



Impact of Work-Life Balance on Employee Job Satisfaction in the Corporate Sector

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Abstract

This research paper investigates the relationship between work-life balance (WLB) and employee job satisfaction in the Indian corporate sector. Using a concurrent mixed-methods design, data were collected from 500 corporate employees across five industries — Information Technology (IT), Banking and Financial Services, Manufacturing, Healthcare, and Management Consulting — supplemented by in-depth interviews with 50 senior HR professionals. The study employed the validated Work-Life Balance Scale and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ). Results reveal a strong positive correlation between WLB and job satisfaction ($r = 0.74$, $p < 0.001$). Regression analysis shows that WLB dimensions collectively explain 58.7% of variance in job satisfaction, with Work Interference with Personal Life ($\beta = -0.39$) as the strongest predictor. Work/Personal Life Enhancement ($\beta = 0.29$) also makes a significant independent contribution, underscoring the importance of positive work-life synergy. Significant industry, gender, and organizational-level variations are documented. Qualitative findings identify an 'always-on' culture, leadership behavior, and the post-COVID shift to hybrid work as critical contextual factors. The paper concludes with evidence-based recommendations for organizations, HR practitioners, and policy makers.

Keywords: work-life balance, job satisfaction, corporate sector, employee well-being, hybrid work, organizational culture



Introduction

In the twenty-first century global economy, the concept of work has undergone a seismic transformation. The advent of digital technologies, globalization, and knowledge-intensive industries have collectively reshaped the nature of employment and the daily experience of millions of corporate workers. At the heart of this transformation lies a fundamental tension: the growing difficulty employees face in maintaining equilibrium between their professional responsibilities and personal lives — commonly referred to as work-life balance (WLB).

Work-life balance, defined as the extent to which an individual can simultaneously balance the temporal, emotional, and behavioral demands of paid employment and family responsibilities (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), has emerged as one of the most pressing concerns for employees, organizations, and society at large. The corporate sector — characterized by high-performance cultures, demanding deliverables, and unrelenting work schedules — represents a particularly pertinent context for investigating WLB dynamics.

The consequences of poor work-life balance are significant. A landmark Harvard Business Review (2014) study estimated that workplace stress costs U.S. corporations approximately \$300 billion annually. Conversely, SHRM (2019) research found that companies with strong WLB programs experience 25% lower employee turnover and 20% higher productivity. A National HRD Network (2022) survey found 68% of Indian corporate professionals report moderate to severe work-life imbalance, with 45% attributing their dissatisfaction primarily to WLB issues.

This paper examines the nature and strength of the WLB-job satisfaction relationship across multiple industries, organizational levels, and demographic groups within the Indian corporate context, and offers actionable recommendations for practitioners and policy makers.

Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Framework of Work-Life Balance

Early conceptualizations of WLB were influenced by the work-family conflict paradigm (Kahn et al., 1964; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), which framed work and non-work roles primarily in terms of conflict. Greenhaus and Beutell's (1985) seminal model identified three primary forms: time-based conflict, strain-based conflict, and behavior-based conflict. From the mid- 1990s, research expanded to include positive spillover and enrichment processes (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), recognizing that work and family roles can enhance rather than merely diminish each other. Clark's (2000) Border Theory further enriched the field by examining how individuals navigate physical, temporal, and psychological boundaries between domains — a framework of renewed relevance in the era of remote work.

2.2 Theoretical Frameworks

Five major theories inform the present study's conceptual framework:

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959): Distinguishes hygiene factors (including personal life) from motivators. Poor WLB creates dissatisfaction as a hygiene deficit; positive work-life synergy may also function as a motivator.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943): Explains why WLB concerns intensify as basic material needs are met and higher-order social and self-actualization needs become salient.

Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1989): Posits that work-life imbalance depletes valued resources (time, energy, attention), triggering stress and disengagement. Organizational WLB support provides resource gains that enable satisfaction.

Role Theory and Boundary Theory: Role Theory predicts stress from incompatible role demands; Boundary Theory focuses on the strategies individuals use to manage work-home transitions.

Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964): Predicts that organizational investment in WLB generates reciprocal employee responses of higher satisfaction and commitment, explaining why the 'implementation gap' between policy and practice undermines WLB program effectiveness.



2.3 Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction: Evidence from Literature

The empirical literature robustly confirms the positive association between WLB and job satisfaction. Allen et al.'s (2000) meta-analysis of 67 studies found work-family conflict negatively associated with job satisfaction ($r = -0.24$). Byron's (2005) meta-analysis of 61 studies confirmed bidirectionality, with work-to-family conflict ($r = -0.22$) more strongly impacting satisfaction than family-to-work conflict ($r = -0.12$). Haar et al.'s (2014) seven-country study found consistent positive relationships ($\beta = 0.41$) across culturally diverse settings, supporting robustness of the relationship.

Industry-specific research reveals distinctive challenges: IT professionals report the highest rates of work-family conflict (Ahuja et al., 2007); investment banking analysts commonly work over 70 hours weekly (CFA Institute, 2022); healthcare workers face severe burnout with documented patient safety consequences; and management consulting firms embed extreme work norms structurally (Reid, 2015). Flexible working arrangements emerge consistently as the most impactful WLB intervention (McNall et al., 2010: $d = 0.49$ for WLB, $d = 0.44$ for job satisfaction).

Research Methodology

3.1 Design and Sample

This study employed a concurrent mixed-methods design. The quantitative component used a cross-sectional survey with stratified random sampling across five industry sectors. The target sample of 500 was achieved (IT: $n = 107$; Banking: $n = 98$; Manufacturing: $n = 95$; Healthcare: $n = 101$; Consulting: $n = 99$). The qualitative component comprised 50 semi-structured interviews with senior HR professionals and line managers across the five sectors. Eligibility required a minimum of two years of corporate experience in full-time private sector employment.

3.2 Instruments

Work-Life Balance Scale (WLBS): Adapted from Hayman (2005), measuring three subscales

— Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL, 7 items), Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW, 4 items), and Work/Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE, 6 items) — on a 5-point Likert scale (α : 0.89, 0.82, 0.85 respectively).

Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ): Short-form (20 items, 5-point scale) assessing satisfaction across 20 job facets. Overall $\alpha = 0.92$; Intrinsic $\alpha = 0.88$; Extrinsic $\alpha = 0.84$.

3.3 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using IBM SPSS v.26 and AMOS v.26, including descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, multiple and hierarchical regression, and one-way ANOVA with Tukey HSD post-hoc tests. Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) using NVivo v.12. Confirmatory factor analysis confirmed construct validity (RMSEA = 0.048/0.053; CFI = 0.962/0.951 — both meeting established thresholds).

Results and Analysis

4.1 Demographic Profile

The sample comprised 55.6% male and 44.4% female respondents. The largest age group was 30–39 years (37.8%), reflecting early-to-mid career concentration. Married employees with children represented 43.8%, the demographic most susceptible to WLB challenges. By organizational level: junior (29.6%), middle (44.2%), senior (26.2%). Work arrangements: hybrid (43.0%), fully office-based (39.6%), fully remote (17.4%).

4.2 Descriptive Statistics



Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL)	3.42	0.78	1.14	5.00
Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW)	2.31	0.82	1.00	5.00
Work/Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE)	3.18	0.69	1.17	5.00
Overall WLB Score (composite)	3.12	0.72	1.21	4.89
Overall Job Satisfaction (MSQ)	3.44	0.74	1.35	5.00
Intrinsic Job Satisfaction	3.65	0.76	1.17	5.00
Extrinsic Job Satisfaction	3.22	0.86	1.00	5.00

Work interference with personal life ($M = 3.42$) substantially exceeds personal life interference with work ($M = 2.31$), confirming the unidirectional, work-driven nature of conflict in corporate settings. The overall WLB score of 3.12 indicates moderate balance; overall job satisfaction of 3.44 indicates moderate-to-high satisfaction, with intrinsic satisfaction ($M = 3.65$) exceeding extrinsic satisfaction ($M = 3.22$), consistent with Herzberg's framework.



4.3 Industry and Gender Differences in WLB

Industry Sector	n	Mean WLB	Mean WIPL	Mean WPLE	SD
Information Technology	107	3.08	3.61	3.22	0.71
Banking & Financial Services	98	2.95	3.72	3.08	0.77
Manufacturing	95	3.48	3.08	3.41	0.74
Healthcare	101	2.89	3.79	2.98	0.82
Management Consulting	99	2.71	3.97	2.89	0.69
Total Sample	500	3.12	3.42	3.18	0.72

ANOVA confirmed significant sector differences [$F(4,495) = 18.42, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.129$]. Management Consulting employees report the lowest WLB ($M = 2.71$) and the highest WIPL ($M = 3.97$ — approaching the scale maximum), while Manufacturing employees report the highest WLB ($M = 3.48$). Female employees report significantly lower WLB ($M = 2.98$) than male employees ($M = 3.24$) [$t(498) = 3.71, p < 0.001, d = 0.37$], most pronounced on WIPL ($F: 3.63$ vs. $M: 3.25$).

4.4 Correlation Analysis

The Pearson correlation between overall WLB and overall job satisfaction is $r = 0.74$ ($p < 0.001$), a large effect size. Key bivariate correlations:

Variable Pair	r	p-value	Interpretation	Effect Size
Overall WLB → Overall JS	0.74	< 0.001	Large positive	Large
WIPL → Overall JS	-0.68	< 0.001	Strong negative	Large
PLIW → Overall JS	-0.31	< 0.001	Moderate negative	Medium
WPLE → Overall JS	0.57	< 0.001	Moderate positive	Medium-Large
Overall WLB → Intrinsic JS	0.71	< 0.001	Large positive	Large

4.5 Regression Analysis

Multiple regression (controlling for gender, age, organizational level, sector, and work arrangement) explains 58.7% of



variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.587$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.580$; $F(8,491) = 87.4$, $p < 0.001$).

Predictor	B	SE	β	p	Interpretation
Work Intrf. with Personal Life (WIPL)	-0.31	0.04	-0.39***	< .001	Strongest predictor
Work/Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE)	0.24	0.04	0.29***	< .001	Key positive driver
Personal Life Intrf. with Work (PLIW)	-0.12	0.03	-0.17***	< .001	Significant negative
Organizational Level	0.14	0.04	0.16***	< .001	Senior = higher JS
Industry Sector (ref: IT)	-0.11	0.04	-0.13**	.006	Sector effect
Hybrid Work Arrangement	0.08	0.04	0.09*	.035	Flexibility benefit
Gender (Female = 1)	-0.09	0.06	-0.07 ns	.142	Mediated by WLB

Note: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; ns = non-significant. The non-significant gender effect after controlling for WLB indicates that WLB mediates the gender difference in job satisfaction.

Qualitative Findings

Thematic analysis of 50 interviews with HR professionals and senior managers yielded five major themes:

Theme 1: The 'Always-On' Culture as the Primary WLB Barrier

Cited by 46 of 50 participants (92%), the expectation of constant availability through digital technology was identified as the dominant barrier to WLB. One Senior HR Director described how technology means 'work follows you everywhere — to dinner, to your child's birthday party, on vacation,' fundamentally disrupting employees' off-work recovery. Management consulting and IT sectors reported this most acutely.

Theme 2: Gender Inequity as a Structural Challenge

Female participants consistently highlighted the disproportionate domestic burden borne by women as a fundamental structural factor. The 'invisible labor' of managing childcare and household responsibilities outside work hours — without organizational recognition — was a universal concern. Married female middle managers with children reported the lowest job satisfaction ($M = 3.08$) and highest WIPL scores ($M = 3.89$) of any demographic subgroup.

Theme 3: Leadership Behavior as the Critical Mediator

All 50 participants identified direct manager behavior as the single most important factor determining whether formal WLB policies translated into actual employee experience. Leaders who modeled healthy boundaries created substantially more supportive WLB environments, while leaders who worked visibly long hours signaled the organization's true values regardless of stated policy. This 'implementation gap' was pervasive across all sectors.



Theme 4: Flexible Working as the Most Valued Intervention

Flexible working arrangements — particularly remote work and schedule autonomy — were universally identified as the most impactful WLB intervention. However, participants emphasized that nominal flexibility without cultural acceptance generates a 'use at your peril' dynamic where employees fear career penalties for exercising available provisions.

Theme 5: Post-Pandemic Hybrid Work as a WLB Inflection Point

The COVID-19 pandemic was unanimously described as having permanently altered employee expectations around flexible working. Organizations attempting full return to pre-pandemic office norms faced resistance, engagement challenges, and documented turnover increases — particularly among high-performers. Hybrid work is now viewed by most employees as a non-negotiable baseline expectation.

Discussion

6.1 Primary WLB-JS Relationship

The strong correlation ($r = 0.74$) and large variance explained ($R^2 = 0.587$) provide compelling evidence that WLB is a critical determinant of corporate employee job satisfaction. These results exceed prior meta-analytic estimates (Allen et al., 2000: $r = -0.24$; Haar et al., 2014: $\beta = 0.41$), likely reflecting the broader, multi-dimensional WLB operationalization and the contemporary intensification of WLB challenges through digital connectivity.

6.2 The Enrichment Dimension

The significant independent contribution of WPLE ($\beta = 0.29$) is a theoretically important finding. It demonstrates that WLB promotion must go beyond conflict prevention to actively cultivate positive synergies — enabling employees to derive meaning from work that resonates with personal values, develop cross-domain skills, and participate in restorative personal activities. This reframes the organizational WLB objective from reactive to proactive.

6.3 Theoretical Implications

The findings validate Herzberg's placement of personal life as a hygiene factor whose disruption reliably generates dissatisfaction, while extending his framework by showing WPLE can also function as a motivator. Conservation of Resources Theory is supported by the pattern of resource depletion through WIPL and resource gain through organizational WLB support. Social Exchange Theory is evidenced by the correlation between perceived organizational support and employee commitment and satisfaction. The qualitative 'always-on' theme empirically illustrates Boundary Theory's relevance to digital-age work.

6.4 Industry Paradoxes

The IT sector's paradox — high job satisfaction despite significant WLB challenges — is explained by high intrinsic interest and intellectual stimulation that partially compensates for balance deficits. Healthcare's low satisfaction despite deeply meaningful work reflects the severity and chronicity of WLB challenges compounded by understaffing and administrative burdens. Management Consulting's structural incentive systems make WLB improvement fundamentally a business-model challenge, not merely an HR initiative.

Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Core Conclusions

This study leads to five core conclusions:

- Work-life balance is a fundamental determinant of job satisfaction and organizational effectiveness. Failure to support WLB carries quantifiable costs in satisfaction, turnover, and absenteeism.
- The WLB-JS relationship extends beyond conflict prevention: positive work-life enrichment makes an independent and substantial contribution to satisfaction, calling for a reframing of organizational WLB objectives.
- Systematic inequities exist across gender, organizational level, and industry sector. Married female middle managers with children face the most acute challenges and require targeted intervention.



- Formal WLB policies are necessary but insufficient. The implementation gap is primarily determined by organizational culture and managerial behavior — making culture change the sine qua non of effective WLB management.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has permanently shifted employee expectations. Organizations resisting hybrid and flexible work face escalating talent acquisition and retention disadvantages.

7.2 Recommendations for Organizations

# Recommendation	Key Actions		
1	Regular WLB Needs Assessments		Annual surveys using validated instruments; disaggregate by gender, level, sector; share results transparently and track progress.
2	Genuine Flexible Working		Move beyond nominal policy: actively encourage use, eliminate career stigma, evaluate on outcomes not hours or presence.
3	Develop Leaders as WLB Champions		Leadership development on WLB business case and modeling; incorporate WLB team outcomes in performance management.
4	Right-to-Disconnect Norms		Explicit policies on after-hours communication; technical solutions (email scheduling); leaders model behavior by avoiding non-urgent after-hours contact.
5	Address Gender-Specific Challenges		Generous parental leave for both parents; subsidized childcare; eliminate maternal wall in promotion criteria; normalize paternity leave.
6	Sector-Specific Programs		Consulting and Healthcare require fundamental business-model and culture changes: redesign staffing models, implement predictive scheduling, invest in workforce capacity.
7	Leverage Technology Thoughtfully		Email scheduling tools; do-not-disturb culture; digital boundary management training; monitor technostress through EAPs.
8	Build a Culture of Well-Being		Holistic well-being encompassing physical, mental, financial, and social wellness; track well-being as a KPI alongside financial metrics.

7.3 Recommendations for Policy Makers

- Strengthen and enforce maximum working hours and mandatory rest period legislation, particularly in high-risk sectors.
- Introduce comprehensive, equally shareable parental leave legislation to address gender inequity in domestic responsibilities.



- Introduce 'right to disconnect' legislation (cf. France's El Khomri Law, 2017) to institutionalize protections for personal time in the digital age.
- Provide tax incentives for organizations investing in certified employee well-being programs to close the gap between leading and lagging practice.
- Require public sector employers to demonstrate WLB leadership as a condition of government contracts.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

The cross-sectional survey design prevents causal inference, though theoretical frameworks and prior longitudinal evidence strongly support WLB's causal primacy. Self-reported data carries common method variance risk, mitigated by procedural controls. Geographic restriction to Indian urban corporate centers limits cross-cultural generalizability. Exclusion of part-time and non-standard workers limits coverage of the modern employment landscape.

Future research should pursue: (1) longitudinal designs tracking WLB and JS trajectories across career stages; (2) experimental studies evaluating specific interventions including right-to-disconnect policies and leadership training; (3) cross-cultural comparative studies contrasting individualist and collectivist contexts; (4) research on AI and automation's reshaping of work demands; (5) economic cost-benefit analyses of organizational WLB investment to strengthen the business case; and (6) studies focusing on Generation Z's distinctive WLB expectations as the future corporate workforce

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