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Work-Life Balance and Work Motivation as Predictors of Employee Performance Among K-Pop Fans

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ABSTRACT

Employee performance is an important factor in achieving organizational goals and is influenced by various individual and workplace factors. Work-life balance and motivation are considered essential aspects that may contribute to employees' ability to perform effectively, particularly among employees with an interest in K-pop. This study aims to examine the effects of work-life balance and motivation on employee performance, both partially and simultaneously, and to identify the variable with the stronger influence. This study employed a quantitative approach using an online questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. A total of 103 respondents were selected through purposive sampling from an initial population of 113, after excluding eight respondents who did not meet the research criteria and two outliers. Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression with SPSS. The results indicate that work-life balance (B = 0.309; $p < 0.001$) and motivation (B = 0.412; $p < 0.001$) have significant positive effects on employee performance. Simultaneously, both variables explain 47% of the variance in employee performance ($R^2 = 0.470$). Motivation demonstrates a stronger influence ($\beta = 0.461$) than work-life balance ($\beta = 0.328$). These findings suggest that organizations should promote work-life balance and strengthen employee motivation to improve performance. Future research may examine additional factors associated with employee performance.

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INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is a central concern for organizations and society because it affects productivity, service quality, sustainability, and employees' economic well-being. Employees are expected to meet demanding work responsibilities while maintaining meaningful personal lives, relationships, and interests. This challenge is relevant to younger workers whose leisure activities and cultural interests may be integrated into everyday routines. K-pop fandom

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provides one example: fans may listen to music, follow social media, stream content, attend concerts, and collect albums or merchandise (Anisa, 2026; Khaliq, 2025; Salsabila & Rohmah, 2026). Previous studies associate K-pop engagement with emotional and psychological experiences, including motivation, comfort, stress coping, and psychological well-being (Putri & Rozi, 2024; Laathi'fah et al., 2024). These findings suggest that personal interests form a meaningful part of employees' lives. Understanding how employees balance work and personal interests is therefore socially and organizationally important today.

This study is grounded in work-life balance, understood as the extent to which individuals manage and fulfil responsibilities across work and non-work roles (Saputra & Masdupi, 2025; Tarumingkeng, 2025; Dewi et al., 2026). The concept emphasizes managing time, involvement, and satisfaction across life domains rather than simply counting hours spent at work or on leisure. The second concept is work motivation, referring to conditions that initiate, direct, and sustain work-related behaviour (Muflihin, 2024; Wardhana, 2021; Hikmah, 2025). Motivation may influence employees' effort, persistence, and willingness to achieve work goals. Employee performance is the outcome of work-related actions and accomplishments through which employees contribute to organizational objectives. In this study, work-life balance and motivation are explanatory variables, while employee performance is the dependent variable. These concepts provide the theoretical basis for examining their individual and combined relationships with employee performance in the workplace.

Employees may struggle to maintain performance when work demands compete with personal responsibilities, leisure activities, and interests (Candra, 2025; Furqon et al., 2026; Muzammil & Susanti, 2025). An imbalance can contribute to fatigue, reduced concentration, and difficulty sustaining work engagement; however, leisure activities do not automatically indicate poor work-life balance. For example, playing video games after working hours may support psychological recovery and be positively associated with performance (Zakaria & Ratnawati, 2026), depending on how individuals manage time and commitments. K-pop-related activities may similarly provide enjoyment or emotional support, but may also require time, attention, and financial resources. Employees therefore face the practical challenge of managing personal interests without neglecting professional responsibilities. At the same time, organizations need employees who remain motivated and perform effectively. The broader problem is not fandom itself, but how employees manage competing demands and maintain motivation while fulfilling their roles at work and outside it.

Prior research has examined work-life balance and employee performance, but its findings are inconsistent. Salsabila and Kurniawati (2026), as well as Sari et al. (2024) and Brilliantia and Swasti (2023), reported positive and

significant relationships. Wakman and Dewi (2025) described how work-life balance is applied. In contrast, Rensiana et al. (2024) identified a negative effect. Gombo et al. (2025) found that work-life balance affected job satisfaction but did not affect performance, while Pitriyani and Jaya (2024) reported a similar pattern. These differences indicate that the relationship may depend on context, sample characteristics, or how work-life balance is operationalized. The inconsistent evidence makes further examination necessary, particularly among employees with distinct personal interests and routines. Addressing this gap may clarify the conditions under which work-life balance relates to performance in different employee groups.

Research has consistently identified motivation as an important correlate of employee performance. Positive and significant effects have been reported by Nuryana (2025), Mohamed et al. (2025), and Setiadi (2023). Studies examining work-life balance and motivation together have likewise found significant joint effects on performance (Utomo & Sanggarwati, 2024; Khoirunnisa & Romi, 2025). Azhar (2024), however, showed that dimensions of work-life balance may operate differently: demands had a negative effect, whereas resources had a positive effect. Meanwhile, K-pop research has mainly addressed fans' psychological experiences, including stress coping, well-being, mental health, and academic motivation (Novanda et al., 2024; Putri & Rozi, 2024; Sa'diyah et al., 2026). Few studies connect this cultural context with workplace performance, leaving an important intersection insufficiently explored.

The novelty of this study lies in examining work-life balance, motivation, and employee performance within a participant group defined by an interest in K-pop. Rather than treating fandom as a direct cause of higher or lower performance, the study positions K-pop interest as the context in which employees' work and personal lives are considered. This approach extends discussion of K-pop beyond fans' psychological and academic experiences into professional life. It also revisits the work-life balance–performance relationship in a group whose personal interests may involve engagement with music, digital content, social media, events, and merchandise. By assessing work-life balance and motivation together, the study offers a perspective on how these workplace-related factors are associated with performance in this participant group. This contribution is important because organizations need to understand employees as individuals with varied interests and responsibilities beyond their job roles.

Accordingly, this study addresses questions concerning whether work-life balance affects employee performance, whether motivation affects employee performance, and whether both variables jointly affect performance among employees who are K-pop fans. It also compares the relative strength of the two explanatory variables. The proposed argument is that employees who manage

work and personal responsibilities may be better able to maintain focus and fulfil job demands, while motivated employees may demonstrate greater effort and persistence. Therefore, work-life balance and motivation are expected to have positive relationships with employee performance, individually and simultaneously. The study does not test whether K-pop fandom itself causes changes in work-life balance, motivation, or performance; instead, it examines these relationships within a defined group of employees. Its findings are expected to enrich academic understanding and provide organizations with practical considerations for supporting balanced work arrangements and sustaining employee motivation.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a quantitative, explanatory survey design to examine the effects of work-life balance and motivation on employee performance among employees who are interested in K-pop. A quantitative approach is appropriate because the study measures predefined variables through structured questionnaire items and tests hypotheses. The research model comprises work-life balance (X1) and motivation (X2) as independent variables, and employee performance (Y) as the dependent variable. The explanatory design enables the researchers to assess the individual contributions of each predictor and their combined association with employee performance. The study is cross-sectional because data were collected once during a specified period rather than repeatedly over time. Accordingly, the analysis identifies statistical relationships within the selected sample and does not establish that K-pop engagement causes changes in work-life balance, motivation, or performance.

The study was conducted through an online questionnaire and did not involve a physical research site, because participants were recruited across organizations, not one company or area. This approach matched the target population, which was defined by employment status and K-pop engagement, not by workplace location. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on two criteria: they were currently employed and engaged in K-pop-related activities at least once a week, such as streaming music, watching idol content, collecting albums or merchandise, or attending concerts. The survey received 113 responses. Eight were excluded because the respondents were not employed, leaving 105 eligible cases. Outlier screening identified two influential observations, which were excluded after diagnostic assessment, resulting in a final sample of 103 respondents. Findings therefore apply primarily to employees with similar characteristics.

Data were collected from October 8 to 12, 2026, through an online questionnaire. Screening questions verified employment and weekly K-pop engagement before respondents accessed the main items. The instrument comprised seven work-life balance items (WLB1–WLB7), seven motivation items

(M1–M7), and seven employee performance items (EP1–EP7), measured on a five-point Likert scale. Work-life balance covered time, involvement, satisfaction, work-to-personal-life and personal-to-work-life interference, based on McDonald and Bradley (2005, cited in Yusniar et al., 2026) and Fisher et al. (2009, cited in Azhar, 2024). Motivation followed Maslow's five needs—physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization (cited in Setiadi, 2023). Performance covered effectiveness, quality, responsibility, discipline, and initiative, drawing on Prawirosentono (2008, cited in Yusniar et al., 2026) and Robbins et al. (2015, cited in Azhar, 2024). Participation was voluntary, anonymous, and confidential throughout.

Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression in SPSS. Before hypothesis testing, the instrument was assessed for validity and reliability to assess measurement quality. The partial effects of work-life balance and motivation on employee performance were examined using t-tests, while the simultaneous effect of both predictors was evaluated using the F-test. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to establish the proportion of variation in employee performance explained by the independent variables. Outlier screening was conducted through boxplots of the total scores using SPSS Explore and Tukey's interquartile range (IQR) rule. Flagged observations were further assessed using Cook's distance, centered leverage, Mahalanobis distance, studentized deleted residuals, standardized DFBETA, and DFFIT. A sensitivity analysis compared results from 103 cases with those from all 105 eligible cases for the three hypotheses.

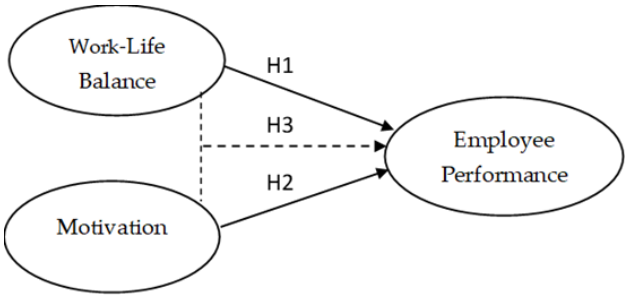


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Research Hypotheses

H1: Work-life balance has a positive and significant effect on employee performance among K-pop fans.

H2: Motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance among K-pop fans.

H3: Work-life balance and motivation simultaneously have a significant effect on employee performance among K-pop fans.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This section presents the statistical results obtained from 103 respondents who met the research criteria and were included in the final analysis after data screening and outlier assessment. The analysis covers instrument validity and reliability, classical assumption tests, multiple linear regression, partial hypothesis testing (t-test), simultaneous hypothesis testing (F-test), and the coefficient of determination. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS.

Validity Test

Table 1. Validity Test Results

Variable	Item	r-table	r-value	Information
Work-life balance	WLB1	0.1937	0.499	Valid
	WLB2	0.1937	0.582	Valid
	WLB3	0.1937	0.425	Valid
	WLB4	0.1937	0.557	Valid
	WLB5	0.1937	0.481	Valid
	WLB6	0.1937	0.512	Valid
	WLB7	0.1937	0.509	Valid
Motivation	M1	0.1937	0.659	Valid
	M2	0.1937	0.638	Valid
	M3	0.1937	0.515	Valid
	M4	0.1937	0.278	Valid
	M5	0.1937	0.726	Valid
	M6	0.1937	0.297	Valid
	M7	0.1937	0.455	Valid
Employee performance	EP1	0.1937	0.652	Valid
	EP2	0.1937	0.682	Valid
	EP3	0.1937	0.305	Valid
	EP4	0.1937	0.630	Valid
	EP5	0.1937	0.672	Valid
	EP6	0.1937	0.517	Valid
	EP7	0.1937	0.644	Valid

The validity of the research instrument was assessed using corrected item-total correlations. Each item's correlation coefficient was compared with the critical r-value of 0.1937, calculated at a 5% significance level (two-tailed) with 101 degrees of freedom (df = 103 − 2). As presented in Table 1, all 21 questionnaire items obtained correlation coefficients exceeding the critical value. The coefficients ranged from 0.278 to 0.726. Therefore, all items met the established item-level validity criterion and were retained for further analysis.

Reliability Test

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Description
Work-life balance	0.780	Reliable
Motivation	0.775	Reliable
Employee performance	0.823	Reliable

The reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha, with a minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70. As shown in Table 2, work-life balance obtained an alpha coefficient of 0.780, motivation obtained 0.775, and employee performance obtained 0.823. All three coefficients exceeded the specified threshold. These results indicate that the questionnaire items for each variable demonstrated acceptable internal consistency and that the instrument was sufficiently reliable for subsequent statistical analysis.

Classical Assumption Tests

The classical assumption tests were conducted to assess the suitability of the regression model. These tests covered normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity. All tests were performed using the final dataset consisting of 103 respondents.

Normality Test

Table 3. Normality Test Results

Test	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Test Statistic	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Unstandardized Residual	103	0.0000000	2.39043513	0.077	0.144

The normality of the regression residuals was examined using the one-sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. Table 3 shows a test statistic of 0.077 and an asymptotic significance value of 0.144. Since the significance value exceeded the 0.05 threshold, the test did not provide sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis of normality. Thus, the residuals did not show a statistically significant departure from a normal distribution, indicating that the normality assumption was satisfied based on this test.

Multicollinearity Test

Table 4. Multicollinearity Test Results

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Work-life balance	0.752	1.330
Motivation	0.752	1.330

Multicollinearity was assessed using tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) values. As reported in Table 4, both independent variables had tolerance values of 0.752, exceeding the minimum criterion of 0.10. Their VIF values were 1.330, below the commonly applied threshold of 10. These results indicate that no problematic multicollinearity was detected between work-life balance and motivation in the regression model.

Heteroscedasticity Test

Table 5. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Variable	Unstandardized B	Standardized Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	4.381	–	2.893	0.005
Work-life balance	-0.024	-0.053	-0.464	0.644
Motivation	-0.062	-0.145	-1.277	0.205

The Glejser test was employed to examine the presence of heteroscedasticity in the regression model. Based on Table 5, the significance value for work-life balance was 0.644, while motivation obtained a significance value of 0.205. Both values exceeded the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, neither independent variable showed a statistically significant association with the absolute residuals. These findings indicate that there was no statistical evidence of heteroscedasticity based on the Glejser test. However, this result does not conclusively establish constant residual variance.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 6. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	8.999	2.359	–	3.815	<0.001
Work-life balance	0.309	0.079	0.328	3.905	<0.001
Motivation	0.412	0.075	0.461	5.486	<0.001

Multiple linear regression analysis was performed to examine the relationships of work-life balance and motivation with employee performance. The estimated regression equation based on Table 6 is:

$$\mathbf{Y = 8.999 + 0.309X1 + 0.412X2 + e}$$

Where:

- Y = Employee performance
- X1 = Work-life balance
- X2 = Motivation
- e = Error term

The regression results show that work-life balance has an unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.309, while motivation has a coefficient of 0.412. Both coefficients are positive, indicating positive estimated relationships with employee performance when the other independent variable is held constant. Specifically, a one-unit increase in work-life balance is associated with a 0.309-unit increase in employee performance, whereas a one-unit increase in motivation is associated with a 0.412-unit increase in employee performance, holding the other predictor constant.

Regarding the standardized coefficients, motivation has a beta value of 0.461, compared with 0.328 for work-life balance. This indicates that motivation has the larger standardized regression coefficient in the estimated model.

Partial Hypothesis Testing (t-Test)

Partial hypothesis testing was conducted to examine the individual statistical significance of each independent variable in predicting employee performance. At a 5% significance level, with 100 degrees of freedom (df = 103 − 2 − 1), the critical t-value is approximately 1.984.

Based on Table 6, work-life balance obtained a t-value of 3.905, exceeding the critical value of 1.984, with a significance value of less than 0.001. Similarly, motivation obtained a t-value of 5.486, also exceeding the critical value, with a significance value of less than 0.001.

Both variables therefore demonstrate positive and statistically significant partial relationships with employee performance. Accordingly, the statistical results support H1, which proposes a positive and significant effect of work-life balance on employee performance, and H2, which proposes a positive and significant effect of motivation on employee performance.

Simultaneous Hypothesis Testing (F-Test)

Table 7. F-Test Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	517.251	2	258.625	44.373	<0.001
Residual	582.846	100	5.828	–	–
Total	1100.097	102	–	–	–

The simultaneous significance of work-life balance and motivation was examined using the F-test. As presented in Table 7, the regression model produced an F-statistic of 44.373 with 2 and 100 degrees of freedom. The corresponding significance value was less than 0.001, which is below the 0.05 significance threshold.

These results indicate that work-life balance and motivation, when considered jointly, have a statistically significant relationship with employee performance. Therefore, the findings support H3, which proposes that work-life balance and motivation simultaneously have a significant effect on employee performance.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Table 8. Coefficient of Determination Results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	0.686	0.470	0.460	2.41422

The coefficient of determination was examined to assess the explanatory capacity of the regression model. As shown in Table 8, the model obtained an R-value of 0.686, an R-squared value of 0.470, and an adjusted R-squared value of 0.460. The R-squared value indicates that work-life balance and motivation jointly account for 47.0% of the observed variation in employee performance within the sample. The remaining 53.0% represents variation not explained by the two independent variables included in the model. Furthermore, the adjusted R-squared value of 0.460 indicates that the model explains approximately 46.0% of the variation after adjustment for the number of predictors and sample size.

Overall, the regression results indicate that both independent variables have positive and statistically significant partial relationships with employee performance, while their combined contribution to the model is also statistically significant.

Discussion

The regression diagnostics indicate that the model met the assessed classical assumptions. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test showed no significant departure from residual normality ($p = 0.144$), while the tolerance (0.752) and VIF (1.330) values indicated no problematic multicollinearity. Similarly, the Glejser test showed no statistically significant evidence of heteroscedasticity for work-life balance ($p = 0.644$) or motivation ($p = 0.205$). These results support the suitability of the regression model for examining the relationships among the variables. However, satisfying these statistical assumptions does not establish causality or eliminate all potential sources of bias. Accordingly, the findings should be interpreted as statistical associations derived from cross-sectional survey data rather than definitive evidence of cause-and-effect relationships.

The findings demonstrate that work-life balance has a positive and significant relationship with employee performance ($B = 0.309$; $\beta = 0.328$; $p < 0.001$). This result is consistent with Sari et al. (2024), Brilliantia and Swasti (2023),

Yusniar et al. (2026), and Salsabila and Kurniawati (2026), who reported similar positive relationships. One possible explanation is that employees who manage professional and personal responsibilities more effectively may experience better psychological recovery and maintain greater concentration at work. This interpretation is consistent with Zakaria and Ratnawati (2026), who associated leisure activities with psychological recovery and performance. Amalia et al. (2024) also identified K-pop as a potentially comforting space for fans experiencing fatigue. Nevertheless, these mechanisms were not directly measured in this study. The finding contrasts with Rensiana et al. (2024), Pitriyani and Jaya (2024), and Gombo et al. (2025), highlighting differences across research contexts.

Motivation also exhibits a positive and significant relationship with employee performance (B = 0.412; β = 0.461; $p < 0.001$). This finding supports previous studies by Suparman et al. (2023), Laathi'fah and Noekent (2024), and Kusumawardani et al. (2024), which identified motivation as a significant correlate of employee performance. The result is theoretically consistent with the view that motivation initiates, directs, and sustains work-related behaviour (Muflihin, 2024; Wardhana, 2021). Employees with stronger motivation may demonstrate greater effort and persistence in completing their responsibilities. Furthermore, the measurement of motivation based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs (cited in Setiadi, 2023) provides a framework for understanding how the fulfilment of individual needs relates to work behaviour. Although Asni et al. (2025) associated K-pop engagement with motivational experiences, this study did not measure fandom as a source of work motivation. Therefore, such a connection remains an avenue for future investigation.

The simultaneous regression test confirms that work-life balance and motivation jointly have a statistically significant relationship with employee performance ($F = 44.373$; $p < 0.001$). This finding is consistent with Brilliantia and Swasti (2023), Utomo and Sanggarwati (2024), and Khoirunnisa and Romi (2025), who also reported significant combined relationships between these variables and performance. The result indicates that both factors contribute to the explanatory capacity of the regression model, although they represent different aspects of employees' working lives. Work-life balance concerns the management of professional and personal responsibilities, whereas motivation relates to the direction and persistence of work behaviour. The absence of problematic multicollinearity further indicates that the two predictors provide distinguishable statistical information within the model. Thus, examining both variables simultaneously provides a broader understanding of employee performance than considering either factor independently.

The main contribution and novelty of this study lie in extending the examination of work-life balance, motivation, and employee performance to a specific group of employees who regularly engage in K-pop-related activities. Previous K-pop studies have primarily investigated psychological experiences, including motivation, stress coping, emotional comfort, and psychological well-being (Asni et al., 2025; Novanda et al., 2024; Putri & Rozi, 2024). By contrast, this study introduces a workplace perspective through the examination of employees' performance in relation to work-life balance and motivation. Its findings provide contextual evidence that both variables are positively associated with performance among employees who engage in K-pop activities at least once a week. Importantly, the novelty does not involve establishing K-pop fandom as a determinant of performance, but rather expanding the research context in which established workplace variables are examined.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that organizations may consider initiatives addressing both work-life balance and employee motivation. The positive relationship between work-life balance and performance ($B = 0.309$; $p < 0.001$) provides a basis for considering flexible working arrangements and policies that support employees in managing their professional and personal responsibilities. Similarly, the significant relationship between motivation and performance ($B = 0.412$; $p < 0.001$) highlights the relevance of employee recognition, career development, and opportunities for personal growth. Motivation also has a larger standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.461$) than work-life balance ($\beta = 0.328$), although the difference between these coefficients was not statistically tested. Therefore, this comparison should not be interpreted as proof of a significantly stronger effect. These initiatives represent practical recommendations derived from the observed associations, and their actual effectiveness requires further evaluation.

The coefficient of determination indicates that work-life balance and motivation explain 47.0% of the variation in employee performance ($R^2 = 0.470$; adjusted $R^2 = 0.460$), while 53.0% remains unexplained by the model. This explanatory proportion differs from the findings of Salsabila and Kurniawati (2026), who reported an R^2 of 0.791 in a model incorporating work-life balance, work stress, and workload. The difference may reflect variations in research contexts, samples, measurement instruments, and the number of explanatory variables. Other factors, including workload and the work environment, as examined by Kusumawardani et al. (2024), may provide additional explanations for employee performance. Nevertheless, the present study is limited by its purposive sample and the absence of a comparison group of non-K-pop fans. Future research should incorporate additional predictors, compare different employee groups, and directly measure K-pop engagement to clarify its potential relationship with workplace outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that work-life balance and motivation are positively and significantly associated with employee performance among employees with an active interest in K-pop culture. The main insight is that maintaining a balance between professional and personal responsibilities, alongside strengthening work motivation, is important in understanding employee performance. Motivation has a larger standardized coefficient (β = 0.461) than work-life balance (β = 0.328), while both variables jointly explain 47.0% of the variance in employee performance (R^2 = 0.470). The implications of these findings suggest that organizations may consider flexible working arrangements, employee recognition, and career development initiatives to support work-life balance and motivation. These findings contribute to the academic literature by extending the examination of employee performance into the context of employees with an interest in K-pop, without assuming that fandom directly influences workplace outcomes. However, the cross-sectional design, purposive sampling, and absence of a comparison group limit causal interpretation and generalizability. Furthermore, K-pop engagement was not examined as an independent variable. Future research should incorporate additional factors, such as workload and work environment, compare employees with different interests, and directly examine the relationship between K-pop engagement and workplace outcomes using broader samples and longitudinal research designs.

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