteeism, decreased motivation, and impaired worker well-being will increase significantly. Research findings indicate that flexible leave policies, realistic work targets, supportive relationships with supervisors, and consideration for family needs are organizational practices that support the principles of SHRM. Such policies help female workers fulfill their professional roles without completely neglecting their domestic responsibilities. Thus, work-life balance becomes a crucial component of human resource sustainability strategies, as maintaining workers' balance ensures the continuity of the company's productivity. This study emphasizes that SHRM in the SKT industry context needs to be developed with a gender-responsive approach, taking into account the social realities of female workers, and prioritizing worker well-being as the foundation for building sustainable employment relationships.

CONCLUSION

The research confirms that work-life balance for female workers in the Hand-Rolled Kretek Cigarettes (SKT) industry is a process of negotiation between work demands, domestic responsibilities, social support, and organizational policies. Female workers face pressures in the form of production targets, which function as a key mechanism driving work intensification,, repetitive work, physical exhaustion, and the burden of dual roles; however, balance can still be achieved through flexible leave policies, support from supervisors, solidarity among coworkers, family support, and personal adaptation strategies. Theoretically, this study strengthens the Job Demands–Job Resources framework by incorporating a gender perspective and the subjective experiences of female workers, thereby framing work-life balance not merely as time allocation but also as social, emotional, and economic adaptation. Practically, these findings underscore the importance of gender-responsive, strategic human resource practices through realistic work targets, attention to worker health, and labor policies that support family roles. Future research is encouraged to expand the context to other labor-intensive sectors or to use quantitative and mixed-methods approaches to test the relationships among variables more comprehensively.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Alifian Nugraha, Edy Wahyudi, Yuslinda Dwi Handini, and Ika Sisbintari contributed to the conceptualization, research design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of the findings, and manuscript preparation. All authors approved the final manuscript.

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