

Improving Creative Consulting Team Service Level Agreement in Pt Ultima Servis Asia Based on Work – Life Balance of Creative Consulting Team

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ABSTRACT: This study examines the relationship between Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and work-life balance in PT Ultima Servis Asia's Creative Consulting Team. Inefficient SLA management has resulted in high workloads, last-minute client requests, and excessive overtime, disrupting employees' work-life balance. By utilizing NASA-TLX workload assessment and structured interviews analyzed via NVIVO, this research identifies key SLA-related challenges and their effects on employees. Findings show that unclear SLA enforcement and unrealistic deadline significantly impact work-life balance. To address these issues, the study proposes SLA refinement, improved workload tracking, a compensation mechanism, and a dedicated SLA management team. These improvements aim to create a structured and balanced work-life balance while maintaining operational efficiency and client satisfaction.

KEYWORDS: Service Level Agreement, Work-Life Balance, Creative Consulting, NASA-TLX, SLA Optimization, Employee Well-Being, Workload Management

INTRODUCTION

Service Level Agreements (SLAs) play a crucial role in defining service expectations between providers and clients. However, improper implementation of SLAs often results in excessive workloads, increased stress levels, and disruptions to employees' work-life balance (Desai, 2021). Work-life balance is defined as the ability of an individual to allocate time effectively between professional responsibilities and personal life, ensuring mental and physical well-being (Ljungkvist & Moore, 2023). When employees experience prolonged excessive workloads, it can lead to burnout, reduced productivity, and high turnover rates (Maulana, 2021). Startups, such as PT Ultima Servis Asia, operate in highly competitive environments where efficiency and rapid turnaround are essential for success. Ries (2017) argues that startups must balance agility with sustainable working conditions to prevent employee exhaustion. In a creative consulting agency, the challenge lies in managing multiple client demands while maintaining a structured work environment. This study aims to explore how SLAs can be optimized to support both operational efficiency and employee well-being at PT Ultima Servis Asia. A preliminary analysis of the company reveals a misalignment between SLA policies and employee workload capacities. Employees often face tight deadlines, last-minute client requests, and inconsistent enforcement of SLA terms, leading to excessive overtime. This study seeks to investigate the relationship between SLA effectiveness and work-life balance and propose solutions to enhance SLA management within the organization.

COMPANY CONTEXT AND ISSUES

PT Ultima Servis Asia operates in a fast-paced, client-driven environment requiring adaptability and innovation. However, weak SLA enforcement has led to excessive workloads, frequent overtime, and inconsistent task distribution, impacting employee work life balance and productivity. Unclear SLAs allow client demands to push deadlines beyond reasonable limits, leading to burnout and high turnover rates. Additionally, inadequate SLA monitoring reduces operational stability and prevents management from addressing inefficiencies. To resolve these challenges, the company must refine SLAs by setting clear role-specific agreements, tracking workloads, and enforcing structured policies. These improvements will enhance employee work-life balance, optimize efficiency, and maintain high service standards while minimizing burnout.

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT (SLA)

Service Level Agreement (SLA) is a structured contract that defines the service provider's commitments regarding performance, quality, and responsibilities in delivering services to clients. According to Desai (2021), SLAs are legally binding documents that establish measurable performance standards, ensuring clarity and accountability in business relationships. These agreements serve

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as essential frameworks for defining service expectations, setting performance benchmarks, and establishing mechanisms for dispute resolution. SLAs typically consist of several key components. Desai (2021) highlights that an effective SLA should include:

- Scope of Services – Defines the services covered under the agreement, ensuring clarity in deliverables.
- Performance Metrics – Establishes measurable performance indicators such as uptime, response times, and resolution periods.
- Roles and Responsibilities – Specifies the obligations of both service providers and clients to maintain service efficiency.
- Monitoring and Reporting – Implements systems to track and report performance against agreed-upon benchmarks.
- Penalties and Remedies – Outlines consequences for SLA violations, ensuring compliance and service consistency.
- Revision and Review Mechanisms – Allows for periodic assessment and necessary modifications based on evolving business needs.

According to Nicolazzo, Nocera & Pedrycz (2024), SLAs play a crucial role in service management by defining the expected service levels and mitigating operational uncertainties. They emphasize that a well-structured SLA enhances service predictability, reduces service failures, and fosters trust between service providers and clients. Moreover, effective SLAs ensure operational efficiency by aligning service commitments with organizational capabilities. Talib et al. (2024) argue that the enforcement of SLAs is significantly influenced by human factors, organizational culture, and technological capabilities. They propose that SLA compliance is dependent on structured governance frameworks and clear communication between stakeholders. Furthermore, Ubani & Emenike (2023) highlight that weak SLA enforcement mechanisms often lead to frequent service disruptions, resulting in customer dissatisfaction and operational inefficiencies. From a legal perspective, Desai (2021) suggests that SLAs should be drafted with precision to avoid contractual ambiguities. Poorly structured SLAs can lead to disputes regarding service expectations and liabilities. To mitigate such risks, SLAs should incorporate specific performance criteria, detailed service descriptions, and enforcement provisions to ensure effective execution.

WORK LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance (WLB) is defined as the ability of individuals to manage work commitments while maintaining personal well-being. According to Delecta (2011), achieving a balance between work and personal life is crucial for reducing stress and improving overall job satisfaction. Employees who experience poor worklife balance are often subjected to increased work pressure, leading to burnout, reduced productivity, and disengagement. Hudson et al. (2018) further highlight that WLB is not just about time management but also about aligning work responsibilities with personal satisfaction, mental health, and family life. Nafis (2020) introduces three key dimensions of work-life balance: time balance, involvement balance, and satisfaction balance. Time balance refers to an individual's ability to allocate time effectively between work and personal life, ensuring that neither domain dominates the other. Involvement balance pertains to the emotional and cognitive engagement an employee invests in both work and personal activities. Finally, satisfaction balance measures how fulfilled an individual feels across both domains, impacting long-term job motivation and overall happiness. Effective work-life balance strategies do not just benefit employees but also improve overall organizational performance. Nafis (2020) found that companies prioritizing employee well-being see a 21% increase in productivity and lower turnover rates. Organizations that integrate work-life balance initiatives tend to attract and retain top talent, as employees value workplaces that respect personal boundaries and promote well-being. Furthermore, Bouwmeester et al. (2020) argue that in high-demand industries such as consulting and technology, work-life balance policies enhance creativity and innovation. Employees who feel rested and mentally recharged are more likely to contribute new ideas and maintain sustained performance over time. The implementation of flexible work policies, workload management tools, and employee wellness programs directly correlates with long-term business success.

METHOD

This study utilizes a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative techniques to collect primary data. The quantitative method ensures research reliability by employing a scientifically validated framework (Sugiyono, 2017). Specifically, the study applies the NASA-TLX questionnaire to measure employees' weighted workload. Meanwhile, structured interviews provide deeper insights beyond what the questionnaire can capture, as they explore dynamic aspects that cannot be categorized as variables (Sugiyono, 2017). Through these interviews, researchers gain a better understanding of employees' personal experiences, motivations, and underlying factors influencing their work. The integration of these methods offers a more comprehensive view of the core issues. The NASA Task Load Index (NASA-TLX) is a multidimensional assessment tool used to evaluate workload by considering various cognitive and physical factors. Developed by Hart & Staveland (1988), NASA-TLX has been extensively used in both laboratory and field settings to assess the mental and physical demands of different job roles. The framework evaluates workload based on six dimensions:

- Mental Demand – The level of cognitive effort required to complete a task.
- Physical Demand – The amount of physical exertion involved.
- Temporal Demand – The pressure from task deadlines and time constraints.

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- Performance – The perceived success in task completion.
- Effort – The overall exertion required to meet task demands.
- Frustration Level – The level of stress and irritation experienced during the task.

The results were derived from participants' responses to pairwise comparisons among six factors, followed by five questions using a 6-point scale. Respondents were asked to identify which of the two given factors they perceived as having the most significant impact on workload in their job. Below is the comparison card provided to respondents along with the NASA-TLX Rating Scale Questions.

1. Mental Demand (MD) vs Physical Demand (PD)
2. Mental Demand (MD) vs Temporal Demand (TD)
3. Mental Demand (MD) vs Own Performance (OP)
4. Mental Demand (MD) vs Effort (EF)
5. Mental Demand (MD) vs Frustration (FR)
6. Physical Demand (PD) vs Temporal Demand (TD)
7. Physical Demand (PD) vs Own Performance (OP)
8. Physical Demand (PD) vs Effort (EF)
9. Physical Demand (PD) vs Frustration (FR)
10. Temporal Demand (TD) vs Own Performance (OP)
11. Temporal Demand (TD) vs Effort (EF)
12. Temporal Demand (TD) vs Frustration (FR)
13. Own Performance (OP) vs Effort (EF)
14. Own Performance (OP) vs Frustration (FR)
15. Effort (EF) vs Frustration (FR)

NASA-TLX Rating Scale Questions

Categories	Codes	Questions	Result
Mental Demand	MD	How much mental and perceptual activity was required (e.g., thinking, deciding, calculating, remembering, looking, searching, etc.)? Was the task easy or demanding, simple or complex, exacting or forgiving?	Low or high
Physical Demand	PD	How much physical activity was required (e.g., pushing, pulling, turning, controlling, activating, etc.)? Was the task easy or demanding, slow or brisk, slack or strenuous, restful or laborious?	Low or high
Temporal Demand	TD	How much time pressure did you feel due to the rate or pace at which the tasks or task elements occurred? Was the pace slow and leisurely or rapid and frantic?	Low or high
Own Performance	OP	How successful do you think you were in accomplishing the goals of the task set by the experimenter (or yourself)? How satisfied were you with your performance in accomplishing these goals?	Good or poor
Effort	EF	How hard did you have to work (mentally and physically) to accomplish your level of performance?	Low or high

Frustration FR How insecure, discouraged, irritated, stressed, and annoyed versus secure, gratified, Low or high content, relaxed, and complacent did you feel during the task?

After completing the weighting and rating comparison card from the NASA-TLX questionnaire, the Weighted Workload (WWL) method is applied to analyze the data. The weight represents the frequency with which each indicator was selected during the weighting stage, while the rating reflects the assigned value for each indicator. The weighted workload is then calculated using a specific formula to determine the workload score and compute the average WWL (Hart, 1988) The weight value is derived by multiplying each indicator's weight by its corresponding rating. The categories were: Very Low (0 - 9), Low (10 - 29), Medium (30 - 49), High (50 - 79), & Very High (80 - 100). While NASA-TLX offers a structured quantitative approach to workload assessment, qualitative research methods complement this by capturing employee perceptions, emotions, and lived experiences. Creswell (2013) emphasizes that qualitative methods, including interviews and focus group discussions, help in uncovering contextual factors that influence workload perception. Ubani & Emenike (2023) suggest that a mixed-method approach, combining NASA-TLX with qualitative research, enhances the accuracy of workload assessments. Qualitative research allows employees to articulate specific

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challenges that may not be captured by structured rating scales. For instance, employees may report experiencing workload imbalances due to unclear job expectations, excessive multitasking, or unpredictable client demands—factors that quantitative tools may overlook. Interview will be focused on getting know deeper about the research question. And to strengthen the NASA-TLX result. Qualitative method will be done using structured interview, which later will be analyzed using NVIVO. This study employs initial coding to identify the central theme based on interview transcripts. This process helps uncover key insights by recognizing recurring patterns and similarities across responses. Once the initial codes are established, they are then categorized into distinct themes for further analysis. The process of "theming data" involves creating an extended phrase or sentence that captures the essence or meaning of a data unit (Rahadi, 2020). Pattern coding is applied to identify connections across the generated codes. According to Rahadi (2020) pattern coding simplifies the interpretation of codes by structuring them into a coherent model. This hierarchical representation of data is visually depicted, allowing for an immediate distinction between major and minor contributing factors.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the NASA TLX questionnaire for 10 selected respondents from XYZ Company, each respondent's data was analyzed using the formulas applied in the weighting and rating stages. Subsequently, their individual workload levels were determined by calculating the Weighted Workload (WWL), providing an assessment of their overall workload intensity.

$$WWL = \sum (weight \times rating)$$

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Table 2. Employees Weighted Workload Score

Position	Rating					
	MD	PD	TD	OP	EF	FR
Art Director/GD Executive A	50	50	60	90	80	70
Art Director/GD Executive B	70	35	80	90	80	30
Art Director/GD Executive C	79	25	86	80	82	65
Art Director/GD Executive D	50	50	80	100	75	70
Art Director/GD Manager A	99	19	99	85	99	88
Art Director/GD Manager B	80	60	90	85	100	90
Art Director/GD Manager C	75	40	80	85	80	75
Art Director/GD Manager D	78	50	90	70	80	68
Business Consulting/AE Executive A	100	10	80	70	90	100
Business Consulting/AE Executive B	75	50	87	90	100	95
Business Consulting/AE Executive C	80	30	75	90	95	75
Business Consulting/AE Executive D	40	50	75	80	60	70
Business Consulting/AE Executive E	80	10	80	100	60	55
Business Consulting/AE Director A	85	40	85	80	100	70
Business Consulting/AE Director B	70	30	85	80	70	70
Business Consulting/AE Director C	99	30	80	80	90	99
Business Consulting/AE Manager A	80	60	70	70	88	98
Business Consulting/AE Manager B	75	30	65	80	80	70
Business Consulting/AE Manager C	20	70	30	50	40	30
Business Consulting/AE Manager D	90	30	80	85	95	50
Business Consulting/AE Manager E	95	70	80	80	100	80
Business Consulting/AE Manager F	78	65	86	89	88	80

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Content Marketing Executive A	90	55	69	85	78	89
Content Marketing Executive B	100	50	80	90	100	89
Content Marketing Executive C	75	50	85	92	84	70
Content Marketing Executive D	40	20	80	90	70	70
Content Marketing Executive E	10	10	50	80	50	20
Content Marketing Manager A	75	45	88	83	72	45
Content Marketing Manager B	75	80	100	95	80	95
Content Marketing Manager C	65	40	75	88	70	40
Content Marketing Manager D	80	60	75	75	85	85
Content Marketing Manager E	80	50	90	95	100	80
Content Marketing Manager F	85	15	60	90	90	30
Creative Consulting Manager A	85	15	65	80	89	55
Creative Consulting Manager B	90	20	20	20	80	60
Creative Consulting Manager C	100	90	100	85	100	20
Studio Manager A	25	50	80	80	80	30
Studio Manager B	40	35	60	85	88	55
Average	72.71	41.82	76.32	82.16	82.84	66.61

Once the workload value for each employee has been determined, it will be categorized to identify their respective workload levels. The classification of weighted workload for each employee is presented below.

Table 3. Employees Weighted Workload Score

Position	WWL SCORE	CATEGORY
Art Director/GD Executive A	61.33	HIGH
Art Director/GD Executive B	73.33	HIGH
Art Director/GD Executive C	79.00	VERY HIGH
Art Director/GD Executive D	62.67	HIGH
Art Director/GD Manager A	85.40	VERY HIGH
Art Director/GD Manager B	86.67	VERY HIGH
Art Director/GD Manager C	80.00	VERY HIGH
Art Director/GD Manager D	75.87	HIGH
Business Consulting/AE Executive A	74.67	HIGH
Business Consulting/AE Executive B	83.93	VERY HIGH
Business Consulting/AE Executive C	85.33	VERY HIGH
Business Consulting/AE Executive D	68.00	HIGH
Business Consulting/AE Executive E	74.33	HIGH
Business Consulting/AE Director A	70.00	HIGH
Business Consulting/AE Director B	75.67	HIGH
Business Consulting/AE Director C	87.53	VERY HIGH
Business Consulting/AE Manager A	81.20	VERY HIGH
Business Consulting/AE Manager B	74.33	HIGH
Business Consulting/AE Manager C	42.00	MEDIUM

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Business Consulting/AE Manager D	75.00	HIGH
Business Consulting/AE Manager E	88.00	VERY HIGH
Business Consulting/AE Manager F	82.80	VERY HIGH
Content Marketing Executive A	75.40	HIGH
Content Marketing Executive B	94.40	VERY HIGH
Content Marketing Executive C	74.67	HIGH
Content Marketing Executive D	70.00	HIGH
Content Marketing Executive E	50.67	HIGH
Content Marketing Manager A	69.87	HIGH
Content Marketing Manager B	88.67	VERY HIGH
Content Marketing Manager C	72.47	HIGH
Content Marketing Manager D	77.67	HIGH
Content Marketing Manager E	86.33	VERY HIGH
Content Marketing Manager F	72.33	HIGH
Creative Consulting Manager A	70.80	HIGH
Creative Consulting Manager B	56.00	HIGH
Creative Consulting Manager C	77.00	HIGH
Studio Manager A	65.67	HIGH
Studio Manager B	59.53	HIGH

The workload analysis reveals that only one out of 38 respondents received a medium WWL score, indicating widespread workload challenges. Art Director managers face the highest workload, with 3 out of 4 receiving very high scores, while executives in the same role report lower pressure. In business consulting, managers (3/6) experience greater workload strain than directors (1/3) and executives (2/5). In Content Marketing, managers (2/5) report more workload pressure than executives (1/5), though overall, high WWL scores outnumber very high scores. Meanwhile, Creative Consulting and Studio teams all received high WWL scores, showing more manageable workload conditions. The weighting stage analysis highlights Temporal Demand (3.53) as the most pressing factor, driven by tight deadlines, followed by Mental Demand (3.08), linked to cognitive strain. Physical Demand (1.21) is notably low, confirming that physical effort is not a significant workload factor. These findings, further substantiated by interviews, suggest a strong link between high workload pressure and PT Ultima Servis Asia's SLA policies. The structured interview was conducted via Google Meet with seven Creative Consulting Team members from PT Ultima Servis Asia, representing all roles except directors. The goal was to validate NASA-TLX findings and assess the impact of the current SLA on workload and work-life balance. The analysis involved initial coding to identify recurring themes, followed by pattern coding to classify primary, secondary, and tertiary workload issues. Interview results also highlighted the correlation between current SLA with the work life balance of the employee. This interview was an important step to know the respondent unmeasured answer. Rahadi (2020) stated that the coding step will make the data more precise. In this step, the researcher must identify several codes from the respondents' answers. These codes are derived from how frequently certain topics are mentioned during the interviews. Based on the highlighted text on each answer, the 12 codes are found and interpreted using the NVIVO app. Thematic analysis was used to structure and interpret the interview data, grouping codes into themes to highlight key workload issues and the impact of SLA on work-life balance. This method validates and enhances the NASA-TLX findings by identifying patterns and relationships within the data. According to Rahadi (2020), thematic analysis helps capture the underlying meaning of responses, while Sugiyono (2017) emphasizes its role in refining data by categorizing codes into broader themes. This process bridges initial coding and pattern coding, ensuring a structured and in-depth understanding of the challenges faced by employees. Out of the 12 codes identified across the respondents' answers, they can be summarized into 4 key underlying themes, which was based on the research question.

Which are as follows:

- Perceptions of the current SLA Business Consulting, Workload)
- Impact of SLA to the Work Life Balance (Clients Handled, Deadline)
- Primary indicator and factor that disrupt work life balance that related to SLA (Overlapping, Overstepping, Overtime, Overwhelming, Quality, Urgent Request)
- Action plan and strategy (Room for Improvement, Detailed)

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When the thematic step done, the final step will be pattern coding. After thematic analysis, pattern coding was applied as the second cycle of coding to refine and prioritize key insights (Rahadi, 2020). This research will be used both hierarchical and sunburst structure. Hierarchical construction will be used to approach to rank codes based on frequency, distinguishing high-priority workload issues from less significant ones. The sunburst structure helped organize findings systematically, ensuring a focused yet comprehensive interpretation of employee concerns. The first theme was using sunburst chart. The sunburst chart highlights "workload" as the most frequently mentioned issue in interviews, confirming that PT Ultima Servis Asia's SLA significantly impacts workload. Sudden client requests increase pressure, especially on the Business Consulting team, which struggles to balance client satisfaction with workload management. Employees fear rejecting requests may lead to complaints or contract termination. Managers in Business Consulting and Content Marketing noted that SLA violations by clients are often seen as common practice in the agency industry. The second theme also using sunburst chart. The second theme explores the link between SLA and work-life balance, with "clients handled" as the most mentioned term. Six out of seven respondents manage multiple brands, leading to workload imbalances due to the lack of clear client assignment guidelines at PT Ultima Servis Asia. Managers from Creative Consulting, Studio, and Graphic Design expressed frustration over uncertain workloads and excessive deadlines, causing burnout. Studio Manager A emphasized that overlapping client deadlines worsen stress and urged for firmer SLA enforcement to protect employee timelines. Content Marketing Manager A suggested that the Business Consulting team should play a stronger role in managing client expectations and ensuring SLA adherence to reduce pressure on internal teams and improve work-life balance. The third theme, visualized using a hierarchy chart, highlights key SLA-related disruptions to work-life balance. The most mentioned issue, "urgent requests", was unanimously cited by respondents as the primary disruptor. Frequent last-minute demands force employees to constantly rearrange schedules, leading to overlapping workloads and increased stress. Additionally, clients often exceed SLA agreements, requesting deliverables outside agreed timelines. This reduces work quality, as tasks shift from high standards to merely meeting client demands. Disrupted timelines also lead to frequent overtime, further diminishing personal time and work-life balance. The fourth theme, shown in the Sunburst chart, reveals a unanimous call for SLA improvement at PT Ultima Servis Asia. Respondents highlighted gaps that need detailed revisions, including clearer breakdowns of SLA components. Graphic Designer A emphasized the need for retraining to ensure employees fully understand SLA implementation. Creative Consulting Manager A suggested switching from daily to hourly metrics to enhance time management and efficiency.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study answers the four research questions using a mixed-method approach, combining NASA-TLX for quantitative analysis and NVIVO-analyzed structured interviews for qualitative insights. The results confirm that PT Ultima Servis Asia's current SLA significantly impacts employee work-life balance, primarily due to high Temporal Demand (TD) from constant deadlines. Most respondents believe the current SLA needs improvement, as it fails to support work-life balance. Some employees also feel it is ineffective because clients frequently violate SLA boundaries. 37 out of 38 employees reported a high workload, with gaps in the SLA contributing to workload imbalances. Improvements are needed to better support employee well-being. The biggest issue is time balance, as urgent client requests disrupt schedules and often force employees into overtime, shifting their focus from quality work to meeting client demands. Proposed SLA Improvements – The SLA should be role-specific rather than generalized, ensuring workload distribution aligns with job responsibilities. Additional policy adjustments were proposed in Chapter IV to ensure the SLA effectively supports employee well-being. PT Ultima Servis Asia should immediately implement the proposed business solutions to improve the SLA and support employee work-life balance. A structured workload distribution will help prevent stress and burnout caused by overwhelming tasks. With the company still in the early months of the year, this is an ideal time to reintroduce the revised SLA to clients, ensuring they understand the updates. Clear communication will help prevent misunderstandings, reduce SLA violations, and minimize last-minute urgent requests. These recommendations are also relevant for other companies facing similar SLA challenges. Implementing structured and enforceable SLA policies can enhance efficiency, protect employee well-being, and create a more sustainable work environment.

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