

How Workload Leads to Burnout: The Mediating Roles of Job Stress and Work-Life Balance

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the effect of workload on burnout, with job stress and work-life balance as mediating variables. The data consisted of 235 employees, whose information was obtained through an online questionnaire that distributed to civil servants at BPS (Badan Pusat Statistik) throughout Bengkulu province. The collected data was then analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the SmartPLS software. This study show that workload does not directly lead to burnout but exerts its influence indirectly by significantly increasing job stress and reducing work-life balance. Job stress fully mediates the relationship between workload and burnout, whereas work-life balance neither predicts burnout nor functions as a mediating mechanism. Overall, burnout among civil servants is driven more by psychological strain than by workload intensity alone, reinforcing the explanatory power of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model framework in the public sector context.

Keywords: Workload; Job Stress; Work-Life Balance; Burnout; Public Sector.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh *workload* terhadap *burnout*, dengan *job stress* dan *work-life balance* sebagai variabel mediasi. Data diambil dari 235 pegawai yang diperoleh melalui kuesioner *online* yang didistribusikan kepada PNS di BPS (Badan Pusat Statistik) se-Provinsi Bengkulu. Data yang dikumpulkan kemudian dianalisis menggunakan *Structural Equation Modeling* (SEM) dengan perangkat lunak SmartPLS. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa *workload* tidak secara langsung menyebabkan *burnout*, tetapi pengaruhnya bersifat tidak langsung dengan secara signifikan meningkatkan *job stress* dan mengurangi *work-life balance*. *Job stress* sepenuhnya memediasi hubungan antara *workload* dan *burnout*, sedangkan *work-life balance* tidak memberikan pengaruh signifikan terhadap *burnout* maupun berfungsi sebagai variabel mediasi. Secara keseluruhan, *burnout* di kalangan PNS lebih dipengaruhi oleh tekanan psikologis daripada intensitas beban kerja saja, hal ini memperkuat kerangka kerja *Job Demands-Resources* (JD-R) Model dalam konteks sektor publik.

Kata Kunci: Workload; Job Stress; Work-Life Balance; Burnout; Sektor Public.

INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of change in the public sector are characterized by increased demands for performance, accountability, and work complexity, leading to significant quantitative and qualitative workloads for civil servants. These pressures manifest as performance targets, time constraints, and administrative demands, contributing to a heightened risk of burnout, which adversely affects employees' psychological health, the quality of public services, and overall organizational effectiveness (Alenezi et al., 2022; Kaiser et al., 2020; Kmail et al., 2025). Although professional burdens are widely recognized as a major catalyst for employee exhaustion, the existing body of literature offers a conflicting narrative regarding the degree to which this factor independently triggers burnout



symptoms (Aljawarneh, 2025; Zakaria et al., 2022). This perspective underscores the need to investigate job stress and work–life balance as mediators that clarify how workload contributes to burnout among public sector employees (Arceta, 2020; Costa et al., 2024). A clear understanding of these elements is crucial for preventing burnout and improving the well-being of employees in this key workforce (Huo, 2025).

Previous research indicates that higher workloads are linked to increased job stress in the public sector, with job stress playing a critical role in the development of burnout as a psychological reaction to work demands (Kim & Kweon, 2020; W. Zhao et al., 2022). Extensive empirical evidence underscores that maintaining a professional-personal equilibrium acts as a critical buffer, effectively lowering the risk of occupational exhaustion while fostering a more resilient sense of health among staff (Irfan et al. 2021). Some studies have found significant direct effects, while others indicate that these effects diminish or become non-significant when psychological variables are integrated into the models examined (Arif et al., 2022; Dugger, 2024). By doing so, we can uncover a more nuanced understanding of how these overlapping factors collectively drive the phenomenon of professional exhaustion (Guidetti, 2021; C. Wei et al., 2025).

Interplay between workload & burnout remains under-explored within a unified mediation framework, presenting a significant research gap. Although a vast body of literature has already explored how task-related burdens straightly impact professional exhaustion, the results remain far from settled when specific organizational contexts are considered, they often fail to elucidate whether burnout results from the workload itself or from the psychological stress it generates (C. Jiang et al., 2024; Xu et al., 2025). Among public sector workers, the function of work–life balance as a mediator is uncertain, with research providing inconsistent support (Bartram et al., 2023; Kotera et al., 2021). Furthermore, existing literature highlights a shortage of research focusing specifically on civil servants in developing nations compared to private sector studies, which limits the generalizability of findings and suggests a dire need for contextual investigation in these environments (Breugh, 2020; López-Núñez et al., 2020). Thus, a better understanding of the psychological pathways between workload and burnout in the public sector is needed, since prior research generally treats these elements in isolation rather than as interconnected.

This study examines the impact of workload on burnout among state civil apparatus (SCA) by analyzing the mediating roles of job stress and work–life balance. It investigates how workload increases occupational stress and disrupts life–work harmony, which may subsequently lead to burnout. Previous research indicates that higher workloads are associated with greater stress, reduced work–life balance, and increased burnout among civil servants (Azizian Kohan & Fathi, 2020; Luran et al., 2025). Evidence also shows that job stress significantly mediates the relationship between workload and burnout (Jasiński & Derbis, 2022; Wang et al., 2020), while work–life balance has been identified as an important predictor of employee well-being and a potential buffering factor (Sharma & Tiwari, 2023). Therefore, this study seeks to clarify these relationships and provide insights to support more effective management strategies in the civil service.

The findings of this research provide significant insights into the interplay between occupational pressure, stress, and exhaustion, particularly within the context of governmental institutions. This perspective is reinforced by previous research demonstrating a strong association between elevated work demands and higher burnout levels across professions, including nursing and education (Haar & Mowat, 2021;



Scheepers, 2020; Zare, 2021). Furthermore, the research provides empirical evidence that challenges the conventional belief that work life balance serve as a consistent mediator in this dynamic, suggesting that it may not always act as a compensatory factor in public sector work environments (Breugh, 2020). The findings also clarify inconsistencies in previous literature regarding Rather than only moderating the link, job stress seems to strengthen the impact of workload on burnout (Hu et al., 2020; López-Núñez et al., 2020).

On a practical level, this study offers crucial insights for public organizations, advocating for the prioritization of effective stress management strategies over mere workload reduction as a means of combating burnout (Huo, 2025). This approach could lead This can inform the development of human resource management policies that prioritize employees' psychological well-being, ensuring that workplace practices and organizational strategies support mental health. Such an approach promotes a healthier, more resilient workforce, ultimately benefiting both the employees and the organization's performance in achieving its goals (Shin et al., 2021; Zahednezhad et al., 2021). Aligning stress regulation practices with sustainable performance metrics, the research supports ongoing efforts within public sector organizations to implement wellness-based frameworks that not only improve human resource functionality but also elevate the the comprehensive quality of services provided by public institutions (Breugh, 2020; Shin et al., 2021).

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model provides a conceptual framework for understanding how job demands and job resources influence employee well-being. According to this model, high job demands such as excessive workload require sustained physical and mental effort. When these demands are not balanced by sufficient organizational support or resources, employees are more likely to experience prolonged stress, which can eventually lead to burnout. In this sense, burnout is viewed as a long-term consequence of unmanaged work demands. For instance, (Huo, 2025) found that the interaction between job demands and resources significantly affects teacher burnout, particularly in rural China, emphasizing the importance of workload reduction and job satisfaction. Similarly (Marsh et al., 2022) showed that for school administrators, personal motivation can mediate the relationship between job demands and exhaustion, highlighting the dynamic nature of the JD-R framework. Furthermore, (Z. Wei, 2024) identified a strong association between heavy workloads and burnout among healthcare professionals, further confirming the model's applicability in high-pressure environments.

Workload, defined as the accumulation of job demands including task volume, work intensity, and time pressure, is recognized Workload is recognized as a major factor driving employee stress and burnout, especially in sectors with high demands. Research in human resource management suggests that heavy workloads contribute to greater mental and emotional fatigue, largely explained by the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model. According to this framework, excessive job demands deplete employees' psychological resources, increasing their susceptibility to emotional exhaustion and fostering more negative attitudes toward their work roles (Phungsoonthorn & Charoensukmongkol, 2022; Xu et al., 2025).

However, The link between workload and burnout appears to vary, particularly in public sector roles, indicating that workload may not directly cause burnout but instead



acts through certain psychological mechanisms. Research shows that while workload can lead to burnout, its effect is often indirect, shaped by factors such as organizational support and individual employee resilience (Russeng, 2020; N. Zhao, 2023). In addition, organizational resources such as strong workplace cohesion can help mitigate the negative impact of heavy workloads on emotional exhaustion, highlighting the intricate interaction between job demands & the resources available to employees (Ma et al., 2025). In summary, while high workload correlates with increased burnout risks, the relationship is mediated by psychological factors and supportive work environments, thus emphasizing It is important to implement thorough workforce management strategies to reduce the effects of work demands on employee well-being.

Job stress is a psychological response that arises when job demands exceed an individual's capacity to cope, as explained by the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model. Excessive demands create sustained pressure that increases the risk of burnout, a major concern in occupational health (Kaski & Kinnunen, 2020; Park et al., 2021; Romero-Carazas et al., 2024). Empirical studies show that job stress acts as a direct predictor of burnout, particularly emotional exhaustion, which intensifies as job demands increase (Barello et al., 2021; Gluschkoff et al., 2021). However, the JD-R model also highlights that adequate job resources, such as organizational support and autonomy, can buffer these negative effects (D. Jiang et al., 2022). Therefore, managing workload and strengthening support systems are essential strategies to reduce burnout and enhance employee well-being.

Within the JD-R framework, work–life balance (WLB) is conceptualized as a personal resource that enables employees to manage the tension between professional responsibilities and private life. This balance is particularly important in structured environments such as the civil service, where rigid schedules and formal procedures may intensify work pressures (Arceta, 2020; Ko, 2022). Although empirical findings regarding the direct impact of WLB on burnout remain mixed (Chênevert et al., 2021; N. Zhao et al., 2023), many studies suggest that WLB can function as a mediating mechanism that weakens the relationship between job demands and burnout (Ramaci et al., 2021; Zeshan et al., 2024). High job demands tend to drain personal resources and increase exhaustion, whereas maintaining a healthy balance between work and personal life can help restore psychological stability and support overall well-being (Ahmad & Rachmawati, 2023; Alrawashdeh et al., 2021).

In contemporary work environments, Workload is recognized as an important factor that can increase job stress and reduce work-life balance. Studies show that individuals experiencing excessive workload frequently report heightened job stress, which is regarded as a direct precursor to burnout (Dugger, 2024; Zare et al., 2021). Notably, the link between workload and burnout is underpinned by evidence suggesting that increased workload corresponds with enhanced burnout levels, solidifying the premise that job stress emerges as a critical mediating factor (Kmail et al., 2025). While theoretical frameworks suggest that a healthier work-life balance could mitigate burnout, empirical validation of this assertion remains limited, with studies showing varying findings (Zakaria, 2022; Zhou, 2020). For instance, while a strong work-life balance is expected to lower burnout, mixed findings in past research suggest that this relationship could be affected by contextual factors such as workload levels and the support provided by the organization (Boamah et al., 2022; Macy et al., 2024).



Current research on burnout highlights an important gap concerning the simultaneous investigation of two mediating factors in the link between workload and burnout. This suggests that the indirect mechanisms through which workload influences burnout are not yet fully understood (Mao et al., 2020; Xu et al., 2025), inconsistencies persist in the outcomes of these direct relationships, which may confuse the understanding of this phenomenon (Mu et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2023). Furthermore, there is a significant lack of empirical evidence specifically targeting the public sector in Indonesia, as highlighted by research demonstrating varying levels of burnout across different sectors and populations (Pourteimour et al., 2021). This gap underscores the need for further investigation into the psychological mechanisms that elucidate how workload culminates in burnout. By exploring these undefined relationships and identifying potential mediators, researchers can contribute valuable insights into burnout prevention strategies, particularly within the Indonesian public sector (Stan & Ciobanu, 2022). Consequently, there is a pressing requirement to dissect the intricate internal mechanics that drive these outcomes, ensuring a more sophisticated approach to maintaining a healthy workplace environment (Moriano, 2021; Svanström, 2025).

Drawing upon the JD-R theoretical construct, this conceptual structure offers a methodical lens for evaluating the interconnectedness of occupational volume, psychological tension, and personal-professional equilibrium. For instance, studies highlight that high workload correlates strongly with increased emotional exhaustion and disengagement, particularly among midwives and healthcare professionals (Barello et al., 2021; Jasiński & Derbis, 2023). The JD-R model emphasizes that when people encounter high job demands, such as heavy workloads, without sufficient resources, they are more prone to job stress, which in turn harms their work-life balance (Arceta, 2020; Chela-Álvarez et al., 2020). Furthermore a profound interdependence exists between occupational tension and life-work harmony, as escalating stress often acts as a corrosive force that compromises an individual's capacity to sustain a stable equilibrium between their professional duties and private spheres (Arceta, 2020; Shirmohammadi et al., 2022). Such imbalance further exacerbates feelings of burnout, creating a vicious cycle that is detrimental to both employee well-being and organizational productivity (Albendín-García et al., 2021; Dima et al., 2021).

To examine the complex interactions between workload, job stress, work-life balance, and burnout, several research hypotheses have been developed. Hypothesis 1 (H1) proposes that workload has a positive effect on job stress, consistent with evidence showing that heavy workloads are associated with higher stress levels. For example, healthcare professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic experienced substantial burnout as a result of excessive job demands (Morgantini, 2020; Zare, 2021). Hypothesis 2 (H2) suggests Workload negatively affects work-life balance, as research shows that heavy workloads can greatly interfere with employees' ability to manage personal life, leading to increased stress and burnout (Ferguson et al., 2023). Additionally, Hypothesis 3 (H3) This study posits that occupational tension acts as a direct catalyst for professional exhaustion, a premise reinforced by a broad consensus in the literature. Previous findings across high-pressure sectors most notably within the educational and healthcare fields consistently demonstrate that as psychological strain intensifies, there is a corresponding and measurable escalation in burnout severity (Ni et al., 2022; Song et al., 2023). Conversely, Hypothesis 4 (H4) proposes that work-life balance adversely affects burnout, as poor work-life management has been recognized as a contributing factor to heightened



burnout levels among professionals (Lee et al., 2022). Moreover, Hypothesis 5 (H5) suggests a direct link between workload and burnout, with existing research consistently showing that heavy workloads are a key predictor of burnout (Morgantini, 2020; Ni et al., 2022). Hypotheses 6 (H6) and 7 (H7) explore the mediating roles of job stress and work-life balance, respectively, in the context of workload and burnout relationships, indicating that both factors could significantly mediate the effects of workload on burnout, aligning with established findings that support these mediating pathways through organizational and individual factors (Ferguson et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2022).

METHODS

A quantitative research design is employed in this investigation to dissect how task volumes directly impact burnout, alongside the mediating roles of occupational tension and life-work harmony. By focusing on the civil service (PNS) within the BPS offices of Bengkulu Province, the study utilizes a saturated sampling technique. This choice was made to ensure total population representation, given the limited number of participants available. Information is gathered through an integrated approach of original field data and existing records, with each variable assessed via established scales that correspond to the JD-R framework.

Data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale adapted to the public sector context. The instrument measured workload, job stress, work-life balance, and burnout. Workload was assessed through indicators such as task demands, time pressure, and work intensity. Job stress captured psychological strain resulting from work demands. Work-life balance reflected the ability to manage professional and personal responsibilities, while burnout measured emotional and psychological exhaustion.

Given that all data were collected from the same respondents at a single point in time, the study acknowledged the potential risk of common method bias (CMB). Procedural remedies included ensuring anonymity and confidentiality, reducing evaluation apprehension, improving item clarity, and psychologically separating predictor and criterion variables. Statistically, Harman's single-factor test and a full collinearity assessment were applied. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values below 3.300 indicated that CMB was unlikely to threaten validity (Kock, 2015). To address potential endogeneity from omitted variables or reciprocal causality, inner VIF values were examined within the structural model. Low VIF values suggested no serious endogeneity concerns. Model fit, predictive relevance (Q^2), and alternative model comparisons were also evaluated to confirm the robustness and stability of the path coefficients, thereby strengthening the credibility and causal interpretation of the finding (Kock, 2015).

The statistical evaluation of the data is conducted via Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), executed through the SmartPLS platform. This technique was selected due to its robust capability in deciphering intricate structural pathways involving various latent constructs and intervening effects. Furthermore, its proficiency in maintaining high predictive power even with non-extensive sample groups aligns perfectly with the requirements of the current study's analytical framework (Hair et al., 2019). The analytical process was executed through a dual-phase approach. Initially, the outer model underwent rigorous assessment to verify both construct validity and the reliability of internal consistency. Following this validation, the structural framework was analyzed to



test the hypothesized relationships concerning the direct impact of workload and the intervening influences of occupational stress and life-work harmony. To determine the statistical weight of these pathways, a bootstrapping technique was employed to evaluate the significance of the path coefficients.

RESULTS

Description of Respondent Demographics. The questionnaire was distributed to all 279 civil servants working at the Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) across Bengkulu Province. Of these, 235 employees agreed to participate and completed the questionnaire, resulting in a response rate that was considered adequate for further analysis. The respondents represented 11 BPS work units across the province, reflecting a broad organizational coverage. **Table 1.** Show the characteristics of 235 respondent.

In terms of gender, the majority of respondents were male (56.170 percent), with females making up 43.830 percent of the sample. This distribution aligns with typical patterns observed in public sector statistical institutions. Regarding age, most respondents were between 31 and 40 years old (38.872 percent), followed by those over 40 years old (31.490 percent). Respondents aged 25 to 30 comprised 23.404 percent of the sample, while those under 25 were the smallest group at 7.234 percent. This suggests that the majority of participants were in their productive and experienced working years. Concerning work experience, most respondents had over 6 years of service (63.404 percent), indicating strong familiarity with their roles and organizational processes. Meanwhile, 24.681 percent had 1 to 3 years of experience, and 11.915 percent had 4 to 6 years, reflecting that most respondents were well-acquainted with their jobs.

Table 1. Respondent Demographics

Variable	Category	Amount	Percentage
Gender	Male	132	56.170
	Female	103	43.830
Age	Under 25 years	17	7.234
	25 to 30 years	55	23.404
	31 to 40 years	89	38.872
	Over 40 years	74	31.490
Work experience	1 to 3 years	58	24.681
	4 to 6 years	28	11.915
	Over 6 years	149	63.404
Marital status	Married	188	80.000
	Not married	47	20.000
Education level	High school (SMA/SMK)	27	11.489
	Diploma (DI/DIII)	14	5.957
	Bachelor (S1/DIV)	147	62.553
	Master (S2)	46	19.574
	Doctor (S3)	1	0.426

Source: processed data

The demographic profile reveals that a vast majority of the participants approximately 80.000 percent are married, a factor that carries significant weight in evaluating work-life equilibrium. This status is crucial, as the interplay between familial obligations and career duties often dictates how an individual navigates their personal-



professional boundaries. In terms of academic background, bachelor's degree graduates represent the largest segment at 62.553 percent, with master's degree recipients comprising a further 19.574 percent of the sample. High school graduates made up 11.489 percent, diploma holder 5.957 percent, and only a very small proportion (0.426 percent) had a doctoral degree. Overall, the sample demonstrates that respondents generally have sufficient academic qualifications to fulfill their professional responsibilities.

To ensure the integrity of the research variables, the outer model was subjected to a rigorous psychometric examination. This evaluation aimed to confirm that the measurement instruments were both accurate and consistent by assessing convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability. Such procedures are essential to ensure that each latent construct is adequately represented by its respective indicators. Convergent validity is confirmed if the factor loading values exceed the predetermined threshold. (Hair et al., 2019), although the ideal factor loading value is above 0.700, indicators with loadings of 0.500 or higher are considered acceptable for establishing convergent validity. Therefore, in this study, indicators that met the loading threshold of greater than 0.500 were regarded as convergently valid and retained for further analysis. The initial measurement model evaluation indicated that several indicators did not meet the minimum loading threshold of 0.500. Specifically, three indicators from the workload construct and one indicator from work-life balance showed insufficient loadings and were therefore removed. After re-estimating the model, **Table 2** shows the results confirmed that all remaining indicators achieved acceptable loading values above 0.500, indicating that the measurement model met the criteria for convergent validity.

Based on these results, all retained indicators meet the minimum loading requirement recommended by (Hair et al., 2019), confirming that the measurement model satisfies the criteria for convergent validity.

Table 2. Convergent Validity Test Results through Loading Factor

Indicator	Loading Factor
W ₁	0.579
W ₂	0.699
W ₃	0.550
W ₅	0.635
W ₆	0.627
W ₇	0.679
JS ₁	0.677
JS ₂	0.717
JS ₃	0.752
JS ₄	0.634
JS ₅	0.789
JS ₆	0.585
JS ₇	0.612
Indicator	Loading Factor
JS ₈	0.716
JS ₉	0.740
WLB ₁	0.737
WLB ₂	0.634
WLB ₃	0.750
WLB ₄	0.577
WLB ₆	0.829
WLB ₇	0.567



WLB ₈	0.587
WLB ₉	0.647
B ₁	0.722
B ₂	0.699
B ₃	0.695
B ₄	0.767
B ₅	0.748
B ₆	0.704
B ₇	0.700
B ₈	0.731
B ₉	0.711

Source: processed data

In this study, discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) method, with a value below 0.900 indicating that the criterion was satisfied. As shown in **Table 3**, the HTMT results revealed that all values between constructs were under the 0.900 threshold. Therefore, it can be concluded that each construct in the research model demonstrates a satisfactory level of distinction, indicating that discriminant validity has been successfully achieved.

Table 3. Result of Heterotrait Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Variable	HTMT
Job Stress ⇔ Burnout	0.874
Workload ⇔ Burnout	0.534
Workload ⇔ Job Stress	0.715
Work-life Balance ⇔ Burnout	0.495
Work-life Balance ⇔ Job Stress	0.697
Work-life Balance ⇔ Workload	0.636

Source: processed data

Table 3 shows that all HTMT values range from 0.495 to 0.874, which are below the recommended threshold of 0.900 (Hair et al., 2019), indicating that each construct is empirically distinct and thus demonstrates adequate discriminant validity. This confirms that workload, job stress, work-life balance, and burnout measure different concepts without excessive overlap. In addition, reliability is assessed using Cronbach’s Alpha and Composite Reliability, where values above 0.700 indicate good internal consistency (Hair et al., 2019; Jogiyanto, 2019). Based on these criteria, all variables in this study can be considered both valid and reliable for further structural model analysis.

Table 4. Result of Composite Reliability

Variable	Cronbach’s Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_c)
Burnout	0.885	0.906
Job Stress	0.864	0.893
Workload	0.705	0.797
Work-life balance	0.824	0.866

Source: processed data

Table 4 shows the Cronbach’s Alpha and Composite Reliability (ρc) values for each construct. All Cronbach’s Alpha values range from 0.705 to 0.885, while Composite



Reliability values range from 0.797 to 0.906. These results exceed the recommended minimum threshold of 0.700 as suggested by (Hair et al., 2019), indicating adequate internal consistency reliability. Specifically, burnout (α is 0.885; ρ_c is 0.906), job stress (α is 0.864; ρ_c is 0.893), workload (α is 0.705; ρ_c is 0.797), and work-life balance (α is 0.824; ρ_c is 0.866) all demonstrate satisfactory reliability levels. This means that the indicators within each construct consistently measure the same underlying concept and exhibit stability in their measurement. Therefore, it can be concluded that all variables in this study are reliable, largely free from substantial measurement error, and suitable for further structural model analysis. The results of the model testing using SmartPLS are presented in **Figure 1**.

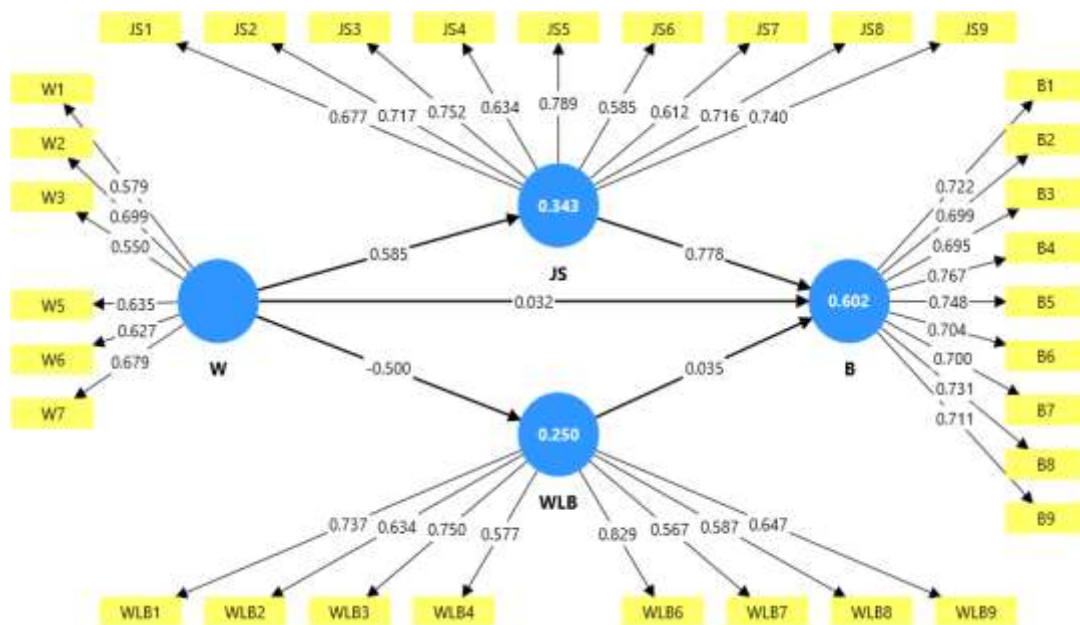


Figure 1. SEM Model Test Using Smart PLS

Source: processed data

This study took additional steps to examine the potential presence of common method bias (CMB) and endogeneity. All VIF values are below the conservative threshold of 3.300 (Kock, 2015). This indicates that no construct exhibits problematic levels of collinearity. In the context of the full collinearity assessment approach, VIF values below 3.300 suggest that the model is free from substantial common method variance. Therefore, it can be concluded that the relationships observed among workload, job stress, work-life balance, and burnout are not artificially inflated due to the use of a single data collection method. These findings strengthen the credibility of the structural model and provide confidence that common method bias does not threaten the validity of the study's empirical results. Endogeneity was assessed using the full collinearity approach by examining inner VIF values. VIF values below 3.300 indicate absence of pathological collinearity and potential endogeneity issues (Kock, 2015).



Table 5. Inner VIF Values

Variable	HTMT
Job Stress ⇔ Burnout	1.915
Workload ⇔ Burnout	1.600
Workload ⇔ Job Stress	1.000
Workload ⇔ Work-life Balance	1.000
Work-life Balance ⇔ Burnout	1.678

Source: processed data

According to **Table 5** All inner VIF values are below the conservative threshold of 3.300, indicating that no predictor construct exhibits problematic levels of collinearity with other predictors in explaining the endogenous variables. According to the full collinearity assessment approach, such results suggest the absence of pathological collinearity that could signal potential endogeneity issues arising from omitted variables or model misspecification. Therefore, the estimated path coefficients can be interpreted with greater confidence, as the structural relationships identified in the model are unlikely to be biased due to endogeneity problems.

The results of the direct effect analysis show that workload positively and significantly impacts job stress (β equals 0.585; t equals 9.985; p less than 0.001). This indicates that as workload increases, employees experience higher levels of job stress. Greater job demands require more physical and mental effort, which consequently raises stress levels. Thus, Hypothesis 1 is supported. Additionally, the analysis demonstrates that workload negatively and significantly affects work-life balance (β equals -0.500 ; t equals 8.126; p less than 0.001). This suggests that heavier workloads reduce employees' capacity to manage work alongside personal and family responsibilities. High workloads tend to consume time and energy that could otherwise be devoted to non-work activities. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is also supported.

Table 6. Direct Effect Results

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	t-statistics	p-values	Conclusion
Workload has a positive effect on Job Stress (H ₁)	0.585	9.985	0.000	Supported
Workload has a negative effect on Work-life Balance (H ₂)	-0.500	8.126	0.000	Supported
Job Stress has a positive effect on Burnout (H ₃)	0.778	15.408	0.000	Supported
Work-life Balance has a negative effect on Burnout (H ₄)	0.035	0.488	0.626	Not Supported
Workload has a positive effect on burnout (H ₅)	0.032	0.580	0.562	Not Supported

Source: processed data

Empirical findings confirm that occupational tension serves as a predominant driver of burnout, evidenced by a strong positive correlation (β equals 0.778; t equals 15.408; p less than 0.001). These statistics imply that as psychological pressure intensifies, personnel become significantly more vulnerable to professional depletion. The data suggests that when stress becomes a chronic fixture in the workplace, it erodes emotional energy and



stifles individual achievement both of which are hallmarks of the burnout syndrome. Consequently, the evidence provides robust support for Hypothesis 3.

In contrast, the analysis reveals that work-life balance does not have a significant effect on burnout (β equals 0.035; t equals 0.488; p equals 0.626). This finding indicates that, within the context of this study, employees' ability to manage work and personal responsibilities does not directly alleviate burnout. A possible explanation is that burnout is primarily driven by immediate work-related stressors rather than by the perceived balance between work and non-work domains. Accordingly, Hypothesis 4 is not supported.

Finally, the findings show that workload does not exert a significant direct effect on burnout (β equals 0.032; t equals 0.580; p equals 0.562). This implies that workload alone is insufficient to directly cause burnout without mediating factors, such as job stress. In other words, while workload may increase burnout, this effect occurs indirectly through elevated stress levels rather than via a direct relationship. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 is not supported. These results highlight the critical role of psychological pressure as a conduit, filtering the impact of work requirements before they manifest as burnout. Workload and burnout, emphasizing that stress management may be more influential in preventing burnout than workload reduction or work-life balance alone.

Table 7. Indirect Effect Results (Mediation Test)

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	t-statistics	p-values	Conclusion
Job Stress mediates the relationship between Workload and Burnout (H ₆)	0.455	8.534	0.000	Supported
Work-life Balance mediates the relationship between Workload and Burnout (H ₇)	-0.017	0.471	0.638	Not Supported

Source: processed data

Statistical analysis confirms that occupational tension functions as a vital intermediary in the workload-burnout link, providing empirical weight to Hypothesis 6 (H₆). With a robust path coefficient (beta equals 0.455; t equals 8.534; p less than 0.001), the data reveals that heightened task volumes first escalate psychological strain, which then serves as the primary driver for increased exhaustion levels. This demonstrates that workload influences burnout not only directly but also indirectly through elevated job stress.

In contrast, work-life balance does not serve as a mediator between workload and burnout, so Hypothesis 7 (H₇) is not supported. This is reflected in the non-significant path coefficient (β equals -0.017; t equals 0.471; p equals 0.638). The findings imply that while professional volume may trigger exhaustion, this process is not channeled through personal-life equilibrium. Consequently, work-life balance failed to act as a viable bridge for explaining how task demands lead to burnout, suggesting that the causal link is driven by alternative, more influential factors within the organizational environment.

DISCUSSION

The results reveal that while several factors impact burnout among PNS, job stress is the primary contributor, rather than workload on its own (Rambe & Pareke, 2024). Job



stress functions as an intermediary in the workload burnout link, underscoring its substantial effect on burnout levels among civil servants (Rambe & Pareke, 2024). Additionally, while there are varying perspectives on the role of work-life balance, certain studies indicate that it may not significantly influence burnout in a direct or mediating capacity (Kinanti, 2025). This suggests that burnout experienced by PNS tends to possess psychological characteristics rather than being solely a result of tangible factors like excessive workload (Rambe & Pareke, 2024). These insights are crucial for developing interventions aimed at mitigating burnout, emphasizing. Prioritizing stress management and mental health support over solely focusing on workload reduction (Arasma et al., 2024; Kinanti, 2025).

Workload is considered a primary job demand that increases job stress and disrupts work-life balance. High labor intensity drains psychological resources, leading to emotional exhaustion and work-home conflict, particularly in high-pressure sectors such as healthcare and the public sector (Chênevert et al., 2021; Chowhan & Pike, 2022). Research also shows that in public institutions, heavy workload is strongly associated with job stress, with work-life balance playing a mediating role (Priandari & Adnyani, 2023). Furthermore, changes in work conditions during the pandemic highlighted how excessive job demands negatively affect employees' quality of life (Barbieri et al., 2021). Evidence from the 2019 Indonesian electoral process similarly demonstrated that extreme professional pressures led to severe psychological strain (A'yunnisa et al., 2023). Overall, these findings support the JD-R assumption that high job demands increase stress and undermine employee well-being.

Occupational tension serves as a primary catalyst for professional depletion, primarily by destabilizing an individual's mental resilience and triggering emotional fatigue. When workplace strain becomes a persistent fixture, it manifests as a state of being emotionally overextended a pivotal characteristic of the burnout syndrome. Consistent with the JD-R framework, these stressors act as heavy demands that compromise an employee's vitality (Fattori et al., 2022). For instance, findings from a study conducted among midwives have shown that perinatal stress events directly relate to burnout, particularly in individuals with low self-efficacy, affirming According to the JD-R model, personal resources act as a buffer against processes that can impair health (Jasiński, 2021). Therefore, reinforcing job stress as a key variable in the framework of burnout underscores its relevance in both theoretical discussions and practical interventions aimed at mitigating burnout in various occupational settings.

Role of Work-Life Balance in Predicting Burnout appears to have a complex impact on burnout among civil servants, with evidence suggesting that stable work environments can mitigate some psychosocial stressors leading to burnout. The structured nature of public employment typically ensures predictable hours and job security, which contrasts with sectors like healthcare where high workloads and chronic stress are connected to greater burnout (Ahmead et al., 2024; Mayer et al., 2025). For instance, Palestinian health workers report elevated burnout due to extreme job stress and insufficient coping mechanisms (Ahmead et al., 2024). While civilian dentists in less stressful environments have exhibited lower burnout levels, it is essential to recognize that these findings might not be directly comparable across sectors due to varying levels of stress and coping resources (Mayer et al., 2025). Studies have shown that burnout correlates significantly with workplace dynamics and employee engagement, suggesting that organizations can adopt practices that promote work-life balance to help manage stress effectively (Wardani



& Firmansyah, 2020). Therefore, the relationship between WLB and burnout in civil servants should be viewed with nuance. Further targeted psychological support and stress management initiatives are vital in addressing burnout, alongside a focus on promoting an effective work-life balance.

Impact of workload on burnout the link between workload and burnout is multifaceted, with evidence indicating that workload by itself does not directly cause burnout. According to the JD-R framework, professional exhaustion is not merely a consequence of high task volume; rather, it is dictated by the interplay between psychological resilience and institutional support. This suggests that an individual's coping mechanisms and the resources at their disposal act as critical buffers that determine whether heavy workloads escalate into burnout (Kaiser et al., 2020; Xie et al., 2021). Evidence points to varied findings regarding the direct effect of workload on burnout, with burnout appearing to relate more to perceived stress than to quantitative workload indicators (Xie et al., 2021). For instance, Kumar et al. emphasized the importance of personal attributes and job resources, proposing that effective management of these factors could mitigate stress, thus influencing burnout outcomes indirectly (Kumar et al., 2022). Additionally, studies by (Xie et al., 2021) and (Kaiser et al., 2020) underline that while job demands, including workload, impact employee well-being, these effects are mediated by psychological responses and can vary significantly between individuals.

Impact of workload on burnout via job stress and work-life balance recent research within the framework of the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, especially in the public sector, has emphasized the role of job stress and its influence on work-life balance. Evidence indicates that job stress functions as a mediator between job demands and employee burnout. This is based on the understanding that job stress arises directly from job demands and, if not effectively managed, can lead to negative outcomes such as burnout (Khalid et al., 2020; Lehmann et al., 2021). These findings offer pivotal insights for the JD-R framework as applied to governmental institutions, highlighting how the intersection of workplace stress and personal-professional harmony serves as a foundation for effective management. By understanding this dynamic, public sector organizations can design targeted interventions that not only curb exhaustion but also cultivate a more resilient workforce (Lehmann et al., 2021).

In the context of Indonesian governance, the JD-R framework has emerged as a premier tool for dissecting occupational strain. Recent empirical evidence reinforces this model by identifying psychological stress as a pivotal conduit for organizational outcomes, a perspective that is vital for addressing the unique pressures inherent in the nation's public service. By focusing on the dynamic tension between professional requirements and supportive assets, this model successfully bridges prior research gaps concerning employee health and efficiency (Puente et al., 2024). As this discussion transitions to the conclusion, it is essential to synthesize the key findings: the centrality of job stress in the JD-R model illustrates the model's relevance in predicting employee health outcomes and informs policymakers and practitioners of the critical aspects to consider in mitigating stress-related issues in the workforce. Academically, these results not only advance understanding of job stress but also establishes a foundational basis for future research tailored to Indonesian public sector challenges, which may lead to improved employee resilience and workplace dynamics (Rizki & Purba, 2022).



CONCLUSION

This study examined how workload contributes to burnout among public sector employees by analyzing the roles of job stress and work-life balance. The findings show that workload does not directly cause burnout but instead affects it indirectly through job stress, which acts as a full mediator. In other words, high job demands lead to burnout primarily when they generate sustained psychological stress. The results also indicate that workload significantly increases job stress and reduces work-life balance; however, only job stress has a strong positive effect on burnout, making it the most immediate predictor of emotional exhaustion in the public sector. Work-life balance neither directly influences burnout nor mediates the relationship between workload and burnout. Theoretically, these findings extend the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model by highlighting job stress as the central psychological mechanism linking job demands to burnout in the public sector context, while clarifying inconsistencies in prior studies regarding the role of work-life balance. Practically, the study suggests that burnout prevention strategies in public organizations should prioritize stress management initiatives, including strengthening coping mechanisms, providing psychological support, and increasing managerial awareness of employee stress to sustain performance and well-being.

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