



OVERTIME TRAP: LITERATURE REVIEW BURNOUT MECHANISM AND DECLINING WORK–LIFE BALANCE

PERANGKAP LEMBUR: TINJAUAN PUSTAKA MEKANISME KELELAHAN DAN PENURUNAN KESEIMBANGAN KEHIDUPAN KERJA

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62567/micjo.v3i1.1872>

Abstract

Overtime has become a strong feature of modern work culture, especially in high-pressure sectors in Asia, such as manufacturing, logistics, and services. Although many studies have proven the link between long working hours and the deterioration of employee welfare, the mechanisms explaining how overtime causes an imbalance between work and personal life (Work-life Balance) have not yet been fully explored and pieced together. This narrative literature review aims to synthesize findings from key and recent studies published between 2000 and 2025. The goal is to form a conceptual framework of understanding how overtime can trigger burnout (emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion) and ultimately disrupt WLB. Based on four main theoretical foundations, namely Job Demands–Resources (JD-R), Conservation of Resources (COR), Effort Recovery Model, and Work–Home Resources Model, this review identifies three main pathway mechanisms: (1) Overtime increases job demands while simultaneously reducing opportunities for self-recovery. (2) Burnout, especially emotional exhaustion, acts as a psychological strain that mediates the effects of overtime. (3) The spillover effects of burnout trigger interference between work and home domain through time based conflicts and strain. Organizational support, job autonomy, family roles, marital status, gender and workload pressure are important moderators that can strengthen or weaken the relationship between each variable. While the theoretical contribution of this review lies in combining various perspectives into a conceptual model of the "overtime trap," its practical contribution lies in proposing implications for organizations, job redesign, fatigue management, and more adaptive work policies. Future research is expected to use longitudinal, mixed-method, and cross-cultural designs to validate, strengthen and expand this model.

Keywords : Overtime; Burnout; Work–Life Balance; Work–Family Conflict; Long Working Hours.

Abstrak

Lembur telah menjadi ciri kuat budaya kerja modern, terutama di sektor-sektor bertekanan tinggi di Asia, seperti manufaktur, logistik, dan jasa. Meskipun banyak penelitian telah membuktikan hubungan antara jam kerja yang panjang dan penurunan kesejahteraan karyawan, mekanisme yang menjelaskan bagaimana lembur menyebabkan ketidakseimbangan antara kehidupan kerja dan pribadi (Keseimbangan Kehidupan Kerja) belum sepenuhnya dieksplorasi dan dirangkai. Tinjauan literatur



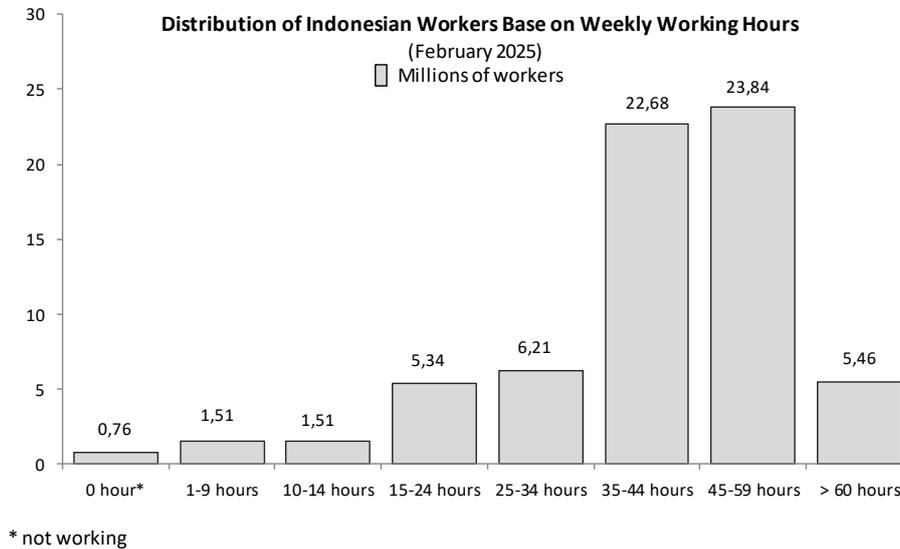
naratif ini bertujuan untuk mensintesis temuan dari studi-studi kunci dan terbaru yang diterbitkan antara tahun 2000 dan 2025. Tujuannya adalah untuk membentuk kerangka konseptual untuk memahami bagaimana lembur dapat memicu kelelahan (emosional, mental, dan fisik) dan pada akhirnya mengganggu keseimbangan kerja dan kehidupan (WLB). Berdasarkan empat landasan teori utama, yaitu Job Demands–Resources (JD-R), Conservation of Resources (COR), Effort Recovery Model, dan Work–Home Resources Model, tinjauan ini mengidentifikasi tiga mekanisme jalur utama: (1) Lembur meningkatkan tuntutan pekerjaan sekaligus mengurangi peluang pemulihan diri. (2) Kelelahan, terutama kelelahan emosional, bertindak sebagai tekanan psikologis yang memediasi efek lembur. (3) Efek limpahan dari kelelahan ekstrem memicu gangguan antara domain pekerjaan dan rumah melalui konflik berbasis waktu dan ketegangan. Dukungan organisasi, otonomi kerja, peran keluarga, status perkawinan, jenis kelamin, dan tekanan beban kerja adalah moderator penting yang dapat memperkuat atau melemahkan hubungan antara setiap variabel. Sementara kontribusi teoretis dari tinjauan ini terletak pada penggabungan berbagai perspektif ke dalam model konseptual "perangkap lembur," kontribusi praktisnya terletak pada pengajuan implikasi bagi organisasi, desain ulang pekerjaan, manajemen kelelahan, dan kebijakan kerja yang lebih adaptif. Penelitian di masa depan diharapkan menggunakan desain longitudinal, metode campuran, dan lintas budaya untuk memvalidasi, memperkuat, dan memperluas model ini.

Kata Kunci : Lembur; Kelelahan; Keseimbangan Kehidupan Kerja; Konflik Kerja-Keluarga; Jam Kerja Panjang.

1. INTRODUCTION

Increased working hours and overtime culture have become a growing global phenomenon amid business competition, digitization of work processes, and increasing pressure for productivity. Organizations across various sectors have normalized overtime as a strategy to achieve targets, even though this practice has been shown to correlate with increased emotional exhaustion, chronic stress, and disruption of work-life balance (Sonnetag & Fritz, 2014). At the global level, a report by the International Labor Organization confirms that long working hours are a major risk factor for physical and mental health disorders, particularly in Asia, which is characterized by high work intensity and weak boundaries between work and non-work time (Anxo & Karlsson, 2019).

Meanwhile, the latest national data shows that the phenomenon of overtime in Indonesia is not merely a perception, but is empirically reflected in the distribution of workers' hours. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in February 2025, more than 22,68 million workers work 35-44 hours per week, while 23,84 million workers work 45-59 hours per week, and 5.46 million workers work 60 hours or more, where normal working hours based on Government Regulation No. 35 of 2021 are 40 hours per week. These findings illustrate that the majority of Indonesian workers fall into the high working hours category, which has the potential to cause chronic fatigue and psychological recovery disorders.



Picture 1 Distribution of Indonesian Workers Base on Weekly Working Hours

Source: Statistics Indonesia (2025), processed by GoodStats (BPS, 2025)

The combination of economic pressures, hierarchical work culture, and expectations of loyalty traps many employees in what is known as the “overtime trap,” a condition in which prolonged overtime becomes a routine practice that is no longer recognized as a source of psychological exhaustion and a decline in quality of life (Fabian & Breunig, 2019). This situation not only creates the risk of burnout, but also disrupts the balance of roles inside and outside of work, creating significant organizational and psychological implications (Bakker & Vries, 2020).

Previous empirical studies have shown a negative relationship between excessive working hours and burnout and work–life balance (WLB), but most studies still place this relationship in a linear perspective and do not explore the procedural mechanisms that explain how overtime causes emotional exhaustion, which then leads to an imbalance in work life (Barck-Holst et al., 2020). In addition, existing literature tends to separate the analysis of burnout and work–life balance, without integrating the two into a unified theoretical framework that considers the dynamics of work stress, job demands, and work–family role interactions. There has been little research synthesizing concepts from Job Demands–Resources (JD-R), Conservation of Resources (COR), and Work–Home Interface theories to understand the holistic pathways linking overtime, burnout, and WLB deterioration .(Kim et al., 2020). This gap in the literature gives space for narrative studies that can draw the patterns, mechanisms, and conditions that strengthen or weaken the relationship between these three constructs.

This literature review aims to organize and synthesize previous research findings to understand the conceptual and empirical mechanisms of how overtime triggers burnout and how burnout, in turn, plays a role in reducing work–life balance. In detail, this study identifies



the procedural pathways that link excessive work demands to emotional exhaustion and role conflict, while mapping moderating and mediating factors, such as organizational support, work autonomy, workload, and individual characteristics that can strengthen or weaken these connections (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018). Using a narrative literature review approach, this study also aims to summarize thematic patterns across studies in order to provide an integrative understanding of the psychological risks that arise from prolonged overtime work.

By incorporating viewpoints from JD-R theory, COR, and work-home interaction model, this study theoretically adds to the body of knowledge on burnout mechanism and work-life balance by offering a more thorough understanding of how overtime may result in a spiral of exhaustion (resource loss spiral) that affects quality of life. The findings also reinforce the importance of viewing burnout as a key psychological mechanism that mediates the relationship between job demands and work-life balance, rather than treating it as a secondary outcome. In practical terms, the results carry meaningful implications for organizations and HR practitioners. They highlight the need for more humane working hour arrangement, flexible and responsive workload management, and proactive burnout prevention initiatives that prioritize employee well-being. A better understanding for the “overtime trap” may also support organizations in developing targeted interventions to reduce chronic fatigue, strengthen employee retention, and sustain productivity over the long term. (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014).

2. RESEARCH METHOD

a. Search Strategy

The narrative literature review method used in this study enables researchers to perform a systematic thematic and conceptual synthesis of scientific findings. In order to guarantee thorough and excellent literature coverage, the literature search strategy was carried out using a number of reliable databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar. These databases are frequently used in management and occupational psychology research (Green et al., 2006). A variety of Boolean keywords, such as “overtime”, “long working hours”, “burnout”, “emotional exhaustion”, “work-life balance”, “work-family conflict”, and “strain” were used in the search to find variations of terms associated with overtime, burnout and work-life balance Boolean operators (AND, OR, and NOT) were applied to refine the search and balance sensitivity with specificity, following established guidelines for conducting literature reviews (Snyder, 2019). In addition, the search was adjusted to account for synonymous and alternative terms used across different fields, allowing the inclusion of relevant studies from occupational psychology, human resources management, occupational health, and labor sociology.

b. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

This study applies strict inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure that the literature analyzed is of sufficient scientific quality and relevant to the objectives of the study. In line with the increasingly complex dynamics of the world of work in the last two decades, the inclusion criteria were set as follows: (1) articles that have undergone peer review and been



published in academic journals indexed by Scopus or other credible scientific databases; (2) publications published between 2000 and 2025; and (3) studies that primarily discuss issues of working hours, overtime, work fatigue, work-life balance, or conflicts between work and family. The exclusion criteria in this study included editorials, commentary articles, short conference papers, non-scientific reports, and publications that had no direct connection to organizational issues, human resource management, or work psychology. The methodological guidelines of (Grant et al., 2022), which highlighted the significance of transparency in literature selection in the narrative review technique, were followed in determining the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

c. Screening Procedure

The literature selection process was conducted in stages using a three-step screening protocol, namely: (1) title review, (2) abstract review, and (3) full-text evaluation, in accordance with best practices in academic review studies (Xiao & Watson, 2017). In the initial stage, more than 100 publications were identified from various keywords, then selected based on topic relevance. After the screening process, approximately 5–7 seminal articles were obtained that underlie the concepts of overtime, burnout, and work–life interface; as well as 40–60 relevant articles that were analyzed as the basis for thematic synthesis. The seminal studies referred to include classic publications on burnout. (Maslach et al., 2001), *Job Demands–Resources Theory* (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018), dan *Work–Family Conflict* (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). This selection method confirms that the literature used has strong conceptual and empirical weight to support the study.

d. Analytical Framework

The literature analysis was conducted using a thematic synthesis approach, which was used to trace and summarize the main patterns, central concepts, and interrelationships between variables in the study of management and organizational psychology (Thomas & Harden, 2008). This approach was chosen because it is in line with the nature of narrative reviews, which emphasize comprehensive understanding and integration of various theoretical perspectives, particularly in explaining the conceptual mechanisms underlying the phenomena under study. The thematic synthesis process was carried out by grouping the research findings into several main themes, including the effect of overtime on workload, the process of fatigue, role conflict, and the role of psychological and organizational buffering factors. To deepen and strengthen the analysis, this study refers to several relevant theoretical frameworks. First, Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Theory is used to understand how job demands contribute to the emergence of work fatigue (Bakker et al., 2011). Second, the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory provides a basis for explaining the process of psychological resource depletion due to excessive and sustained work pressure (Hobfoll et al., 2015). In addition, the Effort–Recovery Model is used to emphasize the important role of recovery in preventing the accumulation of fatigue over time (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). Finally, the Work–Family Resource Model is used to explain how resources derived from work can influence the dynamics of the relationship between work and family life (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). The



combination of these four theoretical perspectives allows for a more comprehensive analysis of the reciprocal relationship between overtime, work fatigue, and declining work–life balance, particularly in the context of an increasingly demanding modern workplace.

e. Summary of Reviewed Studies

Table 1 Summary of Literature Review

No	Author (s) & Year	Research Title	Main Variabel	Key Findings	Relevance to Research
1	(Barck-Holst et al., 2020)	Reduced working hours and work-life balance	Long working hours, work-life balance	Reduced working hour improve work-life balance	overtime → work-life balance
2	(Bartram et al., 2023)	Thriving in the face of burnout? The effect of wellbeing -oriented HRM on the relationship between workload, burnout, thriving and performance	Wellbeing-oriented HRM, Workload, burnout and performance	Wellbing-oriented HRM reduces burnout and improves performance	workload ↑ burnout ↑ performance ↓
3	(Bhende et al., 2020)	Quality of work-life and work-life balance	quality of work life, work-life balance	Quality of work life has a direct and positive effect on work-life balance	Quality of work life ↑ work-life balance ↑ performance ↑
4	(Chang & Woo, 2017)	Critical review of previous studies on labor productivity loss due to overtime	Labor productivity, overtime	A 1% decrease in productivity for every additional hour worked per week	Relevance with overtime and productivity / performance
5	(Fastje et al., 2023)	Employee burnout: the dark side of performance-driven work climate	Burnout, performance	Employee burnout due to high performance pressure	Burnout ↑ because job demand
6	(Chen et al., 2025)	Prolonged overtime predicts worsening burnout among healthcare workers: A 4-year longitudinal study in Taiwan	Overtime, burnout	Overtime, working on Sundays, and extended working hours are negatively associated with employee recovery	Prolonged overtime ↑ burnout ↑
7	(Demerouti et al., 2001)	The job demands-resource model of burnout	JD-R, burnout	The relationship between job demand and fatigue, the relationship between less	Job demand ↑ exhaustion ↑, less resource ↑ disengagement



				resource and involvement	
8	(Demerouti, 2025)	Job demands-resources and conservation of resources theories: How do they help to explain employee well-being and future job design?	Job Demands-Resources (JD-R), Conservation of Resources (COR), employee well-being, performance	Quality of work life has a direct and positive effect on work-life balance	Quality of work life ↑ work-life balance ↑ performance ↑
9	(Dong et al., 2025)	The perception of labor control and employee overtime behavior in China: The mediating role of job autonomy and the moderating role of occupational value	Labor control, overtime, job autonomy,	- De-skilling → mandatory overtime reduced autonomy at work - overtime work causes physical and mental strain	Relevance overtime ↑ and burnout ↑ (physical and mental strain)
10	(Eshun & Segbenya, 2024)	Modelling the mediating role of work-life balance on the relationship work arrangement and employee performance in higher education	Work arrangement, work-life balance, employee performance	Flexible working arrangement improves work-life balance and performance	Relevance WLB ↑ and performance ↑
11	(Guo et al., 2020)	Working hard or hardly working? How supervisor's liking of employee affects interpretations of employee working overtime and performance ratings	Overtime, performance	Supervisors can view overtime as positive (contribution) or negative depending on whether they like or dislike the employee. Overtime does not always result in positive performance	Relevance overtime → performance



12	(Irfan et al., 2021)	impact of work-life balance with the role of organizational support and job burnout on project performance	Work-life balance, organizational support, burnout, performance	Negative relationship between WFC and professional responsibility. Negative relationship between burnout and project performance and organizational support has a positive relationship with emotional support and project performance	Relevance WLB and burnout with performance
13	(Karhula et al., 2020)	The effects of using participatory working time scheduling software on working hours characteristics and wellbeing: A quasi-experimental study of irregular shift work	Working time schedule, well-being	Employee participation in work scheduling has a positive effect on employee perceptions	Relevance job autonomy/mandatory overtime on employee perceptions
14	(Lee et al., 2025)	Job stress, burnout, and work ability in tire manufacturing: The role of age and experience	Job stress, burnout, work ability	High job stress is associated with burnout. Burnout affects work ability, Intergenerational conflict and low work autonomy worsening burnout.	Relevance burnout ↑ and work ability / performance ↓
15	(Ochiai et al., 2023)	Characteristics of long working hours and subsequent psychological and physical responses: JNIOH cohort study	Long working hours	Working long hours over the past six months has caused psychological stress	relevance long working hour/overtime ↑ causes stres



16	(Yang et al., 2023)	Overtime work, job autonomy, and employees' subjective well-being: Evidence from China	Overtime, job autonomy, well-being,	Work autonomy and voluntary overtime are significantly related to levels of happiness, life satisfaction, and health conditions	Relevance overtime and job autonomy/mandatory with happiness / work satisfaction ↑
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Source: Compiled and processed from various scholarly article

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

a. Pathway 1: Overtime Increases Job Demands and Reduces Recovery

Long working hours consistently increase job demands and reduce recovery time, triggering physiological and psychological stress. Based on the Effort–Recovery Model (Meijman & Mulder, 1998), when work demands are not balanced by recovery, individuals experience accumulated fatigue that develops into chronic strain

Empirical research shows that:

- ✓ Overtime disrupts the homeostasis process, increasing fatigue and sleep disturbance (Virtanen & Kivimäki, 2018); (Bannai & Tamakoshi, 2014).
- ✓ Lack of recovery time is directly related to decreased energy and coping capacity (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2014).

b. Pathway 2: Burnout as Psychological Strain Mediating Overtime Effects

Burnout acts as a mediator between overtime and worker well-being. Within the framework of JD–R Theory, long working hours increase job demands that drain energy and result in emotional exhaustion, the core dimension of burnout according to (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

Longitudinal studies found:

- ✓ Overtime → increased emotional exhaustion (Beckers et al., 2004); (Hulst, 2003).
- ✓ Emotional exhaustion increase the risk of work–family conflict (Nohe et al., 2015).
- ✓ Burnout mediates the relationship between job overload and decreased life satisfaction (Hakanen et al., 2008).

The typical mediation pathway mapped by the literature: Overtime → Emotional Exhaustion → Work–Life Conflict → Declining Well-being

c. Pathway 3: Burnout and Work–Life Interference

Burnout not only affects work performance, but also causes cross-domain interference that disrupts life balance.

Studies in work–family research show:

- ✓ Emotional exhaustion increases Work Interference with Family (WIF) because individuals lose the energy to meet household demands (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).
- ✓ Distress spillover occurs: stress from work is “carried” home (Bolger et al., 1989).
- ✓ A crossover effect occurs: spouses also feel the impact of worker burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018).



A synthesis of the literature shows that burnout reduces the quality of household interactions, increases conflict, and reduces engagement in personal and family activities.

d. Moderators and Boundary Conditions

Various factors influence the strength of the relationship between overtime, burnout, and WLB:

- ✓ Organizational and supervisor support
Organizational support can reduce the effect of overtime on burnout through the availability of coping resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2016).
- ✓ Job autonomy
Job autonomy reduces the impact of job demands on emotional exhaustion (Dong et al., 2025).
- ✓ Demographic characteristics: gender, marital status, caregiving
Women or workers with caregiving responsibilities tend to experience greater time conflicts (Byron, 2005).
- ✓ Beban kerja dan tekanan target
High workload strengthens the pathway of overtime → exhaustion → WIF (Ilies et al., 2009), 2019).

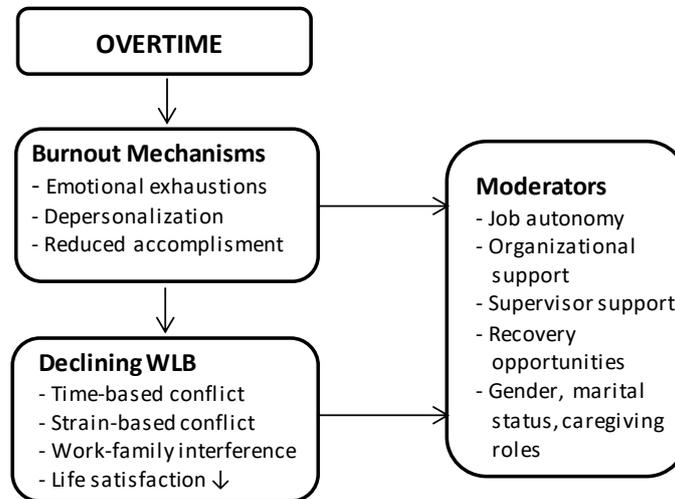
e. Integrated Conceptual Model

This conceptual model shows the narrative relationship between the main components:

- ✓ Overtime/Long Working Hours → increases job demands → reduces recovery
- ✓ Burnout (Emotional Exhaustion) → main mediator between job demands and work–family conflict.
- ✓ Work–Life Balance Decline → influenced by time-based conflict, WIF, strain-based conflict life satisfaction
- ✓ Moderators:
 - Organizational support
 - Supervisor support
 - Autonomy
 - Gender & family roles
 - Workload & performance pressure

This model integrates JD–R, COR, and Effort–Recovery Model theories to explain how overtime creates a spiral of resource depletion that leads to burnout and a decline in WLB.

The conceptual diagram below illustrates how prolonged overtime triggers a decline in work–life balance (WLB) through the mechanism of burnout. This process begins with increased job demands due to long working hours, which directly decrease opportunities for physical and psychological recovery. Referring to JD–R Theory and the Effort–Recovery Model, these conditions cause excessive fatigue, sleep disturbances, and depletion of personal resources as described by Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory. The two condition of high workloads and lack of recovery places workers in a state of chronic stress, which is the root for burnout.



Picture 2 Integrated Conceptual Model

Source: Processed by the authors

Burnout then acts as the main mediator that explains how overtime can develop into a deeper welfare disorder. The main dimensions of burnout, especially emotional exhaustion, arise as a response to the accumulation of demands and decreased energy. As burnout increases, workers experience decreased motivation, increased cynicism towards work, and weakened feelings of accomplishment. In the context of this model, burnout becomes a critical point that bridges the influence of overtime on non-work aspects, showing that the impact of overtime does not stop at productivity, but flows into the psychological and social aspects of workers.

Additionally, burnout causes work–life interference through spillover and strain-based conflict mechanisms, thus reducing the quality of WLB. Emotional and mental fatigue carry over into the home, reducing energy, time, and quality of engagement in family activities. In certain condition, these effects can spread to spouses or family members (crossover effect), spreading their impact beyond the worker themselves. The relationships in the diagram are also influenced by moderators such as organizational support, work autonomy, workload, and family roles, which can strengthen or weaken the whole mechanism pathway. Therefore, this diagram confirms that the “overtime trap” is a continuous cycle involving workload, psychological fatigue, and disruption of life balance, needing organizational intervention to break the chain.

Discussion

f. Summary of the Findings

A synthesis of various studies shows a consistent pattern that overtime and long working hours increase job demands, thereby reducing recovery capacity and triggering emotional exhaustion, a key dimension of burnout. Burnout then becomes an important mediator that explains how prolonged work pressure leads to a decline in Work–Life Balance (WLB) through the mechanisms of work interference with family, strain spillover, and time-based conflict.



The majority of cross-country studies (e.g. (Virtanen & Kivimäki, 2018); (Beckers et al., 2004)) reinforce a linear relationship: Overtime → Burnout → Work–Life Interference / WLB Decline.

However, a number of studies show some inconsistencies. Some contexts that show weaker relationships involve:

- Workers with high autonomy, who can regulate their work rhythm so that the impact of fatigue is lower (Dong et al., 2025).
- Effective organizational intervention, which reduces the level of emotional exhaustion (Bakker & Vries, 2020)
- Collectivist work cultures, which sometimes normalize long working hours so that perceptions of burnout do not explicitly emerge (Yang et al., 2023).

These findings confirm that overtime is problematic, especially when it is involuntary, prolonged, and not balanced by organizational support.

g. Theoretical Implications

This literature review provides several theoretical contributions:

- ✓ Reinforcement of JD–R Theory
The synthesis shows that job demands in the form of overtime systematically increase energy depletion, thereby reinforcing the JD–R proposition that job demands trigger burnout when job resources are inadequate. This adds to the evidence that long working hours are a structural job demand, not merely an individual behavioral factor.
- ✓ Reinforcement of the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory
Cross-study findings confirm the existence of a resource loss spiral (Hobfoll, 1989); (Dong et al., 2025) overtime → loss of recovery time → emotional exhaustion → reduced energy for family roles → increased role conflict → decreased well-being. This expands COR by showing that overtime can be reflected a chronic cause of resource loss.
- ✓ Expansion of the Work–Life Interface Model
Burnout has been proven to be a key psychological mechanism linking the work domain to the home domain. This literature reinforces the work–home resources model perspective (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012) and emphasizes the importance of strain-based spillover as the dominant pathway over time-based conflict in certain sectors.

h. Practical and Managerial Implications

These results have significant implications for managerial practice and organizational policy:

- ✓ Implication for HRM
 - Control overtime and shift regulation: Stricter rules overning work hours, overtime restrictions, and approval process.
 - Job redesign: workload redistribution, task rotation, and more balanced shift schedules.
 - Fatigue management: implementing enforced recuperation time, educating employee about exhaustion, and implementating mental health programs.



- ✓ Role of line manager
 - Monitoring burnout risk by giving attention to changes in behavior, engagement, and decreased energy
 - Implement flexible scheduling to reduce time pressure for employees with family responsibilities.
 - Encourage early intervention and transparent communication.
- ✓ The role function of digital tools and technology
 - Systems for tracking workloads to identify excessive workloads.
 - Automated rostering to guarantee equitable overtime allocation
 - Fatigue patterns can be found using digital fatigue analytics (e.g., from app working hours data, attendance, or login patterns).

Modern work management literature emphasizes that digital solutions can reduce administrative burdens and improve fairness in work allocation (Tarafdar et al., 2017); (Parker & Grote, 2020).

i. Research Gaps and Future Research Agenda

Based on the synthesis, a number of research gaps need attention:

1. Need for Longitudinal Studies

The majority of studies are cross-sectional, making it difficult to assess causal relationships. Longitudinal studies are needed to observe how overtime accumulates fatigue and triggers burnout over time.
2. Investigation of different sectors

The corporate and service industries continue dominate research. The following industries need more research include:

 - Manufacturing: different shift patterns and ergonomics.
 - Healthcare: demanding and high risk of burnout.
 - Digital services and gig economy: high flexibility, but risk of techno-stress and hidden overtime.
3. New Variables

Future study can incorporate contemporary element such as:

 - Techno-stress due to intensive use of work applications (Tarafdar et al., 2017).
 - Hybrid work arrangements allow for unrestricted extension of working hours (Bondanini et al., 2025)
 - AI-based monitoring, which may make more demanding or psychological taxing.
4. Mixed-Methods and Cross-Cultural Studies

Our understanding of the subjective experiences of burnout and overtime can be improved by qualitative research. Beside that, cross cultural study is crucial to comprehending the influence



4. CONCLUSION

This literature review confirms that the overtime trap phenomenon is a complex psychological and organizational issue, characterized by the tendency of workers to get stuck in a pattern of repeated and difficult-to-stop long working hours. Thematic synthesis shows that overtime acts as a chronic job demand that systematically reduces recovery capacity, triggers burnout, and ultimately impacts Work–Life Balance (WLB). Burnout, particularly emotional exhaustion, acts as the primary psychological mechanism that channels the effects of overtime on family functioning and individual well-being.

This conclusion confirms that managing working hours has a much broader meaning than simply improving productivity. The way organizations manage working hours is also directly related to the psychological well-being of employees. Burnout should not be understood solely as an individual problem, but rather as a systemic phenomenon that can lead to decreased performance, weakened morale, and an increased tendency for employees to leave the organization. On that basis, attention to interventions at the organizational level—ranging from clarity on overtime policies, provision of space and time for recovery, to the active role of supervisors in providing support—becomes increasingly important to maintain a healthy balance between work and personal life.

In practical terms, this article also emphasizes the need for a more serious response to the phenomenon known as the “overtime trap.” Prevention cannot be done sporadically, but needs to be realized through more humane job design, the wise use of technology in workload management, and the creation of a work environment that allows employees to truly recover from the demands of work. These efforts are key for organizations that want to maintain long-term productivity without sacrificing the quality of life and psychological health of their workforce.

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