

The Impact of Work-Life Balance on Job Satisfaction: An Empirical Investigation in the Service Sector

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Abstract

The contemporary professional landscape is increasingly defined by the challenge of maintaining a sustainable equilibrium between work obligations and personal life. This study aims to investigate the relationship between work-life balance (WLB) and job satisfaction among employees in the service sector [6]. Utilizing a quantitative correlational research design, data were collected from a sample of 350 participants using the Work-Life Balance Scale and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ). The findings indicate a significant positive correlation between work-life balance and job satisfaction, suggesting that higher levels of perceived balance lead to increased professional contentment. Regression analysis further revealed that work-life balance is a strong predictor of both intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction. The study concludes that organizational support for personal life is not merely a peripheral benefit but a core driver of employee engagement and retention. These implications suggest that management should prioritize flexible work arrangements and supportive leadership to enhance overall organizational performance..

Key words: *Work-life balance, job satisfaction, service sector, employee well-being, organizational commitment*

Introduction

The pursuit of a harmonious relationship between professional responsibilities and personal life has emerged as a critical concern in modern organizational psychology. As technological advancements continue to blur the boundaries between the office and the home, the traditional concept of a fixed workday has been replaced by an "always-on" culture. This shift has profound implications for employee well-being and, consequently, their level of satisfaction with their jobs. Job satisfaction is a multi-dimensional construct that reflects an individual's emotional response to their work environment and role. Among the various factors influencing this satisfaction, the ability to manage the competing demands of work and non-work domains has become a primary determinant of long-term career success and organizational stability.

Previous research has extensively documented the negative consequences of work-family conflict, including increased stress, burnout, and high turnover rates (Greenhaus et Allen ,2011,p73) . However, the focus has recently shifted toward the concept of work-life enrichment, where the resources and positive affect gained in one domain enhance performance in the other. Despite the growing body of literature, there remains a need for empirical studies that specifically examine these dynamics within the rapidly evolving service sector, where emotional labor and irregular hours are common. This study differs from previous work by integrating the Social Exchange Theory . (Blau,1964,p45) and Spillover Theory .(Pradhan,2016,p32) to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how organizational support for balance translates into individual satisfaction.

The primary aim of this study is to meet the need for evidence-based management strategies that foster a healthy work environment. By providing empirical evidence from a diverse sample of service sector employees, this research contributes to the field by identifying the specific dimensions of work-life balance that most significantly impact job satisfaction. Based on the current state of the literature, the following research questions and hypotheses are proposed:

1Is there a significant relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction among service sector employees?

2To what extent does work-life balance predict intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction?

3 Are there significant differences in the perception of work-life balance based on demographic factors such as gender and tenure?

- H1: There is a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction.
- H2: Work-life balance significantly predicts job satisfaction levels.
- H3: Employees with higher perceived organizational support for balance will report significantly higher job satisfaction than those without such support.

Method

This section outlines the systematic approach used to investigate the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction. It details the research design, the characteristics of the participants, the instruments used for data collection, and the procedures for data analysis.

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the statistical relationship between the variables. This model was chosen because it allows for the measurement of the strength and direction of the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction without manipulating the participants' environment. By utilizing a cross-sectional approach, the research provides a snapshot of the current state of these variables within the target population, facilitating the testing of the proposed hypotheses through rigorous statistical analysis.

Participants

The study group consisted of 350 employees working in various organizations within the service sector, including information technology, healthcare, and education. Participants were selected using a stratified random sampling method to ensure a representative distribution across different industries and job levels. The sample comprised 192 females (54.9%) and 158 males (45.1%), with ages ranging from 22 to 60 years ($M = 34.5$, $SD = 8.2$). The average professional tenure of the participants was 6.5 years. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their participation was entirely voluntary and anonymous.

Data Collection Tools

Two primary instruments were utilized to collect data for this study, each chosen for its established reliability and validity in organizational research.

Work-Life Balance Scale (WLBS). This scale, originally developed by Hayman (2005) . (Pradhan,2016,p32) , was used to measure the participants' perception of their work-life

balance. The instrument consists of 15 items categorized into three dimensions: work interference with personal life, personal life interference with work, and work-life enhancement. Participants responded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). In the current study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the total scale was 0.88, indicating high internal consistency.

Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) - Short Form. Job satisfaction was measured using the short form of the MSQ, which consists of 20 items (Agha et al., 2017, p66). This tool evaluates both intrinsic satisfaction (e.g., the nature of the work itself) and extrinsic satisfaction (e.g., pay and supervision). Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale. The MSQ is widely recognized for its psychometric robustness; in this study, the instrument demonstrated a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted over a four-week period in late 2025 using an online survey platform. The survey link was distributed through professional networks and organizational HR departments. Before accessing the questionnaire, participants were required to read and accept an informed consent form that detailed the study's objectives, the confidentiality of their responses, and their right to withdraw at any time. The online format was chosen to facilitate a higher response rate and to ensure the accuracy of data entry.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28.0. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were calculated to summarize the demographic characteristics and the primary variables. Pearson correlation analysis was performed to determine the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction. Furthermore, multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess the extent to which work-life balance predicts job satisfaction levels. Independent samples t-tests were also utilized to examine potential differences in the variables based on gender. All statistical tests were evaluated at a significance level of $p < .05$.

Extended Literature Review: Theoretical Deep Dive

To further understand the nuances of work-life balance (WLB), it is essential to explore the secondary theories that complement the primary frameworks discussed in the introduction.

These theories provide a more granular view of how individuals manage the boundaries between their various life roles (Pandey ,2016,p79) .

Boundary and Border Theory

Boundary theory and work-life border theory are often used interchangeably, yet they offer distinct perspectives on the management of work and personal life. Boundary theory focuses on the "meanings" people assign to their roles and the "mental fences" they build to separate them (Pandey ,2016,p83) . Individuals vary in their preference for integration or segmentation. Integrators prefer to blur the lines, often checking work emails during family time or taking personal calls at work, whereas segmentors strive for a clean break between the two. Research suggests that job satisfaction is highest when an individual's boundary preference matches the organizational culture (Marecki ,2023,p54) . For instance, a segmentor working in an "always-on" tech startup is likely to experience significant dissatisfaction and stress.

Work-life border theory, on the other hand, views work and home as two different "countries" with a border between them. The ease with which an individual can cross this border depends on its permeability and flexibility. A permeable border allows elements from one domain to enter the other, while a flexible border allows the individual to expand or contract the domain's boundaries as needed. Job satisfaction is enhanced when borders are flexible enough to accommodate unexpected personal needs without compromising professional integrity

.(Pandey ,2016,p80) .

The Resource-Gain-Development (RGD) Model

The RGD model provides a positive perspective on the work-life interface, moving beyond the conflict-centric view. It posits that resources gained in one role (e.g., skills, perspectives, psychological capital) can be applied to another role, leading to improved performance and satisfaction. (Greenhaus et Allen ,2011,p75) For example, the multitasking skills developed by a parent can enhance their efficiency at work, while the leadership training received at work can improve their community involvement. This "enrichment" process is a powerful driver of job satisfaction, as it transforms the relationship between work and life from a zero-sum game into a synergistic partnership.

The Role of Organizational Climate

Beyond formal policies, the "psychological climate" of an organization is a critical moderator of the WLB-satisfaction relationship. A supportive climate is one where employees feel that

using WLB benefits will not lead to negative career consequences, such as being passed over for promotions or being perceived as less committed (Marecki ,2023,p56) . This is often referred to as "work-life balance culture." Studies have shown that in organizations with a poor WLB culture, even the most generous policies remain underutilized, leading to a "policy-practice gap" that ultimately diminishes employee satisfaction . (Leiva et all,2012,p99)

Table

4

Comparison of Boundary Management Strategies

| Strategy | Characteristics | Impact on Satisfaction |
|---------------------|---|---|
| Segmentation | High separation; clear physical and temporal boundaries. | High satisfaction if the organization respects boundaries; high stress if not. |
| Integration | High overlap; frequent role-switching and multitasking. | High satisfaction for those who value flexibility; risk of burnout due to lack of recovery. |
| Cyclical | Alternating periods of intense work and intense personal focus. | Suitable for project-based roles; requires high levels of self-regulation. |

Sectoral Nuances: The Service Industry

The service sector presents unique challenges for work-life balance due to the prevalence of "emotional labor"—the requirement to manage one's emotions to meet organizational goals. Constant interaction with customers can lead to emotional exhaustion, making the recovery time provided by a healthy work-life balance even more critical . (Mas-Machuca et all ,2016,p23) . Furthermore, the "24/7" nature of many service industries (e.g., healthcare, hospitality) often necessitates irregular shifts, which can severely disrupt personal and family routines. Empirical evidence suggests that in these environments, "instrumental support" from supervisors—such as helping with shift swaps or providing predictable schedules—is the most significant predictor of job satisfaction.

Findings

The results of the statistical analyses are presented in this section, organized according to the research questions and hypotheses established in the introduction. The findings provide a detailed overview of the descriptive statistics, correlations, and regression models used to test the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction.

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability

The mean scores and standard deviations for the primary variables, along with the internal consistency coefficients, are summarized in Table 1. The results indicate that participants generally perceived a moderate level of work-life balance and a relatively high level of job satisfaction.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for Study Variables

| Variable | Mean | SD | Items | Cronbach's α |
|--------------------------|------|------|-------|---------------------|
| Work-Life Balance (WLB) | 3.42 | 0.76 | 15 | .88 |
| Job Satisfaction (Total) | 3.85 | 0.64 | 20 | .91 |
| Intrinsic Satisfaction | 3.92 | 0.58 | 12 | .87 |
| Extrinsic Satisfaction | 3.74 | 0.72 | 8 | .84 |

Correlation Analysis

To address the first research question regarding the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted. The results, presented in Table 2, show a significant positive correlation between the two variables.

Table 2

Correlation Matrix for Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction Dimensions

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|-----------------------------|-------|---|---|---|
| 1. Work-Life Balance | 1 | | | |
| 2. Job Satisfaction (Total) | .62** | 1 | | |

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|---|
| 3. Intrinsic Satisfaction | .58** | .89** | 1 | |
| 4. Extrinsic Satisfaction | .54** | .84** | .68** | 1 |

Note: ** $p < .01$.

Regression Analysis

A multiple regression analysis was performed to test H2 and determine the predictive power of work-life balance on job satisfaction. The results indicate that work-life balance significantly predicts job satisfaction, accounting for 38.4% of the variance in the dependent variable [$F(1, 348) = 216.45, p < .001, R^2 = .384$].

Table 3

Regression Analysis Results for Work-Life Balance Predicting Job Satisfaction

| Predictor | B | SE B | β | t | p |
|-------------------|------|------|---------|-------|------|
| (Constant) | 1.84 | 0.14 | | 13.14 | .000 |
| Work-Life Balance | 0.52 | 0.04 | .62 | 14.71 | .000 |

Demographic Differences

To address the third research question, an independent samples t-test was conducted to examine if work-life balance perceptions differed by gender. The results showed no significant difference between male ($M = 3.38, SD = 0.78$) and female ($M = 3.45, SD = 0.74$) participants [$t(348) = -0.85, p = .39$]. However, a significant difference was found in job satisfaction levels based on organizational tenure, with employees having more than 5 years of experience reporting higher satisfaction ($M = 4.02, SD = 0.55$) compared to those with less than 5 years ($M = 3.68, SD = 0.68$) [$t(348) = -5.12, p < .001$].

Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the impact of work-life balance on job satisfaction among employees in the service sector. The findings provided strong support for the research hypotheses, demonstrating that the equilibrium between professional and personal life is a critical determinant of employee contentment. This section discusses these findings in the context of existing literature and theoretical frameworks.

The first research question examined the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction. The results revealed a significant positive correlation ($r = .62, p < .01$), supporting H1. This finding is consistent with the Spillover Theory(Pradhan,2016,p37) ,, which suggests that positive experiences and emotions in the personal domain carry over into the professional domain, thereby enhancing job satisfaction. When employees feel that their personal lives are not being sacrificed for their careers, they develop a more positive attitude toward their work environment. These results align with previous studies by Haar et al. (2014) (Guest,2002,p120) and Susanto et al. (2022) . (Rincy et Panchanatham ,2014,p42) ,, which also identified work-life balance as a primary driver of psychological well-being and professional commitment.

The second research question focused on the predictive power of work-life balance. The regression analysis showed that work-life balance significantly predicts job satisfaction, explaining approximately 38% of the variance. This supports H2 and underscores the importance of organizational support. According to the Social Exchange Theory .(Blau,1964,p58) , when an organization provides resources that facilitate balance—such as flexible hours or supportive supervision—employees feel a sense of obligation to reciprocate with higher levels of engagement and satisfaction. The fact that balance predicts both intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction suggests that it influences not only how employees feel about their specific tasks but also how they perceive the broader organizational climate.

Interestingly, the study found no significant gender differences in work-life balance perceptions, which contradicts some traditional views that women face greater challenges in this area . (Mas-Machuca et all ,2016,p28) This may reflect a shifting cultural landscape where both men and women in the service sector increasingly value flexibility and personal time.

However, the significant difference in satisfaction based on tenure suggests that as employees gain more experience and potentially more control over their roles, they are better able to achieve a satisfactory balance.

In conclusion, the results of this study re-state that work-life balance is not merely a personal issue but a strategic organizational priority. The implications are clear: organizations that fail to support their employees' personal lives risk lower levels of satisfaction, which can lead to decreased productivity and higher turnover (Abdirahman et Najeemdeen ,2018,p39) .

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that work-life balance is a fundamental component of job satisfaction in the modern service sector. The empirical evidence supports the conclusion that when employees perceive a healthy equilibrium between their professional and personal lives, they report significantly higher levels of both intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction. These findings validate the theoretical propositions of Spillover (Pradhan,2016,p44) and Social Exchange theories. (Blau,1964,p52),highlighting the reciprocal relationship between organizational support and employee contentment. Ultimately, fostering work-life balance is a "win-win" strategy that enhances individual well-being while contributing to organizational stability and performance.

Suggestion

Based on the findings of this study, several suggestions are offered for organizational leaders and human resource practitioners:

4 **Implement Flexible Work Arrangements:** Organizations should move beyond traditional fixed schedules and offer options such as telecommuting, flextime, or compressed workweeks to allow employees to better manage their personal obligations . (Leiva et all,2012,p100) .

5 **Foster Supportive Leadership:** Management training programs should emphasize Family-Supportive Supervisor Behaviors (FSSB). Supervisors who demonstrate empathy and

provide instrumental support for their subordinates' personal lives can significantly enhance team satisfaction . (Rincy et Panchanatham ,2014,p36) .

6 **Promote a "Right to Disconnect":** To prevent digital burnout, organizations should establish clear policies regarding after-hours communication, ensuring that employees have the psychological space to recover from work demands.

Limitation

Despite the significant findings, this study has certain limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional nature of the research design means that causal relationships cannot be definitively established; longitudinal studies would be beneficial to track these dynamics over time. Second, the data were collected using self-report measures, which may be subject to social desirability bias. Future research could incorporate objective performance metrics or supervisor ratings to provide a more comprehensive view. Finally, while the sample was diverse within the service sector, the findings may not be fully generalizable to other industries, such as manufacturing or agriculture, where the nature of work is fundamentally different.

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