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FAMILY CYBERLOAFING AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE: DIGITAL COPING WITH WORK–FAMILY CONFLICT ACROSS GENERATIONS

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Abstract. Work-family conflict (WFC) often undermines employees' well-being, yet the coping role of family-related cyberloafing (FCL) across generations remains unclear. Guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior, this study examines relationships among WFC, FCL, and work-life balance (WLB) and tests whether these links vary for Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. Survey data from 309 married Indonesian women were analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling and multi-group analysis. In the full sample, WFC reduced WLB, whereas FCL independently improved WLB. Multi-group analysis revealed that only the relationship between WFC and FCL differed by cohort, positive and significant for Generation X but non-significant for Millennials and Generation Z. At the same time, the influences of WFC and FCL on WLB were consistent. These findings confirm TPB-based mechanisms and highlight the need for generation-sensitive flexibility and technology policies to support work-life balance.

Keywords: work-life balance, work-family conflict, family cyberloafing, generational differences, multi-group SEM.

JEL Classification: M54, M50.

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1. Introduction

Particularly for women in professional positions, it has become increasingly complex to juggle several commitments, such as going to school while working or juggling the demands of both professional and familial obligations (Pwavra et al., 2025; Schweyer, 2020). According to the data provided by the World Bank (2024), the percentage of competent female workers in Indonesia has increased by around one percent annually over the last ten years. This increase has made the proliferation of homes with two incomes easier. According to Noor et al. (2022) and Jackson et al. (2025), even when a household's income grows, the problem of financial stress continues to exist because of the rising living costs.

The stress resulting from having incompatible job and family responsibilities is called work–family conflict (WFC). According to Reimann et al. (2022) and Pascucci et al. (2022), it has the potential to have a negative influence on the mental health of persons of varying ages and backgrounds, as well as hinder their ability to perform well at work and maintain relationships with their families. It is crucial to discover practical solutions to manage work-family conflict (WFC) to sustain health and familial peace (Adisa et al., 2022; Rahmawati & Yuniawan, 2023). This solution-seeking is becoming increasingly important as dual demands continue to increase.

On the other hand, more people now have access to digital connections. By 2022, 73.7% of Indonesians will have used the Internet, and more than 69% will have used social media (Kemp, 2022). Cyberloafing, or surfing the Internet for personal reasons at work, can cost firms money (Giordano & Mercado, 2023; Lu et al., 2024). Also, new studies show that taking a short break might help lower stress and keep employees' mood up (Constantino et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2023; Zhong et al., 2022). In this situation, family-related cyberloafing (FCL) is extremely important to pay attention to. This situation is especially true in Indonesia, where strong family duties often get in the way of employment, especially for women who work. Short digital chores that have to do with family, including checking on dependents, making appointments, or responding to urgent messages, are widespread. These tasks are sometimes essential for caregivers, especially mothers. These short conversations may help women workers feel less anxious about family issues, which will help them get back to work with a fresh mind (Kinasih et al., 2023). However, while earlier research has looked

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at general cyberloafing, the specific role of FCL in dealing with work–family conflict (WFC) is still not well understood (Andel et al., 2019; Hertlein, 2012; Lim & Chen, 2012; Liu & Zhang, 2022; Pardim et al., 2024).

Using the Theory of Planned Behavior as a foundation, the current study seeks to fill this vacuum by studying whether or not FCL acts as a mediator between work–life balance (WLB) and work–family conflict (WFC), as well as how these dynamics differ between the generations. Our primary focus is on three generations that are currently dominating the workforce: Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980), Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996), and Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012). Each generation has a unique perspective on technology and boundary management (Akram et al., 2020; Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021; Williams, 2020). This study uses the Theory of Planned Behavior to look at family-related cyberloafing (FCL) as a possible way to deal with work-family conflict (WFC). Attitude toward FCL, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are three factors that are thought to affect the intention to participate in FCL, which then leads to real FCL behavior. The main goal of this study is to find out if FCL behavior affects the link between WFC and work-life balance (WLB). Another goal is to examine how this mediation changes between Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z.

2. Literature review

Theory of Planned Behavior, published in 1985 by Ajzen, provides a framework for understanding how work-family conflict and work-life balance influence an individual's actions in achieving the balance. Individuals' beliefs regarding the detrimental effects of work-family conflict (i.e., behavioral beliefs) can affect their attitude toward the situation (Jacob et al., 2023; Moon, 2021). Suppose an individual believes that conflict between work and family life will result in stress and unhappiness. In that case, they are likely to have a negative attitude toward the work, which causes conflict. Conversely, suppose an individual believes that maintaining a balance between work and personal life will enhance their well-being. In that case, they tend to exhibit positive attitudes toward behaviors that facilitate this balance (Haar & Brougham, 2022). The influence of normative and control beliefs on individual intentions and behavior is also significant. Perceptions of social expectations and cultural norms regarding roles at work and home have been demonstrated to exacerbate work-family conflict (Hammer et al., 2005; Lee et al., 2020). For example, if there is pressure from the social or work environment to excel in both roles, individuals may feel compelled to meet those expectations, intensifying the conflict (Laß & Wooden, 2023). Conversely, providing support from family, friends, and colleagues regarding maintaining a work-life balance may influence the individual's intention to achieve this state of balance. The perception of one's ability to control or manage work-family conflict is critical. Individuals who perceive low control due to a high workload or lack of support may encounter more significant challenges in achieving balance (Mustafida, 2020; Peng & Min, 2020). These beliefs will influence their intention to implement the requisite steps to achieve such a balance, including establishing work time limits or identifying familial support resources.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) posits that behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs influence an individual's intentions and actions. This study did not incorporate questions that directly inquired whether participants intended to engage in family-related cyberloafing, such as survey items asking, "I plan to use digital devices for family matters." Actual family-related cyberloafing (FCL) behavior was a direct outcome of behavioral, normative, and control beliefs. Belief in the stress-relief benefits of brief, family-oriented Internet breaks predicts greater engagement in FCL activities such as administrative checking (managing bills or appointments), non-browsing tasks (sending e-mails to family members), and social browsing (accessing social media for family updates). Subjective norms refer to individuals' beliefs regarding acceptable workplace behavior, impacting all three FCL dimensions. Ultimately, confidence in one's ability to manage device access, time constraints, and self-discipline fosters a sense of behavioral control, thereby increasing the likelihood of engaging in family-related cyberloafing, including administrative tasks, non-browsing activities, and browsing.

Work-life balance

Balancing work, family, and personal life is a complex challenge, particularly for women, who often juggle professional responsibilities with societal expectations of caregiving and household management (Dousin et al., 2022). Unlike separate compartments, these roles overlap significantly, making it impossible for individuals to "switch off" their work persona at home or vice versa. For women, this overlapping dynamic often leads to heightened pressures and conflicts as they strive to meet the demands of both spheres (Basak, 2021). The concept of work-life balance aims to address these challenges by reducing conflicts between professional and family roles. According to Pascucci et al. (2022), this balance reflects a person's ability to meet obligations in both areas effectively. Women, however, face unique hurdles due to persistent gender norms that expect them to shoulder a greater share of domestic responsibilities, even as they pursue ambitious careers (Liu et al., 2021). This dual responsibility often forces women to make difficult choices or sacrifices in one domain to satisfy the other. Mukhopadhyay (2023) defines work-life balance as a state of well-being that emerges when an individual experiences satisfaction, involvement, and adequate time allocation across all roles. For women, achieving this balance requires managing time and finding emotional and psychological equilibrium amidst competing demands. Many women navigate these challenges by adopting strat-

egies such as setting boundaries, seeking support systems, or pursuing flexible work arrangements. The effectiveness of work-life balance can be measured through the time devoted to various roles, their emotional engagement, and their satisfaction (Greenhaus et al., 2003). Striking this balance is more than just managing a schedule. It addresses the more profound societal expectations and systemic barriers that shape their experiences (De Clercq & Brieger, 2022). Achieving balance reduces stress and fosters personal fulfillment, career growth, and stronger family relationships.

Work-family conflict

People play various roles in life, including siblings, friends, spouses, parents, employees, and children. It can be challenging for working parents to balance the duties of each role. They frequently find themselves in a difficult situation where they must choose between caring for their personal or family demands and their work responsibilities (Andrade & Neves, 2022; Dodanwala et al., 2022). This scenario demonstrates the challenges of juggling work and family responsibilities simultaneously, which can lead to conflict and make it challenging to satisfy the expectations of both areas successfully. According to Molina (2021), work-family conflict is a type of dual-role conflict brought on by the interconnectedness of the work and family domains, which has detrimental effects because of the varying needs of each.

In the same way, Yildiz et al. (2021) define work-family conflict as an inter-role conflict in which one or both domains are strained due to unequal expectations from work and family responsibilities. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) describe the dimensions used in this study to measure this conflict. These dimensions divide the work-family conflict into three categories: behavior-based conflict, which occurs when behavior required in one role is incompatible with expectations in another; strain-based conflict, which occurs when stress in one role affects performance in another; and time-based conflict, which occurs when time demands from one role interfere with the other. These dimensions provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the multifaceted nature of work-family conflict and its effects on individuals' lives. For working women, the challenges of work-family conflict are often more acute due to societal expectations that they balance professional responsibilities with caregiving and household duties. Unlike men, who are less frequently expected to fulfill primary caregiving roles, women face the burden of excelling in both work and family domains (Karakose et al., 2021). This dual responsibility can result in heightened stress as women attempt to distribute their time, energy, and emotional resources across competing demands. For instance, long work hours or inflexible job requirements may lead to time-based conflicts that limit women's time with their families. Similarly, strain-based conflicts can emerge when the stress of professional responsibilities diminishes their ability to engage meaningfully in family activities (Reimann et al., 2022). Behavioral expectations further compound these challenges, as women are often expected to demonstrate assertiveness and competence at work while simultaneously being nurturing and empathetic at home. These overlapping demands can negatively affect women's mental health, well-being, and performance in both roles, underscoring the need for family-friendly policies and supportive workplace practices to help alleviate these conflicts (Andrade & Neves, 2022).

Cyberloafing

Cyberloafing refers to employees using the company's Internet during work hours for personal activities, often without realizing its negative impact. Lu et al. (2024) define cyberloafing as the voluntary use of the workplace internet to visit websites unrelated to work. This behavior includes checking and replying to personal e-mails, browsing non-work-related websites, downloading music, and watching videos. These activities are generally considered unproductive and can harm organizational performance by diverting attention away from work tasks (Osei et al., 2022). It uses work hours for non-work-related activities. A specific form of cyberloafing is family-related cyberloafing (FCL), which occurs when employees use work hours to address family matters online. FCL involves e-mailing a child's school, managing family schedules, or searching for tips and recipes.

Family-related cyberloafing is presented in this article to differentiate between regular random-purpose cyberloafing and purposive cyberloafing. The rise of FCL reflects the growing overlap between professional and personal responsibilities, especially for employees with caregiving duties (Chavan et al., 2022). In these cases, work and family life boundaries become increasingly blurred. Certain cyberloafing or one with a purpose, such as family-related cyberloafing, can benefit workers. It could increase commitment and performance (Koay & Soh, 2018; Nyoto et al., 2023). Organizations can help mitigate the effects of FCL by encouraging employees to balance work and family roles more effectively. Promoting policies that support work-life balance, such as flexible hours or remote work options, can reduce the temptation for employees to engage in family-related cyberloafing during office hours. By

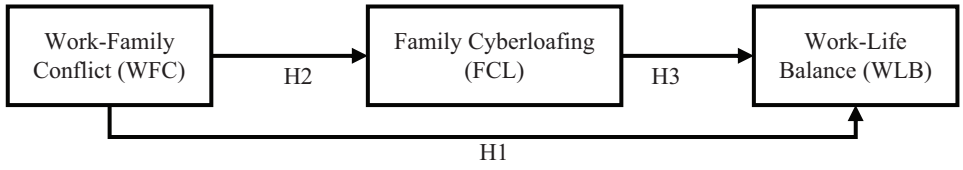


Figure 1. Conceptual model

fostering an environment where personal and professional boundaries are respected, businesses can help employees maintain productivity without sacrificing family responsibilities (Wong et al., 2023). The research model proposed in this study is presented in Figure 1. The structural model, depicting the relationships and sequence of variables, is shown in Figure 2 using SMART-PLS.

Drawing on the Theory of Planned Behavior, we propose that elevated work-family conflict shapes employees' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control toward family-related cyberloafing, strengthening their intention to cyberloaf to manage boundary stress. Under acute work-family conflict, employees' attitudes toward family-related cyberloafing (FCL) grow more positive because they believe that brief online engagement with family matters can quickly replenish depleted emotional resources and enhance overall well-being (Haar & Brougham, 2022; Jacob et al., 2023; Moon, 2021). At the same time, subjective norms shift as workers perceive that colleagues and supervisors tacitly approve of occasional cyberloafing when personal demands intensify social expectations to accommodate dual-role pressures (Hammer et al., 2005). Finally, perceived behavioral control over FCL increases since the stress of WFC undermines self-regulatory capacity, making employees feel both more compelled and more capable of using cyberloafing as an adaptive coping mechanism (Mustafida, 2020; Peng & Min, 2020). Proposed hypotheses:

H_1: Work-family conflict negatively influences work-life balance.

H_2: Work-family conflict positively predicts family cyberloafing.

H_3: Family cyberloafing positively influences work-life balance.

H_4: Family cyberloafing mediates the relationship between work-family conflict and work-life balance.

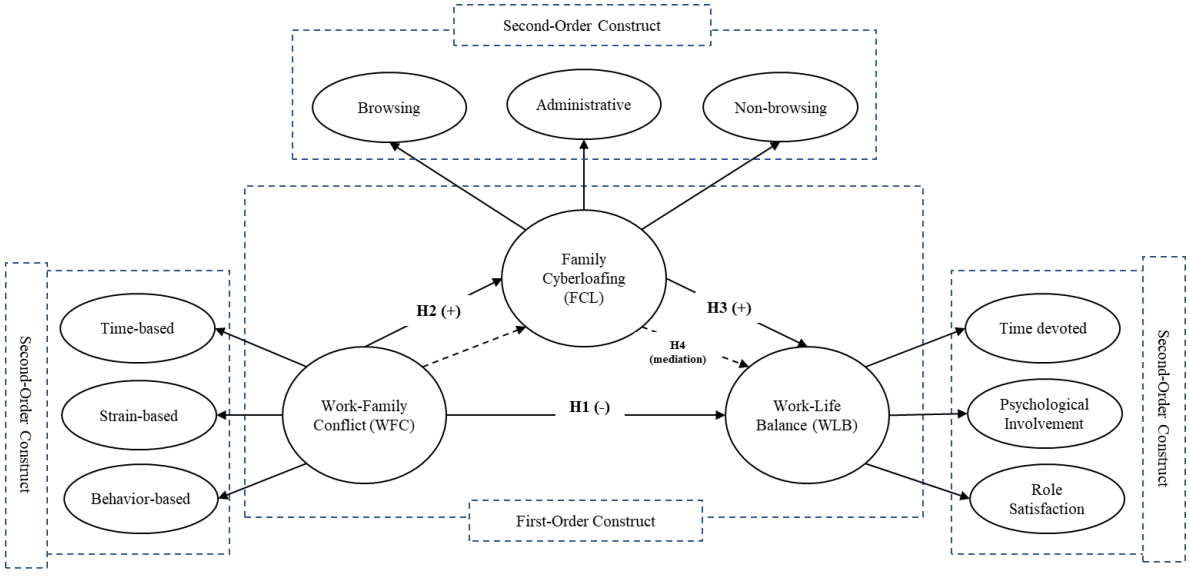
H_5: The strengths of the paths specified in H1–H3 differ across Generations X, Y, and Z, as assessed via PLS-SEM multi-group analysis.

3. Methods

The research is based on a positivist / post-positivist paradigm. This research will adopt an objective stance about the phenomena under investigation, acknowledging the possibility that several events may not be predictable or that not all phenomena can be accounted for by existing theories. The positivist / post-positivist paradigm is typically employed in investigating human behavior, employing a verifiable approach. This research employs a causal quantitative methodology. It is crucial to address this issue directly to improve work-life balance. This study proposes an intervention involving family cyberloafing, offering a novel approach to the problem. The work-life balance variable is measured based on Greenhaus et al. (2003). The work-family conflict variable is measured following the ones developed by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985). Meanwhile, the family cyberloafing variable is measured using measurements adopted from Lim (2002) and Liberman et al. (2011). Data was collected using a questionnaire with a Likert scale of 1–7. All questionnaire items for each construct are listed in Appendix E.

Procedure for data collection

The population in this study consisted of female employees, skilled laborers, and married people. Since the population is unknown, determining the minimum sample size is based on Hair et al. (2019) using power analysis. With



H5: Paths H1–H3 tested for equality across Generations X, Y, and Z using PLS-SEM multi-group analysis.

Figure 2. Structural model

an anticipated effect of 0.3, the number of latent variables is three, and the number of observed variables is 31, with an error rate of 0.05. The minimum sample size that must be met is 119 respondents. The sampling technique to be used is snowball sampling. Data were collected through a structured online survey administered to employees in the service and manufacturing sectors throughout Central Java Province, Indonesia, from July to August 2024. Three hundred fifty questionnaires were distributed using a snowball sampling technique, with participants allotted one week to complete the survey.

The number of questionnaires distributed was 350, and those that were eligible and used in this study amounted to 309.

Criteria for eligibility and final sample

Out of 350 responses, 309 satisfied the eligibility criteria and were incorporated into the final analysis. Participants had to (1) be currently employed full-time, (2) be married women from Generation X, Y, or Z, and (3) complete the questionnaire without omitting responses on key variables. Incomplete responses, duplicates, or items that did not pass attention-check items were excluded from the analysis. The data analysis techniques include a pretest, a classical assumption test, and an SEM analysis utilizing partial least squares (PLS). The employment of data analysis techniques in the form of SEM is justified because this research model comprises several exogenous variables and a similar number of endogenous variables. Furthermore, PLS-SEM MGA is also employed for multi-group (generation) analysis.

4. Results

This study was conducted on 309 samples deemed eligible for inclusion, comprising women, skilled workers, and married individuals. The total samples from Generation X, Y, and Z are 56, 203, and 50, respectively. As the respondents are married, information regarding the number of dependents is also essential. It can be seen that 44.34% of respondents have two dependents, 100 respondents have one dependent, 37 respondents have three dependents, and the remainder have one or fewer dependents. The length of employment is less than one year for 3.56% of respondents, more than ten years for 23.95%, and is dominated by those employed between 1 and 5 years, representing 45.63% of the sample (141 respondents). The remaining 83 individuals have been employed for 5–10 years. Further, most respondents (63.11%) are employed in the service industry, while the remainder are in manufacturing. A more detailed account of the respondent profile can be seen in Table 1.

All data from outer loadings are greater than 0.7, as calculated using the SmartPLS 3.0 software. Following the criteria established by Hair et al. (2019), the data are considered reliable and suitable for analysis. A composite reliability (CR) value of 0.6 or greater and an average variance extracted (AVE) value of 0.5 or greater are

Table 1. Respondent profile (source: processed data, 2024)

Category		Frequency	%
Generations	Generation X (1965–1980)	56	18.12
	Generation Y/ Millennial (1981–1996)	203	65.70
	Generation Z (1997–2012)	50	16.18
Number of Dependents	0	23	7.44
	1	100	32.36
	2	137	44.34
	3	37	11.97
	> 3	12	3.88
Length of Employment	< 1 year	11	3.56
	1 < 5 years	141	45.63
	5 < 10 years	83	26.86
	> 10 years	74	23.95
Industry	Service	195	63.11
	Manufacturing	114	36.89

eligible for analysis. The assessment of common-method bias utilized the full-collinearity approach established by Kock (2015), employing Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs) for all constructs. Common-method bias is deemed minimal when all outside VIF values are ≤ 3.3. This investigation revealed that all item VIFs were below 3.3 and beneath the conventional threshold of 5.0, indicating that the measurements are free from significant technique bias. The loading of each item indicates the degree to which it represents its latent construct. The t-value derived by bootstrapping assesses whether the loading is statistically distinct from zero. A t-value exceeding 1.96 (for a two-tailed test at $\alpha = .05$) signifies that the item is a dependable measure of the construct. In other terms, elevated t-values substantiate that each item significantly contributes to the assessment of its designated concept. The resulting calculations are presented in Table 2.

Two complementary methods investigated discriminant validity. The Fornell–Larcker criterion requires that, for each construct, the square root of its AVE exceed its correlations with every other construct. In all cases, the diagonal value exceeded the off-diagonal correlations, indicating that each latent variable has more variance with its indicators than others. Second, the heterotrait–monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) was calculated, and all values were below the conservative threshold of 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015) (Appendix F), confirming that each construct pair is empirically unique. These results confirm that the measurement model has appropriate discriminant validity. The model fit was assessed using PLS-SEM criteria. The estimated model had an SRMR of 0.108 (saturated model = 0.101), slightly over the optimum threshold of 0.08, but still acceptable (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Euclidian distance squared was 13.083. The fit statistics, reliability, and validity data establish a suitable measurement and structural model for this multi-construct study.

Table 2. Measurement model assessment: outer loadings, reliability, and validity metrics (source: processed data, 2024)

Construct	Item	Item Code	Loadings	t-values	VIF	CA	rho_A	CR	AVE
WFC	Time Based	TB1	0.920	95.711	1.912	0.817	0.817	0.916	0.845
		TB2	0.919	87.733	1.912				
	Strain Based	SB1	0.934	104.911	2.324	0.860	0.862	0.935	0.877
		SB2	0.940	129.870	2.324				
	Behavior Based	BB1	0.865	57.132	1.862	0.832	0.836	0.899	0.749
		BB2	0.887	59.460	2.124				
		BB3	0.844	35.652	1.852				
FCL	Browsing	BR1	0.913	67.587	2.123	0.842	0.870	0.926	0.862
		BR2	0.944	159.533	2.123				
	Administrative	AD1	0.931	66.103	2.151	0.845	0.845	0.928	0.866
		AD2	0.930	74.854	2.151				
	Non-Browsing	NB1	0.810	44.052	1.168	0.576	0.608	0.773	0.534
		NB2	0.749	24.104	1.198				
		NB3	0.622	11.214	1.162				
	Time Devoted	TI1	0.852	34.671	1.760	0.781	0.781	0.873	0.695
		TI2	0.814	29.216	1.512				
		TI3	0.835	42.879	1.652				
	Psych. Involv.	IN1	0.732	20.292	1.526	0.819	0.834	0.873	0.58
		IN2	0.786	22.341	1.827				
		IN3	0.656	12.934	1.458				
		IN4	0.811	38.275	1.862				
		IN5	0.812	36.525	1.897				
	Role Satisfaction	SL1	0.865	44.412	1.860	0.779	0.793	0.872	0.695
		SL2	0.882	52.316	2.027				
		SL3	0.748	18.283	1.384				

Work–family conflict had robust positive correlations with its three subdimensions (behavioral, strain, and time-based) and significantly detrimentally affected overall work–life balance. In contrast, work–family conflict did not substantially forecast family-related cyberloafing in the entire group. Family-related cyberloafing has shown consistently robust, favorable benefits across all three behavioral dimensions – administrative checking, non-browsing tasks, and browsing – along with a modest yet significant enhancement to work-life balance. Ultimately, work–life balance significantly influenced elevated levels of psychological engagement, role satisfaction, and time allocated to personal pursuits. Refer to Table 3 for comprehensive path estimations and significance assessments.

The structural model was tested across three generational cohorts. Table 4 summarizes the significance and direction of hypothesized relationships (H1–H3) for Generations X, Y, and Z. As shown in Table 3, the negative impact of work-family conflict on work-life balance (H1) is robust and consistent across all cohorts, Generation X ($\beta = -0.516$, $p = .000$), Generation Y ($\beta = -0.484$, $p = .000$), and Generation Z ($\beta = -0.395$, $p = .004$). In contrast, the hypothesized positive link between work-family conflict and family-related cyberloafing (H2) emerges only for Generation X ($\beta = 0.436$, $p = 0.000$), remaining non-significant in Generations Y and Z. Finally, the effect of

Table 3. Structural model path coefficients and significance (source: processed data, 2024)

Path	β	t-value	p-values
WFC -> Behavior-based	0.930	105.697	0.000
WFC -> FCL	0.057	0.950	0.342
WFC -> Strain-based	0.911	103.307	0.000
WFC -> Time-based	0.786	27.988	0.000
WFC -> WLB	–0.480	10.304	0.000
FCL -> Administrative	0.852	49.362	0.000
FCL -> Non_Browsing	0.842	50.849	0.000
FCL -> Browsing	0.732	28.099	0.000
FCL -> WLB	0.159	3.135	0.002
WLB -> Psychological Involvement	0.916	82.641	0.000
WLB -> Role Satisfaction	0.892	70.366	0.000
WLB -> Time Devoted	0.873	52.613	0.000

family-related cyberloafing on work-life balance (H3) is supported in Generations X (β = 0.253, p = .046) and Y (β = 0.178, p = .005) but not in Generation Z (β = 0.194, p = .153). These results highlight a common vulnerability to work-family conflict across cohorts while revealing generational distinctions in cyberloafing behaviours as both a response to conflict and a means of maintaining work-life balance. The indirect effect of work-family conflict on work–life balance through family-related cyberloafing (H4) was small (β = 0.024, SE = 0.015, t = 1.60, p = .110) and did not achieve statistical significance. A 95% bootstrap confidence interval of approximately [–0.005, 0.053] encompasses zero, suggesting a lack of mediation. The direct relationship between digital-related conflict and work–life balance was significant, indicating that family-related cyberloafing does not significantly mediate this effect.

Table 4. Summary of hypothesis testing across generations (source: processed data, 2024)

Path	Gen X (β, p)	Gen Y (β, p)	Gen Z (β, p)	Result
WFC → WLB	–0.516, 0.000	–0.484, 0.000	–0.395, 0.004	Supported
WFC → FCL	0.436, 0.000	–0.037, 0.306	–0.065, 0.686	Not Supported
FCL → WLB	0.253, 0.046	0.178, 0.005	0.194, 0.153	Partially supported

All second-order constructs demonstrated strong loadings across dimensions. Table 5 concisely summarizes higher-order factor loadings across the three generational groups. As shown in Table 4, each higher-order construct achieved uniformly high loadings on its respective dimensions across Generations X, Y, and Z (all λ > 0.70, p < .001). Specifically, the work-family conflict (WFC) construct's time-based dimension loaded between 0.757 and 0.834, its strain-based dimension between 0.893 and 0.945, and its behavior-based dimension between 0.907 and 0.965. The family-related cyberloafing (FCL) construct exhibited browsing loadings from 0.672 to 0.758, administrative loadings from 0.823 to 0.856, and non-browsing loadings from 0.827 to 0.863. Finally, the work-life balance (WLB) construct's time-devoted dimension ranged from 0.833 to 0.898, its satisfaction level from 0.838 to 0.931, and its psychological involvement from 0.914 to 0.938. These results confirm that the specified dimensions consistently and robustly reflect their respective second-order constructs across all three cohorts. In addition to hypothesis testing, we evaluated the explanatory power of the structural model by examining adjusted R^2 values for the endogenous constructs across cohorts. As shown below, family-related cyberloafing explains 24.2% of the variance in work-life balance in the full sample, compared with 18.7% in Generation X and 17.0% in Generation Z. Generation Y exhibits the most potent effect, with FCL accounting for 26.5% of WLB variance. Conversely, work-family conflict explains 17.5% of the variance in FCL for Generation X but virtually none in the other cohorts. These results underscore both the general and cohort-specific strength of our structural paths.

Table 5. Summary of second-order construct loadings across generations (source: processed data, 2024)

Construct	Dimension	Loading Range	Sig.
WFC	Time-based	0.757 – 0.834	p < 0.001
WFC	Strain-based	0.893 – 0.945	p < 0.001
WFC	Behavior-based	0.907 – 0.965	p < 0.001
FCL	Browsing	0.672 – 0.758	p < 0.001
FCL	Administrative	0.823 – 0.856	p < 0.001
FCL	Non-Browsing	0.827 – 0.863	p < 0.001
WLB	Time Devoted	0.833 – 0.898	p < 0.001
WLB	Satisfaction Level	0.838 – 0.931	p < 0.001
WLB	Psych. Involvement	0.914 – 0.938	p < 0.001

To formally test H5, we conducted a PLS-SEM multigroup analysis (MGA) across Generations X, Y, and Z. As reported in Table 6, both the WFC → WLB and FCL → WLB paths show no statistically significant differences between any pair of cohorts (all p > .05), indicating invariance in the negative impact of work-family conflict and the positive coping effect of cyberloafing on work-life balance. By contrast, the WFC → FCL relationship varies significantly by cohort: it is notably stronger in Generation X compared to Generation Y (Δβ = 0.473, p = .0002) and Generation Z (Δβ = 0.501, p = .009), whereas Generations Y and Z do not differ from each other (p = .87). These findings support H5 only for the work-family conflict–cyberloafing linkage, suggesting a unique generational moderation effect for that mechanism.

Table 6. Generational MGA: Δβ, z-values, and Significance for H1–H3 (source: processed data, 2024)

Path	Comparison	Δβ	z-value	p-value	Sig.
H1: WFC → WLB	X vs Y	–0.032	–0.22	0.8300	No
	X vs Z	–0.121	–0.63	0.5300	No
	Y vs Z	–0.089	–0.60	0.5500	No
H2: WFC → FCL	X vs Y	0.473	3.680	0.0002	Yes
	X vs Z	0.501	2.600	0.0090	Yes
	Y vs Z	0.028	0.160	0.8700	No
H3: FCL → WLB	X vs Y	0.075	0.460	0.6400	No
	X vs Z	0.059	0.290	0.7700	No
	Y vs Z	–0.016	–0.11	0.9100	No

The structural model demonstrated a consistent adverse effect of work-family conflict on work-life balance across all cohorts and a cohort-specific increase in family-related cyberloafing only for Generation X, as confirmed by multi-group analysis (Table 6). The model explains between 17% and 26.5% of the variance in work-life balance

and up to 17.5% in cyberloafing across cohorts. Appendix A–D provide complete path coefficients and second-order measurement details for the overall sample and each generation.

5. Discussion

The study reveals that work-family conflict (WFC) consistently undermines work-life balance (WLB), echoing prior evidence that boundary strain disrupts personal well-being (Brauner et al., 2020; Talukder, 2019). At the same time, family-related cyberloafing (FCL), for example, briefly searching online for children's needs, can bolster WLB, suggesting it functions as a situational coping mechanism (Andel et al., 2019; Pindek et al., 2018). Although there is a positive trend between WFC and FCL, this relationship appears to be influenced by various factors, including organizational culture, flexibility policies, and individual preferences in handling role conflicts. Furthermore, the efficacy of the higher-order dimensions in elucidating the primary constructs substantiates the theoretical model employed in this study, thereby establishing a robust foundation for subsequent interpretation.

The WFC to FCL link varies over different generations. Members of Generation X experiencing greater work–family conflict are more inclined to engage in cyberloafing concerning familial matters. This result indicates that mid-career professionals may require brief interruptions from their employment to attend to familial responsibilities simultaneously. Individuals in this demographic typically belong to the "sandwich generation," signifying their responsibility to care for their parents and children while maintaining employment. FCL may offer temporary psychological relief or enable an individual to defer a job, although it appears insufficient for reestablishing long-term equilibrium. The cumulative burden of several roles may exceed any immediate advantages (Yano-Horoski, 2024). This result indicates that although Generation X employees employ digital tools to manage stress, their FCL activities do not significantly enhance their perception of work-life balance, suggesting that their coping mechanisms do not consistently yield favorable results.

Conversely, Millennials (Generation Y) exhibit distinct behavior: as work–family conflict intensifies, their utilization of FCL diminishes. This result may be perceived as a deliberate effort to maintain a professional demeanor or remain concentrated during critical periods. Nevertheless, when individuals utilize digital devices for family-oriented activities, the positive correlation with work-life balance indicates that these activities may serve as a targeted means of alleviating stress rather than a constant engagement. Research on many generations indicates millennials are typically motivated by success and power, prioritizing work performance and career progression over other considerations (Ng et al., 2016; Rubiano-Moreno et al., 2023). Conversely, the conflict–FCL pathway and its impact on WLB are statistically insignificant for Generation Z, indicating that FCL is ineffective for boundary management. The generational disparities underscore the necessity of establishing adaptable workplace practices and digital standards, considering individuals' varying stress management approaches across age groups.

These patterns suggest that cyberloafing should not be viewed as a monolithic behavior but rather as a context-sensitive, generationally-influenced response to competing role demands (Chavan et al., 2022; Koay et al., 2017). For managers, this underscores the importance of designing flexible work policies that consider generational preferences and digital behaviors. Policies that assume uniform digital engagement may overlook subtle generational tensions. More specifically, enabling low-stakes, family-oriented digital access during work hours may serve as a relief valve for Gen X employees. However, it may require different framing or support for younger cohorts (Nevin & Schieman, 2021). Nevertheless, FCL continues to have a beneficial impact on their work-life balance, which is in alignment with the overall findings. On the other hand, Generation Z demonstrates comparatively weaker and less pronounced patterns in the relationship between WFC and FCL and the impact of FCL on WLB. It might reflect a lower reliance on these activities to manage WLB. These findings underscore the distinct attributes of generational responses to WFC and the utilization of FCL. Generation X appears to be more responsive to utilizing FCL as an adaptive strategy for WFC, although its impact on WLB is insignificant. In contrast, Generation Y and Generation Z demonstrate a more passive approach or tendency to avoid FCL in conflict situations. Generation Y appears to benefit more from FCL in supporting WLB than Generation Z. These findings highlight the importance of considering generational factors in designing organizational policies that support WLB, such as providing work flexibility that is more adaptive to the needs of specific generations.

Family-related cyberloafing likely failed to mediate work-family conflict on work-life balance, as brief, intermittent breaks from the Internet are insufficient to mitigate the persistent and substantial stress associated with managing multiple jobs. Messaging a relative or coordinating caregiving arrangements are examples of digital intermissions that may offer brief relief. However, they fall short of providing the deep recovery needed to overcome emotional and mental fatigue. Short intervals of non-work-related digital interaction may inadvertently facilitate boundary transgressions, complicating the distinction between professional and personal life and hindering mental detachment from work responsibilities (Derks & Bakker, 2010; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). When employees remain mentally preoccupied with unresolved job or familial issues, even during personal online activities, these breaks significantly diminish their restorative benefits.

Furthermore, work–family conflict may induce enduring stress responses such as cognitive overload, role pressure, and emotional fatigue that cannot be sufficiently alleviated by engaging in cyberloafing breaks (Michel et al., 2010). These activities are frequently insufficiently prolonged and fragmented to facilitate the profound

healing processes essential for achieving a genuine work-life balance. Moreover, various coping mechanisms are significant: not all employees perceive cyberloafing as a beneficial method for recovery. Individuals may allocate excessive time to digital distractions, resulting in diminished productivity. Others may refrain from this due to self-discipline or adherence to workplace regulations. The variations in individuals' self-regulation and problem-solving capabilities likely obscure any consistent mediation pattern, explaining the lack of statistical significance of the indirect effect throughout the population (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Although FCL may assist individuals in managing immediate challenges, it may not consistently serve as a conduit between work-family conflict and improved equilibrium.

Viewed through the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) lens, these generational patterns become clearer. TPB posits that intention to engage in family-related cyberloafing is shaped by attitude toward the behavior, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioral control. Among Generation X, work-family conflict strengthens favorable attitudes, permissive norms, and firm control beliefs (Bennett et al., 2017). As a result, intention and actual cyberloafing rise but do not meaningfully restore balance. Millennials hold more career-focused attitudes and stricter norms, which weaken their intention to cyberloaf despite high control (Chavan et al., 2022). When they do engage in cyberloafing, however, it still enhances their work-life balance. Generation Z exhibits neutral attitudes, mixed norms, and limited control, so conflict does little to change intention or behavior (Sumolang, 2023). These cohort-specific constellations of TPB elements explain why only the conflict-to-cyberloafing path differs significantly by generation. In contrast, the core conflict-to-balance link remains consistent for all employees.

6. Conclusions

Conclusions and implications

This study underscores the complex relationship between WFC, FCL, and WLB across generations. While WFC universally impairs balance, digital coping behaviors are not equally adopted or effective for all employees. Understanding these generational nuances helps organizations craft more adaptive, inclusive strategies that support employees in digitally and behaviorally managing role-based stress. This study enhances our theoretical comprehension of employees' utilization of digital coping strategies, including family-related cyberloafing (FCL), to address work-family conflict (WFC). The study contributes to the growing body of research highlighting generational inequalities in digital engagement and coping strategies. The findings corroborate the Theory of Planned Behavior with empirical evidence, demonstrating that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence individuals' responses to digital challenges variably across different groups (Paul et al., 2023).

The findings indicate that CEOs and HR experts must consider the expectations of various generations when formulating work-life balance strategies. Generation X employees may gain from flexible micro-breaks to attend to brief digital tasks related to their families. Simultaneously, younger demographics may require more explicit digital boundaries or alternative strategies to address issues. Policies considering various generations, such as designated digital break periods, caregiving assistance, or training on technology utilization, can enhance individual well-being and increase organizational productivity.

Limitations and future research

Limitations include the absence of long-term tracking and comprehensive comparisons of cultures or cohorts. Although the generational cohort was not established as a formal moderator, a PLS Multi-Group Analysis (MGA) revealed that the WFC → FCL pathway significantly varied among age groups. It indicates that further research is required on cohort effects and the impact of technology on the management of work-life boundaries. Cross-cultural comparisons and work type or industry as contextual variables may enhance future research.

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APPENDIX

A. Overall sample detailed results

	Original Sample (O)	STDEV	T Statistics	P Values	Remarks
WFC -> WLB	–0.480	0.046	10.401	0.000	H1: Supported
WFC -> FCL	0.057	0.061	0.934	0.350	H2: Not Supported
FCL -> WLB	0.159	0.050	3.148	0.002	H3: Supported
Second Order					
WFC -> Behavior-based	0.930	0.009	102.857	0.000	
WFC -> Strain-based	0.911	0.009	101.308	0.000	
WFC -> Time-based	0.786	0.028	28.468	0.000	
FCL -> Administrative	0.852	0.017	49.789	0.000	
FCL -> non-Browsing	0.842	0.017	50.747	0.000	
FCL -> Browsing	0.732	0.026	28.020	0.000	
WLB -> Psych. Involvement	0.916	0.011	83.233	0.000	
WLB -> Satisfaction Level	0.892	0.013	69.544	0.000	
WLB -> Time devoted	0.873	0.016	54.983	0.000	

B. Generation X detailed results

	Original Sample (O)	STDEV	T Statistics	P Values	Remarks
WFC -> WLB	–0.516	0.136	3.803	0.000	H1: Supported
WFC -> FCL	0.436	0.106	4.102	0.000	H2: Supported
FCL -> WLB	0.253	0.150	1.686	0.046	H3: Supported
Second Order					
WFC -> Behavior-based	0.965	0.008	121.034	0.000	
WFC -> Strain-based	0.931	0.014	64.406	0.000	
WFC -> Time-based	0.834	0.053	15.586	0.000	
FCL -> Administrative	0.853	0.044	19.230	0.000	
FCL -> non-Browsing	0.854	0.027	32.119	0.000	
FCL -> Browsing	0.728	0.078	9.364	0.000	
WLB -> Psych. Involvement	0.938	0.012	75.129	0.000	
WLB -> Satisfaction Level	0.931	0.022	42.058	0.000	
WLB -> Time devoted	0.898	0.031	29.357	0.000	

C. Generation Y detailed results

	Original Sample (O)	STDEV	T Statistics	P Values	Remarks
WFC -> WLB	–0.484	0.054	8.903	0.000	H1: Supported
WFC -> FCL	–0.037	0.073	0.509	0.306	H2: Not Supported
FCL -> WLB	0.178	0.063	2.839	0.005	H3: Supported
Second Order					
WFC -> Behavior-based	0.927	0.011	86.306	0.000	
WFC -> Strain-based	0.893	0.014	65.730	0.000	
WFC -> Time-based	0.772	0.039	20.041	0.000	
FCL -> Administrative	0.856	0.020	43.293	0.000	
FCL -> non-Browsing	0.827	0.026	31.793	0.000	
FCL -> Browsing	0.758	0.029	26.544	0.000	
WLB -> Psych. Involvement	0.914	0.014	65.406	0.000	
WLB -> Satisfaction Level	0.896	0.015	60.998	0.000	
WLB -> Time devoted	0.886	0.016	54.569	0.000	

D. Generation Z detailed results

	Original Sample (O)	STDEV	T Statistics	P Values	Remarks
WFC -> WLB	–0.395	0.137	2.884	0.004	H1: Supported
WFC -> FCL	–0.065	0.161	0.404	0.686	H2: Not Supported
FCL -> WLB	0.194	0.136	1.431	0.153	H3: Not Supported
Second Order					
WFC -> Behavior-based	0.907	0.032	28.500	0.000	
WFC -> Strain-based	0.945	0.014	65.943	0.000	
WFC -> Time-based	0.757	0.079	9.614	0.000	
FCL -> Administrative	0.823	0.071	11.563	0.000	
FCL -> non-Browsing	0.863	0.033	26.213	0.000	
FCL -> Browsing	0.672	0.077	8.687	0.000	
WLB -> Psych. Involvement	0.914	0.025	36.123	0.000	
WLB -> Satisfaction Level	0.838	0.054	15.543	0.000	
WLB -> Time devoted	0.833	0.050	16.728	0.000	

E. Measurement Items

This appendix includes all items used to measure each construct in the study. Respondents rated each item using a [Likert scale type, e.g., 1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree].

Work–Family Conflict (adapted from Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985):

- TB1. I often feel that the time I spend working takes away from the time I should spend with my family.
- TB2. My work demands often disrupt planned family activities.
- SB1. Stress from work often negatively affects my mood at home.
- SB2. Work pressure makes it hard to enjoy time with my family.
- BB1. I feel too exhausted from work to participate fully in family activities.
- BB2. Work demands often make me bring work behaviors or attitudes into family life.
- BB3. The behavior expected at work often conflicts with what is expected at home.

Family-related Cyberloafing (adapted from Lim, 2002 and Liberman et al., 2011):

- BR1. I sometimes browse online shopping sites for household needs during work hours.
- BR2. I never look for recipes or family activity ideas online while working.
- AD1. I use my work e-mail to communicate with family about household matters.
- AD2. I check and reply to personal family-related e-mails while working.
- AD3. I often use messaging apps like WhatsApp or Telegram to talk to family during work hours.
- NB1. I use calendar or reminder apps on my phone to plan family activities while working.
- NB2. I never use shopping or payment apps for household needs during work hours.

Work-Life Balance (adopted from Greenhaus et al., 2003)

- TI1. I feel the time I spend on my job is balanced with my time with my family.
- TI2. I can manage my time well between work responsibilities and personal activities.
- TI3. I feel like I have enough time to rest.
- IN1. I feel fully engaged at work without neglecting my attention to my family.
- IN2. I feel fully motivated at work without sacrificing my attention to my family.
- IN3. I can focus my mind on household responsibilities when I am not working.
- IN4. I feel my involvement in work and personal life is balanced.
- IN5. I feel my work and personal involvement do not interfere with each other.
- SL1. I am satisfied with how I balance my work and personal life.
- SI2. I feel my level of job satisfaction is equal to my satisfaction in personal life.
- SL3. I am satisfied with how I manage my work responsibilities.

F. Fornell-Larcker criterion and HTMT ratio

Fornell-Larcker Criterion												
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Behavior-Based (1)	0.865269											
WFC (2)	0.730285	0.796536										
Administrative (3)	0.097275	0.084438	0.930446									
FCL (4)	0.071605	0.057050	0.652131	0.743028								
Psych. Ivolv. (5)	–0.309356	–0.401552	0.043603	0.106880	0.761682							
Non-browsing (6)	0.028829	0.021851	0.531124	0.642253	0.122044	0.731065						
Strain Based (7)	0.809578	0.711182	0.035898	–0.005107	–0.363629	–0.040965	0.936647					
Role Satisfaction (8)	–0.319530	–0.401805	0.012220	0.078148	0.748457	0.063585	–0.319423	0.833700				
Browsing (9)	0.013971	0.001981	0.431256	0.731563	0.201203	0.615576	–0.055766	0.215829	0.928642			
Time Devoted (10)	–0.365089	–0.456040	0.140549	0.185236	0.695687	0.133849	–0.402135	0.667884	0.245553	0.833862		
Time Based (11)	0.578676	0.786077	0.087140	0.084180	–0.411034	0.075029	0.577179	–0.447805	0.050669	–0.458590	0.919396	
WLB (12)	–0.370053	–0.470476	0.072802	0.131445	0.715754	0.111018	–0.406997	0.691997	0.235568	0.673238	–0.492105	0.735628

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)												
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Behavior-Based (1)												
WFC (2)	0.071											
Administrative (3)	0.115	0.117										
FCL (4)	0.093	0.124	0.028									
Psych. Involv. (5)	0.366	0.456	0.063	0.172								
Non-browsing (6)	0.087	0.144	0.718	0.211	0.282							
Strain Based (7)	0.852	0.025	0.075	0.111	0.425	0.184						
Role Satisfaction (8)	0.394	0.477	0.083	0.178	0.824	0.226	0.387					
Browsing (9)	0.022	0.063	0.508	0.881	0.255	0.886	0.063	0.258				
Time Devoted (10)	0.452	0.545	0.173	0.259	0.854	0.283	0.490	0.847	0.299			
Time Based (11)	0.698	0.824	0.129	0.148	0.484	0.143	0.687	0.551	0.101	0.574		
WLB (12)	0.425	0.520	0.109	0.203	0.053	0.264	0.461	0.057	0.268	0.035	0.565	