

## THE PURSUIT OF MEANINGFUL WORK: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND MOTIVATION AMONG SINGLE WOMEN PROFESSIONALS IN SOUTH JAKARTA

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Informasi	Abstract
Volume : 3 Nomor : 4 Bulan : April Tahun : 2026 E-ISSN : 3062-9624	<p><i>This study aims to determine the influence of work-life balance and work motivation on meaning of work among single women in their 30s and 40s working in multinational Public Relations (PR) agencies in South Jakarta. Meaning of work refers to the degree to which individuals perceive their work as significant, purposeful, and contributing to a greater good. The participants were 20 single women aged 30–49 who had been employed for over one year, selected through purposive sampling. A quantitative correlational approach was employed using Likert-scale questionnaires. Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis revealed that both work-life balance and work motivation were positively and significantly correlated with meaning of work. These findings suggest that a better balance between work and personal life and stronger work motivation contribute to a deeper sense of meaning in work for single women navigating demanding professional environments during a critical life stage.</i></p> <p><b>Keyword:</b> <i>work-life balance, work motivation, meaning of work, single women, public relations, midlife</i></p>

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### A. INTRODUCTION

The professional landscape in urban Indonesia, particularly in South Jakarta, has seen a marked increase in single women holding significant roles in competitive industries such as multinational Public Relations (PR) agencies. Among these professionals, single women in their 30s and 40s represent a distinctive group—they are in a phase of life often characterized by heightened self-reflection, career consolidation, and a deepened search for personal purpose (Levinson, 1986; Super, 1990). For many of these women, questions about the meaning they derive from their work are not merely philosophical but deeply practical, shaping their daily motivation, resilience, and long-term commitment to their profession.

Work-life balance (WLB) refers to the equilibrium between professional obligations and personal life (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Guest, 2002). Work motivation is defined as the internal and external forces that initiate, sustain, and direct work-related behavior, encompassing both intrinsic drivers such as autonomy and mastery, and extrinsic drivers

such as recognition and reward (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Locke & Latham, 2002). Meaning of work (MoW), the focal construct of this study, is conceptualized as the individual's subjective experience of their work as significant, purposeful, and connected to something larger than themselves (Steger, Dik, & Duffy, 2012; Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010).

Single women in their 30s and 40s occupy a particularly complex social position. Unlike their married counterparts, they manage professional demands without the formal domestic partnership structure, yet they often carry significant personal responsibilities and social expectations. Operating in high-pressure, client-driven PR environments amplifies these complexities. The capacity of these women to find and sustain meaning in their work is therefore of considerable practical and theoretical importance.

Previous research has demonstrated that both work-life balance and motivational factors predict important work outcomes including engagement, satisfaction, and retention (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). However, the specific pathway through which these factors shape meaning of work among single professional women in midlife has received limited attention, particularly in the Southeast Asian context. This study addresses that gap.

**Research problem:** Do work-life balance and work motivation significantly influence meaning of work among single women in their 30s and 40s working in multinational PR agencies?

**Research objective:** To examine the effect of work-life balance and work motivation on meaning of work in single women aged 30–49 employed in multinational PR agencies in South Jakarta.

## **B. RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Design and Participants**

A quantitative correlational design was adopted. The study involved 20 single women aged between 30 and 49 years working in multinational PR agencies in South Jakarta who had been employed for more than one year. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that only qualified respondents meeting the defined inclusion criteria were included. The decision to focus on single women in this age bracket is grounded in developmental theory: Levinson (1986) identified the midlife period as a stage of heightened reflection on life purpose and professional identity, making meaning of work a particularly salient construct for this group.

**Instruments**

Three instruments were used. First, the Work-Life Balance Scale was adapted from Greenhaus and Allen (2011) and Fisher, Bulger, and Smith (2009), consisting of 10 items measuring the degree to which respondents perceived balance between their professional and personal domains. Second, the Work Motivation Scale was based on Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), comprising 10 items assessing both intrinsic motivation (autonomy, competence, relatedness) and identified regulation. Third, the Meaning of Work Scale was adapted from the Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI) developed by Steger, Dik, and Duffy (2012), comprising 12 items assessing three dimensions: positive meaning, meaning-making through work, and greater good motivations. All items used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Reliability and validity tests were conducted, with Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding 0.70 for all scales and item-total correlations above 0.30.

**Procedure and Analysis**

Data were collected through online questionnaires distributed via WhatsApp and professional networks such as LinkedIn. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. SPSS was used to conduct descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis to test the hypotheses.

**C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**Descriptive Statistics**

Descriptive statistics for all three variables are presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Work-Life Balance	3.80	0.52	20
Work Motivation	4.10	0.45	20
Meaning of Work	3.90	0.48	20

Table 1 shows that participants reported a moderately high level of work-life balance (M = 3.80, SD = 0.52) and a high level of work motivation (M = 4.10, SD = 0.45). The mean score for meaning of work (M = 3.90, SD = 0.48) reflects a favorable sense of work meaningfulness among the respondents, suggesting that the majority of single women in this sample perceived their professional roles as substantially purposeful.

### Correlation Analysis

Table 2 presents the Pearson correlation matrix for all variables.

**Table 2. Pearson Correlation Matrix**

Variable	Work-Life Balance	Work Motivation	Meaning of Work
Work-Life Balance	1.00	.432	.658**
Work Motivation	.432	1.00	.714**
Meaning of Work	.658**	.714**	1.00

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

As shown in Table 2, there is a strong positive correlation between work-life balance and meaning of work ( $r = .658, p < .01$ ), and between work motivation and meaning of work ( $r = .714, p < .01$ ). A moderate positive correlation was also observed between the two predictors ( $r = .432$ ), indicating they are related but sufficiently distinct to function as independent predictors in the regression model.

### Multiple Regression Analysis

Tables 3 and 4 present the results of the multiple regression analysis.

**Table 3. Multiple Regression Analysis**

Predictor	B	SE B	Beta	p-value
Work-Life Balance	0.38	0.12	.41	<.01
Work Motivation	0.49	0.13	.53	<.01
(Constant)	1.12	0.34	-	<.01

**Table 4. Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	.783	.613	.588

Both predictors significantly contributed to the model. Work motivation had a slightly stronger standardized influence on meaning of work (Beta = .53,  $p < .01$ ) compared to work-life balance (Beta = .41,  $p < .01$ ). The overall model explained 61.3% of the variance in meaning of work ( $R^2 = .613$ ), indicating strong predictive power. These findings support both research hypotheses.

### Discussion

The results of this study provide empirical evidence that both work-life balance and work motivation significantly and positively influence meaning of work among single women in their 30s and 40s employed in multinational PR agencies in South Jakarta.

The significant positive correlation between work-life balance and meaning of work ( $r = .658$ ) is consistent with Greenhaus and Allen's (2011) proposition that perceived balance between life roles enhances overall satisfaction and psychological well-being. When single women in high-demand PR roles feel that their professional obligations are appropriately matched by time and energy for personal pursuits, reflection, and relationships, they are better positioned to experience their work as an integrated and meaningful part of their lives rather than a competing drain on personal identity. This is particularly salient for women in their 30s and 40s, who, according to Levinson's (1986) theory of adult development, are in a period of re-examining life structures and consolidating personal values.

Work motivation emerged as the strongest predictor of meaning of work in this sample. This aligns with Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which posits that when individuals engage in work for intrinsic reasons—because it aligns with their values, interests, and sense of self—they are more likely to perceive their work as meaningful. In the context of PR, where creative problem-solving, relationship management, and narrative craft are central activities, intrinsically motivated women are likely to find richer sources of meaning in their day-to-day tasks. Locke and Latham's (2002) goal-setting theory further supports this link: the pursuit of specific and challenging professional goals generates engagement and a sense of progress that feeds into a broader experience of work as purposeful.

The regression model accounted for 61.3% of the variance in meaning of work, indicating that work-life balance and motivation together are robust predictors of this construct. The remaining variance may be attributed to factors not measured in this study, such as organizational culture, quality of supervisor relationships, peer support, or individual differences in identity and values orientation (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997; Rosso et al., 2010).

These findings are practically significant in the Indonesian urban professional context. Single women in their 30s and 40s who do not experience adequate work-life balance or sufficient motivational support from their organizations are at heightened risk of experiencing work as merely transactional, which in turn may reduce engagement, increase turnover intention, and erode psychological well-being. PR agencies and similar organizations should therefore attend carefully to the structural and interpersonal conditions that support both balance and motivation for this demographic.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that work-life balance and work motivation significantly and positively affect meaning of work among single women in their 30s and 40s employed in multinational PR agencies in South Jakarta. Organizations should consider implementing flexible work policies, autonomy-supportive management practices, and meaningful career development pathways to strengthen the sense of purpose and significance that professional single women derive from their work.

Practically, companies should prioritize flexible scheduling, psychological safety, autonomy in task execution, and recognition systems tailored to the needs and life stage of single professional women in midlife. Future research should expand the sample size, include longitudinal designs, and examine mediating variables such as professional identity and organizational support.

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