



# Burnout and Quality of Work Life: The Moderating Role of Servant Leadership

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study aims to examine the effect of burnout syndrome on quality of work life (QWL) and analyze the moderating role of servant leadership in the relationship between burnout syndrome and QWL among Generation Z employees in the service sector in Bandar Lampung, Indonesia.

**Research Methodology:** This study adopts a quantitative approach using a survey method. Data were collected from 170 Generation Z employees in the service sector who had been working for at least one year. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling with convenience distribution through online platforms. Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4.

**Results:** The findings reveal that burnout syndrome has a significant negative effect on quality of work life, indicating that higher burnout leads to lower employee well-being. However, servant leadership does not significantly moderate the relationship between burnout syndrome and QWL.

**Conclusions:** Burnout syndrome is a key determinant in reducing employees' quality of work life, while servant leadership does not function as a moderating variable in this relationship among Generation Z employees in the service sector.

**Limitations:** This study is limited to a cross-sectional design and focuses only on Generation Z employees in the service sector in one geographical area, which may limit generalizability of the findings.

**Contributions:** This study contributes to literature by providing empirical evidence on the burnout-QWL relationship and testing servant leadership as a moderating variable in a Gen Z context, offering new insights into leadership effectiveness in high-stress service environments.

**Keywords:** Burnout Syndrome, Generation Z Employees, Quality of Work Life, Service Sector, Servant Leadership

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## 1. Introduction

The digital era and challenges of globalization have brought about major transformations in the world of work across processes, technology, and social relations within organizations (Schroth, 2019; Seemiller, & Grace, 2024). Facing an increasingly competitive and complex work environment, organizations are required to balance the achievement of business goals with the well-being of their human resources (Bakker, & Demerouti, 2017; Jensen, Lund, & Abrahams, 2022). One of the major challenges facing modern organizations is the increasing incidence of burnout syndrome among employees (Jahrami, Alkaabi, Trabelsi, Pandi-Perumal, Saif, Seeman, & Vitiello, 2023).

Burnout syndrome, or work exhaustion syndrome, is a psychological phenomenon characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low self-fulfillment, typically caused by chronic and prolonged work-related stress ([Edú-Valsania, Laguía, & Moriano, 2022](#); [Martínez-López, Lázaro-Pérez, Gómez-Galán, & Fernández-Martínez, 2020](#)). In the ICD-11, the WHO classifies burnout as a syndrome resulting from poorly managed work stress, encompassing three main dimensions: exhaustion, cynicism, and decreased professional effectiveness ([Kim, Park, Kim, Min, Min, & Hwang, 2021](#)). This condition has serious implications for organizations, as employees experiencing burnout tend to lose motivation, experience more frequent absences, and have reduced levels of commitment and loyalty ([Salvagioni, Melanda, Mesas, González, Gabani, & Andrade, 2017](#); [Jahrami et al., 2023](#)).

Burnout negatively impacts not only individuals but also overall organizational productivity. Employees experiencing burnout tend to exhibit decreased work motivation, increased absenteeism, and decreased commitment and loyalty to their organization ([Jahrami et al., 2023](#); [Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001](#)). In the long term, this can lead to a decline in service quality. This phenomenon becomes even more concerning when linked to quality of work life (QWL), which is an employee's perception of the extent to which the work environment balances personal and professional needs ([Hammond, Owusu, Nunoo, Boampong, Osman, Panin, Nyametso, & Essen, 2023](#); [Sirgy, Efraty, Siegel, & Lee, 2001](#)).

Quality of work life (QWL) is a crucial indicator of employee well-being, as it encompasses aspects such as job security, healthy interpersonal relationships, support for self-development, work-life balance, and job satisfaction ([Hammond et al., 2023](#); [Siziba, & Barnard, 2023](#)). In highly stressful work environments, QWL tends to decline, ultimately impacting organizational effectiveness and efficiency ([Mercan, Pancar, Can, & Can, 2023](#); [Nowrouzi-Kia, Sithampanathan, Nadesar, Gohar, & Ott, 2022](#)). Therefore, organizations must adopt managerial strategies to mitigate the negative effects of burnout and improve the QWL ([Bakker and Demerouti, 2017](#); [Jensen et al., 2022](#)).

Implementing a servant leadership style is one approach believed to address these challenges. Servant leadership emphasizes the role of leaders who serve first before leading, focusing on the emotional and psychological well-being of subordinates ([Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, Dierendonck, & Liden, 2019](#); [Eva et al., 2019](#)). This leadership style contributes to employee job satisfaction, commitment, and positive behavior ([Dooley, Alizadeh, Qiu, & Wu, 2020](#); [Liden, Wayne, Liao, & Meuser, 2014](#)). Leaders who practice servant leadership principles tend to place greater emphasis on employees' emotional and psychological well-being ([Eva et al., 2019](#)). Furthermore, [Sendjaya, Eva, Robin, and Castles \(2019\)](#) emphasized that servant leadership is holistic, encompassing six dimensions that consistently contribute to increased job satisfaction, commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior.

Studies on this leadership style indicate that servant leadership fosters healthy relationships between leaders and subordinates. Humble leaders are better able to foster follower satisfaction through a servant-leadership approach ([Chiniara, & Bentein, 2019](#); [Krumrei-mancuso, & Rowatt, 2023](#)). In modern organizations, servant leadership plays a crucial role in fostering collaborative values and employee empowerment ([Claro & Sousa, 2025](#)). Servant leadership encourages closer social relationships between superiors and subordinates, increases open communication, and strengthens mutual trust ([Eva et al., 2019](#); [Jensen et al., 2022](#)).

This phenomenon is also becoming significant among Generation Z (Gen Z) employees in the service sector, particularly in large cities and economic hubs such as Bandar Lampung. Generation Z comprises individuals born between 1995 and 2010 ([Dimock, 2019](#); [Schroth, 2019](#)). As Gen Z's workforce participation increases, surveys indicate that workers in this generation are more susceptible to work stress and burnout than previous generations ([Cigna, Fischer, & Abuannab, 2023](#); [Schroth, 2019](#)). [Cigna et al. \(2023\)](#) found that young workers, particularly Gen Z, experience the highest levels of workplace stress, with many feeling emotionally and mentally exhausted.

Disway.id [n.d. \(n.d.\)](#) report stating that Gen Z workers are 2.4 times more likely to experience stress and a lack of work enthusiasm than other generations. In this context, [Seemiller and Grace \(2024\)](#) emphasized that Gen Z has high expectations for work-life balance and meaning, making them vulnerable to incompatibility with the work environment.

The relationship between burnout syndrome, QWL, and servant leadership has been widely studied. However, research specifically examining the role of servant leadership as a moderating variable in the relationship between burnout and QWL remains limited, particularly among Generation Z employees in the service sector ([Mercan et al., 2023](#); [Ju, & Hyun, 2025](#)). Previous research has generally focused on the healthcare and education sectors, while studies on Gen Z employees in the service sector are rare ([Hammond et al., 2023](#); [Nowrouzi-Kia et al., 2022](#)). Furthermore, leadership research indicates that servant leadership positively contributes to job satisfaction and relationships ([Claro and Sousa, 2025](#); [Krumrei-mancuso and Rowatt, 2023](#)). However, it has not been widely studied in the context of work-related stress or burnout. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by examining the role of servant leadership as a moderating variable that can attenuate the impact of burnout on the QWL of Generation Z employees in Bandar Lampung.

## 2. Literature Review and Hypothesis/es Development

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### 2.1 The Impact of Burnout Syndrome on Quality of Work Life

Burnout syndrome is a condition of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion arising from persistent and poorly managed work pressure ([Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001](#)). The WHO, in its ICD-11, also confirms that burnout is a phenomenon resulting from chronic, poorly managed work stress, characterized by exhaustion, cynicism about work, and decreased professional effectiveness ([Kim, Park, Kim, Min, Min, & Hwang, 2021](#)). This condition is often experienced by employees under high workloads, with excessive role demands, and lacking social and organizational support ([Jahrami, Alkaabi, Trabelsi, Pandi-Perumal, Saif, Seeman, & Vitiello, 2023](#); [Nowrouzi-Kia, Sithamparanathan, Nadesar, Gohar, & Ott, 2022](#)).

The impact of burnout is broad and can hinder employees work effectiveness and well-being. Employees experiencing emotional exhaustion tend to lose energy, motivation, and enthusiasm for work, ultimately reducing the quality of their work experience ([Salvagioni, Melanda, Mesas, González, Gabani, & Andrade, 2017](#); [Le, Huynh, Luu, Ho, Nguyen, & Tran-Chi, 2024](#)). The relationship between burnout syndrome and quality of work life (QWL) can be explained through the Job Demands–Resources Theory proposed by [Bakker and Demerouti \(2017\)](#), which states that high job demands increase the risk of burnout, while a lack of job resources worsens employee well-being and reduces QWL ([Bakker and Demerouti, 2017](#)).

Burnout syndrome can become a serious barrier to employees' quality of work life (QWL). Previous research has shown that burnout has significant consequences for the decline in the quality of work life. Continuous burnout reduces employee motivation, enthusiasm, and engagement, leading them to view their work environment more negatively ([Salvagioni et al., 2017](#); [Leitão, Pereira, & Gonçalves, 2021](#); [Al-Attas, 2026](#)). [Mercan, Pancar, Can, and Can \(2023\)](#) found a negative relationship between burnout and QWL among healthcare workers, with chronic exhaustion and work pressure worsening employees' perceptions of their work. [Santana and Zaia \(2025\)](#) and [Indriani \(2025\)](#) confirmed that burnout not only impacts QWL but also reduces overall quality of life and psychological satisfaction. Thus, burnout has broad implications for both psychological and professional aspects, consistently reducing the quality of work life ([Santana & Zaia, 2025](#)). Based on these findings, the first hypothesis of this study is formulated as follows:

*H<sub>1</sub>*: Burnout syndrome negatively impacts the quality of work life

## 2.2 The Role of Servant Leadership in Moderating the Effect of Burnout Syndrome on Quality of Work Life

Under conditions of high work pressure, employees often face the risk of burnout, which directly impacts their quality of work life (QWL), resulting in decreased psychological well-being, work engagement, and quality of social relationships in the workplace ([Jahrami, Alkaabi, Trabelsi, Pandi-Perumal, Saif, Seeman, & Vitiello, 2023](#); [Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001](#)). This can weaken motivation, reduce workplace morale, and worsen interpersonal relationships ([Salvagioni, Melanda, Mesas, González, Gabani, & Andrade, 2017](#); [Mercan, Pancar, Can, & Can, 2023](#)). However, leadership plays a crucial role in shaping how employees respond to this pressure, with a supportive leadership style serving as a protective factor against the impact of burnout ([Dooley, Alizadeh, Qiu, & Wu, 2020](#); [Jensen, Lund, & Abrahams, 2022](#)). Servant leadership is a leadership style considered relevant for mitigating the negative impact of burnout ([Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, Dierendonck, & Liden, 2019](#); [Wu, Zhao, Qiu, & Li, 2024](#)).

Servant leadership prioritizes the interests, well-being, and development of subordinates ([Liden, Wayne, Liao, & Meuser, 2014](#); [Eva et al., 2019](#)). with these characteristics tend to be humble, service-oriented, and strive to empower employees to maximize their potential ([Chiniara, & Bentein, 2019](#); [Krumrei-mancuso, & Rowatt, 2023](#)). Furthermore, servant leadership emphasizes humanistic values such as empathy, trust, and attention to individual needs, which contribute to improved employee psychological well-being ([Eva et al., 2019](#); [Jensen et al., 2022](#)). By providing emotional and practical support, servant leaders can create a more positive work environment and sense of psychological safety ([Dooley et al., 2020](#); [Liden et al., 2014](#)).

In the context of the relationship between burnout and QWL, servant leadership acts as a moderating variable that can mitigate the negative impact of burnout on quality of work life ([Bakker, & Demerouti, 2017](#); [Mercan et al., 2023](#)). The presence of a servant leader can reduce employees' psychological distress. Therefore, even if employees experience emotional exhaustion due to high workloads, the leader's attention and empathy can help them feel valued, supported, and cared for ([Dooley et al., 2020](#); [Eva et al., 2019](#)). In turn, this revitalizes motivation, strengthens engagement with work, and maintains a balance between personal life and work demands ([Hammond, Owusu, Nunoo, Boampong, Osman, Panin, Nyametso, & Essen, 2023](#); [Jensen et al., 2022](#)).

In addition to the direct relationship between burnout and QWL, previous research suggests that leadership factors can significantly strengthen or weaken the impact of burnout on QWL. One leadership style that has received considerable attention is servant leadership, which emphasizes attention to the needs and well-being of subordinates ([Eva et al., 2019](#)). A study by [Krumrei-mancuso and Rowatt \(2023\)](#) found that leaders who demonstrate humility are better able to build employee satisfaction and loyalty, while [Claro and Sousa \(2025\)](#) emphasized that servant leadership encourages collaboration and creates a healthier, more adaptive work environment. These findings strengthen the position of servant leadership as a social mechanism that can reduce negative psychological impacts in organizations ([Jensen et al., 2022](#); [Liden et al., 2014](#)).

The results of this study indicate that the presence of leaders with a servant leadership style can reduce burnout-related psychological stress while helping employees maintain a positive perception of their work. Furthermore, from the perspective of Job Demands–Resources Theory [Bakker and Demerouti \(2017\)](#), leadership can be viewed as a form of job resource that provides emotional, social, and structural support to employees in dealing with work demands. Therefore, servant leadership is thought to mitigate the negative impact of burnout syndrome on the quality of work life ([Hammond et al., 2023](#); [Mercan et al., 2023](#)). Based on this argument, the second hypothesis is formulated as follows:

*H<sub>2</sub>: Servant leadership moderates the negative effect of burnout syndrome on quality of work life.*

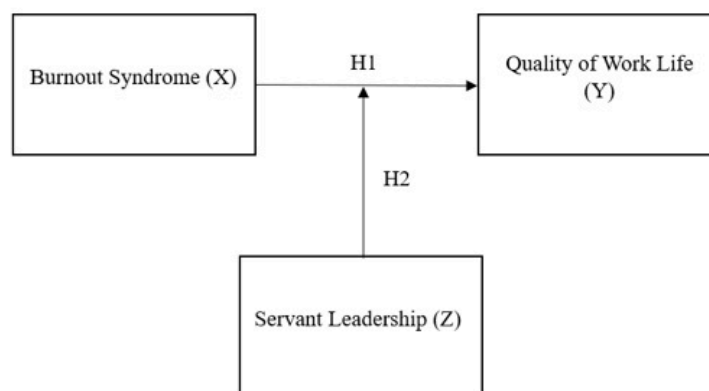


Figure 1. Research Model

Figure 1 shows the research model examining the effect of burnout syndrome ( $X$ ) on quality of work life ( $Y$ ), with servant leadership ( $Z$ ) as a moderating variable. The direct relationship between burnout and QWL is demonstrated by  $H_1$ , which indicates that burnout is expected to influence a decline in the quality of employees' work life. Meanwhile,  $H_2$  shows the role of servant leadership, which not only influences as a supporting variable but also moderates the relationship between burnout and QWL, namely, strengthening or weakening the impact of burnout on quality of work life. Thus, this model positions servant leadership as an important contextual factor that can moderate the intensity of the influence of burnout on employee work well-being.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Sample

This study used purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling method, via online convenience sampling on social media, while still considering predetermined respondent criteria. Purposive sampling was chosen because the researcher established specific characteristics that respondents must meet to align with the research objectives and be relevant to the context of the analysis. This technique is often used when researchers want to ensure that only individuals who meet certain criteria can participate in the study, thereby ensuring that the data obtained are more representative of the phenomenon being studied. The respondents in this study were Generation Z employees working in the service sector who had been actively employed for at least one year and resided in Bandar Lampung (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

The sample size for this study was 170 respondents in total. The respondent characteristics showed a fairly diverse distribution. In terms of gender, the respondents were predominantly female (54.10%), while males (45.90%) were male. Regarding birth year, the majority of respondents were born between 1997 and 2002, with 2000 accounting for 28.20% of the respondents. The majority of respondents had a bachelor's degree (61.20%), followed by a diploma and a high school diploma. Based on marital status, most respondents were single (59.40%).

#### 3.2 Measurement

Burnout Syndrome was measured using an instrument adapted from Kim et al. (2021), comprising 12 items. After model evaluation, only seven items met the analysis criteria. The Quality of Work Life (QWL) variable was measured using an instrument developed by Sirgy et al. (2001) comprising 16 items. However, after model evaluation, only seven items met the analysis criteria. The Servant Leadership variable was measured using the SLBS-6 instrument developed by Sendjaya et al. (2019), consisting of six items; four met the analysis criteria. All items were measured using a 5-point Likert

scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Items with a favorable (positive) direction on the burnout syndrome variable were reverse-scored in Microsoft Excel during data processing to align the direction of the score interpretation. This study used Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4.

## 4. Results and Discussions

### 4.1 Results

#### 4.1.1 Validity and Reliability Test

Table 1. Measurement Validation

Variable	Indicators	Convergen Validity (SLF>0.60)	Convergen Validity (AVE>0.50)	Convergen Validity (CA>0.70)	Reliability (CA>0.70)	Reliability (CR>0.70)
Burnout Syndrome	BS1	0,791				
	BS2	0,795				
	BS3	0,756				
	BS4	0,773	0,648	0,91	0,91	0,927
	BS5	0,833				
	BS6	0,822				
	BS7	0,86				
Quality of Work Life	QL1	0,782				
	QL3	0,758				
	QL4	0,764				
	QL6	0,74	0,566	0,876	0,876	0,898
	QL9	0,723				
	QL11	0,754				
	QL16	0,744				
Servant Leadership	SL2	0,715				
	SL3	0,843	0,598	0,775	0,775	0,784
	SL5	0,799				
	SL6	0,729				

Source: Processed Data, 2026

Table 1 shows the results after the indicator elimination process and model re-estimation using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach. The analysis results indicated a significant improvement in the model quality. The evaluation of the measurement model in PLS-SEM emphasizes the importance of outer loading and construct validity to ensure that the indicators represent the latent variables (Hair et al., 2021). All retained indicators had outer loading values above 0.70, indicating that they met convergent validity criteria and adequately represented the constructs. Outer loading values for the burnout syndrome variable ranged from 0.756 to 0.860, for QWL from 0.723 to 0.782, and for servant leadership from 0.715 to 0.843 (Hair et al., 2021).

Convergent validity in this study was evaluated using outer loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. According to Hair et al. (2021), a construct is considered to have convergent validity if its AVE is greater than 0.50, and its outer loading is greater than 0.70. The test results showed that the AVE values for each variable met the criteria, namely 0.648 for burnout syndrome, 0.566 for QWL, and 0.598 for servant leadership (Hair et al., 2021). This indicates that each construct explains more than 50% of the variance in its indicators, and the research model has adequate convergent validity (Hair et al., 2021).

The results of the discriminant validity test showed that all indicators had the highest loading values on their respective constructs compared to the other constructs. Cross-loading evaluation is one approach to ensure that each indicator has good discrimination against the construct being measured (Hair et al., 2021). For the burnout syndrome variable, the cross-loading value ranged from 0.756 to 0.860, which is higher than the loading values for the QWL and servant leadership constructs. The indicator with the highest loading value was BS7 (0.860), while the lowest was BS3 (0.756). For the QWL variable, cross-loadings ranged from 0.723 to 0.782, with the highest in QL1 (0.782) and the lowest in QL9 (0.723). Meanwhile, for the servant leadership variable, cross-loadings ranged from 0.715 to 0.843, with the highest in SL3 (0.843) and the lowest in SL2 (0.715). This indicates that each construct has distinct, non-overlapping characteristics, thus fulfilling discriminant validity in this research model (Hair et al., 2021).

Reliability testing in this study was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values. According to Hair et al. (2021), a construct is considered reliable if its Composite Reliability value is above 0.70, while a Cronbach's alpha value above 0.70 indicates good internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha measures internal reliability based on correlations among indicators, whereas Composite Reliability is considered superior in the context of PLS-SEM because it accounts for indicator contributions more precisely (Hair et al., 2021).

Based on the test results, the Cronbach's alpha values for burnout syndrome, QWL, and servant leadership variables were 0.910, 0.876, and 0.775, respectively. Meanwhile, the Composite Reliability values were 0.927, 0.898, and 0.784, respectively. All of these values exceeded the minimum required threshold, indicating that the indicators for each variable had a high level of internal consistency and were reliable in measuring the research constructs (Hair et al., 2021).

#### 4.1.2 Hypothesis Testing

Table 2. Tabel 2. Path Coefficients dan Signifikansi

	Hypothesis	Original Sample	T Statistic	P Value	Category
$H_1$	Burnout Syndrome Quality Of Work Life	-0,202	3,276	0,001	Supported
$H_2$	Servant Leadership X Burnout Syndrome Quality Of Work Life	0,101	1,399	0,162	Not supported

Table 2 shows that burnout syndrome negatively impacts the quality of work life (QWL). This means that increasing levels of burnout among employees will result in a decrease in QWL, as explained by the JD-R theory, which emphasizes the relationship between Job Demands, exhaustion, and decreased work well-being (Bakker, & Demerouti, 2017; Saraiva, & Nogueiro, 2025). Based on the PLS-SEM test results, burnout syndrome had a negative impact on QWL, with a coefficient value (original sample) of -0.202, a t-statistic of 3.276, and a p-value of 0.001 (<0.05). This finding is consistent with previous research showing that burnout significantly reduces employees' quality of work life and psychological well-being (Mercan, Pancar, Can, & Can, 2023; Santana, & Zaia, 2025). Thus, the first hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) was confirmed, indicating that increased burnout leads to a decrease in QWL (Salvagioni, Melanda, Mesas, González, Gabani, & Andrade, 2017).

Testing servant leadership as a moderator indicated that it did not moderate the relationship between burnout syndrome and QWL, thus neither significantly strengthening nor weakening it. Theoretically, servant leadership is viewed as an organizational resource (job resource) that can help employees cope with work demands (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017; Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, Dierendonck, & Liden, 2019); however, in this study, this influence was not significant. This is indicated by a coefficient of 0.101, a t-statistic of 1.399, and a p-value of 0.162 (>0.05). This finding aligns with several studies showing that the influence of servant leadership on certain outcomes can be context-dependent and not always significant under high work pressure (Dooley, Alizadeh, Qiu, & Wu, 2020; Jensen, Lund, & Abrahams, 2022). Therefore, the second hypothesis ( $H_2$ ) was not supported.

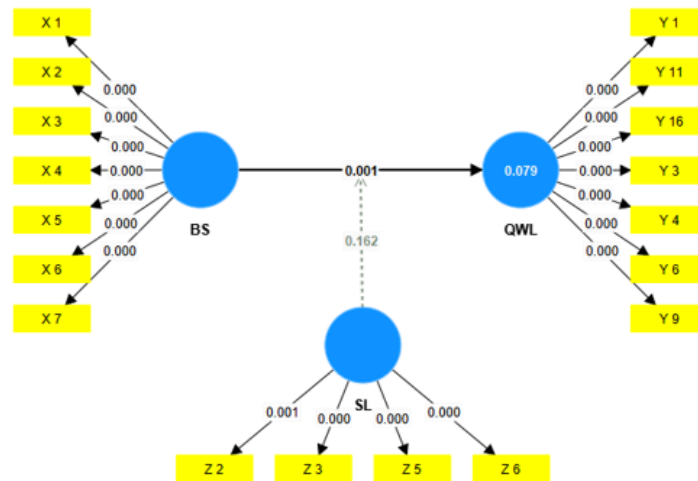


Figure 2. Path Coefficients

Figure 2 the structural model of the study, illustrating the relationship between behavioral stress (BS) and quality of work life (QWL), with stress level (SL) included as a moderating variable. The model also indicates that all measurement indicators for each construct exhibit significant loading values, confirming the validity of the constructs used in the analysis.

#### 4.1.3 R-square and F-square tests

The PLS-SEM analysis yielded an R-squared value of 0.079 for the QWL variable. In the Structural Equation Modeling approach, R-squared measures the extent to which independent variables explain the variance in the dependent variable (Hair et al., 2021). The R-squared value of 0.079 indicates that the burnout syndrome variable and its interaction with servant leadership explain only 7.9% of the variation in the QWL. In comparison, the remaining 92.1% was influenced by variables outside the research model. This finding aligns with the characteristics of organizational behavior models, which are often influenced by numerous contextual and psychosocial factors (Hammond et al., 2023; Nowrouzi-kia et al., 2021).

The data processing results showed that the F-squared value for the burnout syndrome variable on QWL was 0.042. According to Cohen (1988), an  $f^2$  value of 0.02 is categorized as a small effect, 0.15 as a medium effect, and 0.35 as a large effect. Therefore, a value of 0.042 falls into the small effect category, indicating that the direct contribution of burnout syndrome in explaining variations in QWL is relatively low (Cohen 1988; Hair et al., 2021). This indicates that, although statistically significant, its practical significance remains limited and is likely influenced by other variables, such as job resources and organizational factors (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Jensen et al., 2022).

## 4.2 Discussion

### 4.2.1 The Effect of Burnout Syndrome on Quality of Work Life

The results of this study indicate that burnout syndrome negatively impacts quality of work life (QWL). This finding indicates that burnout is a significant factor that can reduce employees' quality of work life, in line with the Job Demands–resources theory, which explains that increased work demands not matched by adequate resources will reduce work well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). The results of the path coefficient test showed a coefficient of -0.202 ( $p = 0.001; < 0.05$ ), confirming a significant negative relationship between burnout and QWL (Hair, Hult, Ringle, Sarstedt, Danks, & Ray, 2021; Mercan, Pancar, Can, & Can, 2023).

These results indicate that the higher the level of burnout experienced by employees, the lower their perceived QWL is. Conversely, when burnout levels are low, the quality of work life tends to increase. This confirms that psychological factors play a significant role in shaping perceptions of well-being at work ([Salvagioni, Melanda, Mesas, González, Gabani, & Andrade, 2017](#); [Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001](#)). Therefore, the first hypothesis in this study is supported, as it is consistent with the pattern of negative relationships between burnout and work well-being observed in many previous studies ([Santana, & Zaia, 2025](#); [Nowrouzi-Kia, Sithampanathan, Nadesar, Gohar, & Ott, 2022](#)).

This relationship is also reflected in the descriptive analysis of burnout syndrome. Overall, the respondents reported low to moderate levels of burnout, indicating that most had not yet experienced high levels of burnout ([Kim, Park, Kim, Min, Min, & Hwang, 2021](#); [Maslach et al., 2001](#)). However, several indicators still indicated the presence of burnout symptoms, particularly those related to mental and emotional exhaustion due to work. This aligns with the findings that burnout often develops gradually before reaching chronic levels ([Salvagioni et al., 2017](#); [Jahrami, Alkaabi, Trabelsi, Pandi-Perumal, Saif, Seeman, & Vitiello, 2023](#)).

In the exhaustion dimension, some respondents reported feeling tired and drained after completing their work. This indicates that ongoing work pressure can reduce employees' energy and psychological capacity for work ([Bakker and Demerouti, 2017](#); [Maslach et al., 2001](#)). Meanwhile, in the cynicism dimension, there was a tendency toward boredom and reduced enthusiasm for work, although not at high levels. This suggests that burnout affects not only the physical aspects of work but also the psychological attachment to work ([Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, Dierendonck, & Liden, 2019](#)).

Although the respondents' burnout levels were generally low to moderate, the results of the hypothesis test indicated that burnout still negatively affected QWL. These findings suggest that decreased QWL occurs not only at high levels of burnout but also at the early stages of burnout symptoms, such as mental exhaustion and job burnout ([Salvagioni et al., 2017](#); [Nowrouzi-Kia et al., 2022](#)). Thus, burnout is a condition that requires early monitoring because its impact on QWL can be seen even at pre-extreme levels ([Jahrami et al., 2023](#); [Maslach et al., 2001](#)).

The results of this study align with the Job Demands–Resources Theory, which states that burnout arises from high job demands, such as work pressure, emotional demands, and excessive workload ([Bakker & Demerouti, 2017](#)). When these demands are not balanced with adequate work resources, employee well-being declines, negatively impacting the QWL ([Hammond, Owusu, Nunoo, Boampong, Osman, Panin, Nyametso, & Essen, 2023](#)). These findings are also consistent with those of [Mercan et al. \(2023\)](#) and [Santana and Zaia \(2025\)](#), who demonstrated a negative relationship between burnout and QWL across various work contexts.

Furthermore, burnout impacts not only individuals but also organizations as a whole. Employees experiencing burnout tend to experience decreased work motivation, increased absenteeism, and decreased commitment and loyalty to the organization ([Jahrami et al., 2023](#); [Maslach et al., 2001](#)). In the long term, this condition can reduce organizational effectiveness and the quality of services. It is closely related to the concept of QWL, which describes the extent to which the work environment can balance personal and professional needs ([Sirgy, Efraty, Siegel, & Lee, 2001](#); [Siziba, & Barnard, 2023](#)).

The impact of burnout on QWL in this study is even more relevant when linked to the characteristics of Generation Z. Various studies have shown that Generation Z experiences higher levels of work stress and is more susceptible to emotional exhaustion than previous generations ([Cigna, Fischer, & Abuannab, 2023](#); [Schroth, 2019](#)). Disway.id (2024) report even indicated that Generation Z is 2.4 times more likely to experience stress and decreased work morale. This suggests that Gen Z's sensitivity to work pressure can amplify the impact of burnout on QWL ([Schroth, 2019](#); [Seemiller, & Grace, 2024](#)).

The extent of the impact of burnout on QWL also depends heavily on organizational conditions. Organizations that provide a supportive work environment, manage workloads in a balanced manner,

and provide psychological support can minimize the impact of burnout ([Bakker and Demerouti, 2017](#); [Jensen, Lund, & Abrahams, 2022](#)). Conversely, when organizations fail to manage work pressure, burnout becomes a major factor, significantly reducing employees' QWL ([Dooley, Alizadeh, Qiu, & Wu, 2020](#); [Hammond et al., 2023](#)).

Overall, the results of this study confirm that burnout syndrome plays a significant role in determining the quality of work life, particularly for Generation Z employees who are more susceptible to work stress. Therefore, organizations must focus on burnout management strategies, including workload management, improved work-life balance, and psychological support, to sustainably improve QWL ([Bakker and Demerouti, 2017](#); [Maslach et al., 2001](#)).

#### *4.2.2 Servant Leadership as a Moderating Variable in the Effect of Burnout Syndrome on Quality of Work Life*

The results indicate that servant leadership does not moderate the relationship between burnout syndrome and quality of work life (QWL). This finding indicates that servant leadership does not strengthen or weaken the impact of burnout on employee QWL. Conceptually, servant leadership is viewed as a job resource that can help employees cope with work demands ([Bakker, & Demerouti, 2017](#); [Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, Dierendonck, & Liden, 2019](#)); however, in the context of this study, this effect was not found to be significant. The results of the path coefficient test on the moderating relationship showed a coefficient of 0.101 ( $p = 0.162; > 0.05$ ), thus rejecting the second hypothesis ([Dooley, Alizadeh, Qiu, & Wu, 2020](#); [Hair, Hult, Ringle, Sarstedt, Danks, & Ray, 2021](#)).

The descriptive analysis of the servant leadership variable shows that most respondents gave high ratings to the leader's behavior. Respondents assessed that leaders demonstrated servant leadership characteristics, including caring for subordinates, listening, building positive interpersonal relationships, and supporting their development ([Liden, Wayne, Liao, & Meuser, 2014](#); [Eva et al., 2019](#)). Items related to opportunities to express opinions and the leader's ability to help employees find meaning in their work received high average scores, indicating that servant leadership practices were effective and perceived positively by employees ([Eva et al., 2019](#); [Jensen, Lund, & Abrahams, 2022](#)).

However, the results of moderation tests indicated that these effective servant leadership practices were insufficient to mitigate the impact of burnout syndrome on QWL. This indicates that even when superior-subordinate relationships are positive, employees experiencing emotional exhaustion still experience a decline in their quality of work life. These findings suggest that burnout has a stronger and more direct influence on QWL than leadership style ([Salvagioni, Melanda, Mesas, González, Gabani, & Andrade, 2017](#)).

This finding is supported by an R-squared value of 0.079, indicating that burnout syndrome and servant leadership explain only 7.9% of the variation in QWL. This indicates that QWL is more influenced by factors outside the model, particularly direct job factors such as workload, target pressure, and work-life imbalance ([Hammond, Owusu, Nunoo, Boampong, Osman, Panin, Nyametso, & Essen, 2023](#); [Nowrouzi-Kia, Sithamparanathan, Nadesar, Gohar, & Ott, 2022](#)). Burnout is often explained in the literature as the result of an imbalance between job demands and job resources, with high work pressure being the dominant factor in triggering burnout ([Bakker and Demerouti, 2017](#); [Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001](#)).

This finding also aligns with the descriptive analysis of the burnout syndrome variable, which showed that respondents' burnout levels were in the low to moderate range. Nevertheless, the results of the first hypothesis test indicate that burnout continues to negatively affect QWL. This indicates that even the initial symptoms of burnout can influence employees' perceptions of the quality of their work life ([Kim, Park, Kim, Min, Min, & Hwang, 2021](#); [Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001](#)). Therefore, when burnout begins to emerge, the role of servant leadership is not strong enough to change this relationship ([Dooley et al., 2020](#)).

Theoretically, these results can be explained by the Job Demands–Resources Theory, which states that burnout is more influenced by high job demands than by strong job resources ([Bakker & Demerouti, 2017](#)). Under conditions of high job demand, leader support, such as servant leadership, is not always strong enough to mitigate the impact of burnout on work well-being ([Jensen et al., 2022](#)). This suggests that the protective effect of job resources may weaken when job demands are predominant.

These findings also support previous research showing that the effectiveness of servant leadership is highly dependent on the organizational context and work climate. [Qiu and Zhang \(2022\)](#) stated that in high-pressure work environments, the effect of servant leadership on burnout is not always significant. Furthermore, ([Maslach et al., 2001](#)) emphasized that burnout is more influenced by work system factors such as workload, job control, and organizational pressure; therefore, interpersonal relationships with leaders are not always sufficient to directly mitigate its impact.

[Liden et al. \(2014\)](#) also showed that the effectiveness of servant leadership is highly dependent on a supportive organizational culture (serving culture). Without strong organizational cultural support, the influence of servant leadership on employee outcomes is limited. [Dooley et al. \(2020\)](#) found that the moderating role of servant leadership in the relationship between work stress and well-being is inconsistent and can weaken in certain contexts.

The characteristics of the Generation Z respondents also explain the study's findings. Generation Z is known to have high expectations regarding work-life balance, work flexibility, and mental health in the workplace ([Schroth, 2019](#); [Seemiller, & Grace, 2024](#)). Under high work pressure, support from leaders alone is not always sufficient to mitigate the impact of burnout on QWL, as burnout is more influenced by job demands such as workload and work pressure ([Bakker and Demerouti, 2017](#); [Cigna, Fischer, & Abuannab, 2023](#)). Therefore, even when servant leadership is implemented effectively, the impact of burnout on QWL remains significant.

Overall, the results of this study not only demonstrate that servant leadership is not yet a moderating variable but also enrich the literature on the complexity of the relationships among burnout, leadership, and QWL. These findings indicate that the effect of burnout on QWL is more direct, whereas servant leadership likely plays a more indirect role through increased engagement, job satisfaction, or psychological well-being ([Eva et al., 2019](#); [Jensen et al., 2022](#)). Thus, the effectiveness of servant leadership in improving employee well-being does not always manifest as a moderating effect but rather through more complex, multidimensional mechanisms.

## 5. Conclusions

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The results of this study indicate that the higher the burnout syndrome experienced by employees, the lower their perceived quality of work life (QWL). Burnout causes emotional exhaustion, decreased psychological energy, and disrupted work-life balance, so that work is perceived more as a stressor than a source of well-being. This study also found that servant leadership did not moderate the relationship between burnout syndrome and QWL. This means that even if servant-based leadership is implemented, it is not strong enough to reduce the negative impact of burnout on QWL, especially when work pressure remains high. Burnout syndrome is the main factor directly reducing QWL, whereas servant leadership does not show a strengthening or weakening effect on this relationship. This suggests that QWL is influenced by a broader combination of factors, including leadership and working conditions, such as workload, target pressure, and job control.

Based on these findings, organizations must focus on managing burnout by balancing workloads, reducing overload, and providing adequate recovery time. Furthermore, psychological support, such as counseling and mental health programs, is crucial for improving employees' well-being. To improve QWL, organizations need to strengthen health and wellness through wellness facilities, exercise programs, flexible work policies, and work-life balance. Work culture should focus not only on achieving targets but also on employees' overall well-being. The role of servant leadership remains crucial and should be optimized, particularly in supporting employees' personal and professional

development through mentoring, coaching, training, and constructive feedback. It can help improve employees' ability to cope with work pressure. Furthermore, attention must be paid to specific aspects of the research findings. Regarding burnout, there are still indications that employees perceive their work positively, which must be sustained through increased engagement and appreciation of their work. Regarding QWL, health and wellness are weak areas that need to be addressed through wellness programs and reduced workload. In servant leadership, self-development needs to be strengthened through career development and ongoing training.

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## Author Contributions

NS contributed to the conceptualization of the study, data collection, and manuscript drafting. KH contributed to the development of the research methodology, data analysis, and critical revision of the manuscript. Both authors approved the final version of the manuscript and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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## Conflict of Interest

Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The research was conducted independently without any financial, commercial, or personal relationships that could influence the findings or interpretation of the study.

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