# The Relationship Between Stress Coping Strategies and Work-Life Balance Among Bank Employees

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## ABSTRACT

Several studies showed that bank employees face high job demands, which impact their work-life balance. Exceeding standard working hours and encountering significant stressors require employees to employ coping strategies to support their performance and daily lives. Therefore, the objective of this study is to determine the relationship between stress coping strategies and work-life balance, as well as the role of problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies on work-life balance among bank employees. This research involved 141 bank employees in Makassar City, South Sulawesi. The results revealed that both coping stress strategies have a positive correlation ($r=0.417$, $p<0.001$). Among the coping strategies, problem-focused coping had a greater impact.

**Keywords**: Work Life Balance; problem-focused coping strategies; emotion-focused coping strategies; bank employees

## INTRODUCTION

The current economic development has brought about new challenges in business organizations worldwide. The financial services industry is one sector that can significantly impact economic growth and plays a crucial role in driving the economy of a country (Inggrid, 2006). Banks, as part of the financial services sector, are trusted by both companies and individuals to manage their finances. As a result, banks are known for employing advanced technology to provide services to customers. Based on these factors, job demands in the banking industry are high, and the work is closely tied to working hours (Kasmir, 2004).

The working hours and workload that employees have to bear make them susceptible to experiencing stress (Jean, 2020). Job-related stress experienced by bank employees can have an impact on their work-life balance. Aisyah (2009) explains that high workloads imposed on employees can lead to low work-life balance. A low work-life balance is one of the sources of stressors for employees and encompasses four main issues: time, behavior, goal achievement, and tension (Fisher, 2001).

Employees who cannot achieve work-life balance can experience reduced well-being, leading to dissatisfaction in their lives, feelings of sadness, and engaging in negative behaviors such as drug consumption (Lowe, 2005). Furthermore, another impact of employees failing to create work-life balance in their work is the deterioration of their job performance. Based on these factors, if employees cannot achieve work-life balance within an organization, it not only affects the individuals themselves but also has implications for the organization as a whole (Yamamoti & Matsuura, 2014).

There are several factors that can influence work-life balance among employees, and one of them is stress coping strategies. Employees who experience stress may struggle to

achieve work-life balance due to work-related pressures. However, having effective stress coping strategies can help individuals manage and alleviate stress, enabling them to achieve work-life balance more easily (Kazmi & Sing, 2015). Coping strategies refer to the efforts made by individuals to avoid or deal with pressures and threats, relying on available resources to protect themselves and prevent stress resulting from the experienced pressures (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Indeed, the type of coping strategy used by individuals varies depending on the situation, and coping strategies are adjusted to match the type of stress experienced (Evans & Kim, 2013). If the situation is changeable by the individual, problem-focused coping strategies are likely to be employed. However, if the situation is unchangeable, individuals may resort to emotion-focused coping strategies. The success of coping strategies can be evaluated based on the reduction of perceived stress or the fulfillment of desired demands (Rutter, 2013). The research conducted by Zheng et al. (2016) found a relationship between coping strategies and work-life balance. The study revealed that employees who possess positive coping strategies are more likely to achieve work-life balance and experience higher well-being. Furthermore, the research indicated that problem-focused coping strategies, in particular, have a greater contribution to work-life balance compared to emotion-focused coping strategies. However, both categories of coping strategies have an impact on work-life balance among employees in Australia.

The coping strategies can also have positive impacts on various life roles. When employees are able to effectively manage stress and prevent it from affecting their personal and work lives, it helps them achieve work-life balance by balancing both roles. Jackson et al. (1982) explained that experiences in work life can influence attitudes and behaviors in personal life, and vice versa. Therefore, the coping strategies employed by employees can help them cope with the pressures of work life without negatively affecting their attitudes and behaviors in other aspects of life.

Spillover theory explains that experiences in work and non-work domains influence each other. The principle of this theory suggests that positive influences from all life domains can contribute to individual satisfaction and high work-life balance (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). Staines (1980) explains that spillover occurs when one domain impacts another domain in similar ways, even though boundaries between family, personal life, and work domains have been established.

Hill (2003) explains that spillover can have both negative and positive effects. Positive spillover refers to the enhancement generated from one domain that influences another domain. For example, happiness at work may lead to happiness at home. Negative spillover refers to conflicts between work and non-work domains and is often characterized by various types of conflicts or disruptions. For instance, when work becomes boring or monotonous, employees may become unmotivated to complete assigned tasks, which in turn leads to reluctance to engage in activities at home or with family members.

The study conducted by Rotondo and Kincaid (2008) found that employees who derive happiness from the work domain to the non-work domain are assumed to possess the ability to maintain a positive outlook, which is one of the coping strategies employed by employees. This ability helps them develop the capacity to reduce conflicts between work and non-work domains, ultimately enabling them to achieve work-life balance. Amazue and Onyishi (2015) discovered a significant relationship between coping strategies and work-life balance among bank employees in Nigeria. The researchers found that coping strategies

involving seeking social support and emotional support were effective in managing a good work-life balance. These strategies help individuals protect themselves from the negative stressors, making it easier for them to maintain work-life balance.

Based on the above explanation, this study aimed to find out the relationship of coping strategies to work-life balance among bank employees. Also, the impact of problem-focused coping and emotion-focus coping strategies on work-life balance among bank employees.

## METHOD

### Participants

The participants involved in this study were bank employees, working in Makassar city, aged 20-60 years, and with a minimum work experience of 1 year. Based on calculations using G-Power 3.1 software, a minimum of 107 samples needed to be collected. This study involved 155 samples of bank employees working in Makassar city, but after conducting data cleaning, 141 respondents were obtained.

### Instruments

The scale used for the work-life balance variable was developed by Fisher (2009) and adapted by Aras et al (2022), consisting of 17 items. The validity and reliability of the work-life balance measurement tool were assessed, resulting in an RMSEA value of 0.07 and a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.822. Therefore, based on these findings, it can be concluded that the work-life balance measurement tool is reliable for use. The work-life balance scale developed by Fisher (2009) comprises four dimensions: Work interference with personal life (WIPL), Personal life interference with work (PLIW), Work enhancement of personal life (WEPL), and Personal life enhancement of work.

The coping strategy variable, based on Lazarus and Folkman's framework, includes two types of coping strategies: problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. The measurement tool for coping strategies was constructed by Gunawan (2019) and consists of 50 items. The validity and reliability of the measurement tool for problem-focused coping were assessed, resulting in an RMSEA value of 0.03 and a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.784. Similarly, for emotion-focused coping, the RMSEA value was 0.04, and the Cronbach's alpha value was 0.872. The problem-focused coping strategy has three dimensions: planful problem-solving, confrontative coping, and seeking social support. On the other hand, the emotion-focused coping strategy has five dimensions: distancing, self-control, escape/avoidance, accepting responsibility, and positive reappraisal.

### Analytical Techniques

The data were analyzed using a multiple regression test to test the hypothesis, which is the coping stress strategies to work-life balance. The data testing were carried out using the SPPS application.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Result

### 1. Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis testing of this research was conducted to determine the contribution of coping stress strategies to work life balance using multiple regression test.

**Table 1. Multiple Regression test result of Coping stress strategies on Work Life Balance**

| Variabel | β | t | Sig. t | R | $R^2$ | Adj. R Square | F | Sig. F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Problem focused coping | ,405 | 3,099 | 0,00 | | | | | |
| Emotion focused coping | ,277 | 2,707 | 0,00 | ,417 | ,174 | ,162 | 14,547 | 0,00 |

The results of the multiple linear regression test, as shown in Table 1, reveal that the obtained F-value is 14.547, of 0.00 (p<0.05), it can be concluded that the obtained results are statistically significant. Based on this, it can be inferred that there is a significant contribution of both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies to work-life balance among bank employees in Makassar City. Furthermore, the variance of work-life balance explained by problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies is 17.4%, while the remaining 82.6% is explained by other factors beyond these coping strategies.

**Table 2. Multiple Regression test result of problem focused coping on Work Life Balance**

| Variabel | R | $R^2$ | Adj. R Square | F | Sig. F | β | t | Sig. t |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Problem focused coping | ,361 | ,130 | ,124 | 20,815 | 0,00 | ,554 | 4,562 | 0,00 |

The results of the multiple linear regression test shown in Table 2 indicate that the obtained F-value is 20.815, of 0.00 (p<0.05). Therefore, it can be said that the obtained results are significant based on this comparison. Furthermore, the problem-focused coping strategy variable contributes 12.4% to work-life balance, while the remaining 87.6% is explained by other factors outside of problem-focused coping strategies.

**Table 3. Multiple Regression test result of emotion focused coping on Work Life Balance**

| Variabel | R | $R^2$ | Adj. R Square | F | Sig. F | β | t | Sig. t |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Emotion focused coping | ,342 | ,117 | ,110 | 18,354 | 0,00 | ,410 | 4,284 | 0,00 |

Then, the obtained F-value is 18.354 of 0.00 (p<0.05). It can be stated that the obtained results are significant based on this comparison. Therefore, the contribution of emotion-focused coping strategies to work-life balance among bank employees in Makassar city is accepted. Furthermore, the emotion-focused coping strategy variable contributes 11% to work-life balance, while the remaining 89% is explained by other factors outside of emotion-focused coping strategies.

**Discussion**

This research study demonstrates a significant relationship between coping strategies and work-life balance. Lazarus and Folkman (1980) stated that all individuals have problem-focused coping strategies and emotion-focused coping strategies, but these coping strategies will be used according to the stressor they receive. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Zheng et al. (2016), which found a positive and significant correlation between problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping strategies with work-life balance. Furthermore, this study also reveals that employees with positive coping strategies are more likely to achieve work-life balance and experience better well-being. Positive coping strategies referred to in this context include problem-solving, redirecting emotional feelings through positive activities such as sports, engaging in voluntary and religious activities (Permaitiyas, 2013).

Based on the results of the multiple regression analysis, it was also found that problem-focused coping strategies have a greater contribution compared to emotion-focused coping strategies. Thoits (2006) explains that individuals who employ problem-focused coping strategies generally take direct action and engage in solving the problems they face by changing or eliminating threatening circumstances. As a result, individuals are able to avoid work-life conflicts and achieve high levels of work-life balance. Furthermore, according to the instrumental spillover theory, specific skills and behaviors carried over from one domain to another will yield positive consequences. It can be observed that individuals who employ problem-focused coping strategies are more likely to take action in addressing stress arising from both work-related and non-work-related problems. Therefore, based on these findings, the actions taken by individuals will lead to positive consequences and facilitate the achievement of work-life balance more easily (Edward & Rothbard, 2000).

However, it is important to note that emotion-focused coping strategies also make a positive contribution. Problem-focused coping strategies are considered as skills or abilities possessed by employees. Therefore, problem-focused coping strategies can be used by employees to address problems or sources of stress in various domains of life (Reilly, 2014). Hecht and Boies (2009) also found a significant relationship between emotion-focused coping strategies and work-life balance among employees. Employees who use emotion-focused coping strategies employ them to alleviate emotional reactions and may not have additional resources to cope with the stressors they face. As a result, employees tend to redirect their perceived emotions towards a positive direction in order to achieve a good work-life balance. Employees who employ emotion-focused coping strategies demonstrate good self-control in managing their perceived stress, ensuring that they address their negative emotions before completing their tasks.

The study conducted by Jackson et al. (1982) found that the experiences gained in work life can influence attitudes and behaviors in personal life, and vice versa. Therefore,

the coping strategies possessed by employees can help them manage the pressures they face in their work life without affecting their attitudes and behaviors in other aspects of life. Additionally, the researchers conducted interviews with three informants who stated that factors other than coping strategies can also influence the level of work-life balance, such as organizational support and family support.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the hypothesis testing conducted previously, it can be concluded that stress coping strategies contribute to work-life balance among bank employees in Makassar city by 17,4%. The contribution of problem-focused coping strategies is the most influential, accounting for 12.4% of the work-life balance, while the contribution of emotion-focused coping strategies is 11% to work-life balance among bank employees in Makassar city.

The implications of this research are to help employees achieve work-life balance so that they can work optimally and be committed to the organization. Additionally, it can provide information to employees regarding stress coping strategies that can assist them in achieving work-life balance within the organization. One limitation of this research is that it is still limited to bank employees in Makassar. Future research can involve bank employees from other region. This can provide different dynamics related to coping stress strategies and work-life balance. Future research can also expand the scope of its variables by adding predictors, mediators, or moderators to show the theoretical model related to factors that can influence work-life balance.

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