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Work–Life Balance and Its Impact on Job Satisfaction and Employee Performance in Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract: Work–life balance has become an important concern in higher education institutions due to increasing job demands and role complexity experienced by academic and administrative staff. This study investigates the effect of work–life balance on job satisfaction and employee performance in higher education institutions. A quantitative research design was employed using a survey method. Data were collected from employees working in higher education institutions through structured questionnaires and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The results demonstrate that work–life balance has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. In addition, job satisfaction significantly influences employee performance. The analysis also reveals that work–life balance directly affects employee performance and indirectly influences performance through job satisfaction as a mediating variable. These findings indicate that job satisfaction strengthens the relationship between work–life balance and employee performance. This study provides empirical evidence that supports the role of work–life balance as a strategic human resource management practice in higher education institutions. The findings suggest that organizational policies promoting balanced work arrangements and employee well-being can enhance job satisfaction and improve employee performance. Therefore, higher education managers are encouraged to integrate work–life balance initiatives into their human resource management strategies to achieve sustainable organizational performance.

Keywords: Work–Life Balance, Job Satisfaction, Employee Performance, Human Resource Management, Higher Education Institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions are increasingly required to maintain high levels of performance amid growing academic, administrative, and societal demands. Universities are no longer evaluated solely based on academic outputs but also on their ability to manage human resources effectively in order to sustain organizational performance. Academic and

administrative staff are expected to perform multiple roles simultaneously, including teaching, research, community service, and institutional administration, which often leads to increased workload and work pressure. Several studies have indicated that excessive job demands without adequate organizational support may negatively affect employee well-being and performance (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Delecta, 2011).

One of the key human resource management issues emerging in higher education institutions is work–life balance. Work–life balance refers to an individual’s ability to balance work responsibilities with personal and family life without experiencing role conflict or excessive stress. Previous research suggests that employees who perceive a better balance between work and non-work roles tend to demonstrate higher levels of psychological well-being and work satisfaction (Guest, 2002; Haar et al., 2014). In the context of higher education, the boundary between work and personal life is often blurred due to flexible working hours, academic deadlines, and performance targets, which makes work–life balance a critical concern.

Job satisfaction has long been recognized as an important determinant of employee performance. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to show greater commitment, motivation, and willingness to perform beyond formal job requirements. Empirical studies in human resource management literature have consistently shown that job satisfaction positively influences employee performance and organizational effectiveness (Judge et al., 2001; Robbins & Judge, 2017). In higher education institutions, job satisfaction is closely related to factors such as workload distribution, institutional support, career development opportunities, and work–life balance arrangements.

Several empirical studies have examined the relationship between work–life balance and job satisfaction, as well as the effect of job satisfaction on employee performance. For instance, research by Haar et al. (2014) demonstrated that work–life balance has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction across different occupational groups. Similarly, studies conducted in educational settings indicate that employees who experience better work–life balance tend to report higher satisfaction and improved performance outcomes (Rashmi & Kataria, 2017; Azeem & Akhtar, 2014). However, most existing studies focus on corporate or healthcare sectors, while empirical evidence from higher education institutions, particularly in developing countries, remains limited.

Moreover, previous studies often examine the direct relationship between work–life balance and employee performance without adequately exploring the mediating role of job satisfaction. Understanding job satisfaction as a mediating variable is essential, as work–life balance initiatives may not directly enhance performance unless employees perceive these initiatives as contributing to their overall job satisfaction. This research gap highlights the need for empirical studies that integrate work–life balance, job satisfaction, and employee performance within a comprehensive analytical framework in the context of higher education institutions.

Based on the above discussion, this study aims to examine the effect of work–life balance on job satisfaction and employee performance in higher education institutions, as well as to analyze the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between work–life balance and employee performance. The findings of this study are expected to provide empirical evidence that supports the development of effective human resource management policies in higher education institutions, particularly in designing work–life balance strategies that enhance job satisfaction and improve employee performance in a sustainable manner.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Development

Human resource management literature emphasizes that employee performance is influenced not only by individual competencies but also by organizational practices that

support employee well-being. Work–life balance is widely regarded as an important organizational practice that enables employees to manage work demands alongside personal and family responsibilities. When employees perceive that their organization supports a healthy balance between work and non-work roles, they are more likely to experience positive work-related attitudes and behaviors.

Work–Life Balance and Job Satisfaction

Work–life balance is closely associated with job satisfaction, as employees who are able to manage multiple life roles effectively tend to experience lower levels of stress and higher psychological well-being. According to role theory, imbalance between work and personal roles may lead to role conflict, which negatively affects job satisfaction. Empirical studies have shown that employees who perceive higher levels of work–life balance report greater job satisfaction across various organizational contexts (Guest, 2002; Haar et al., 2014). In higher education institutions, flexible working arrangements and supportive organizational policies may enhance employees' perceptions of balance, thereby increasing job satisfaction.

Based on the theoretical and empirical evidence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Work–life balance has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction and Employee Performance

Job satisfaction reflects an individual's overall evaluation of their job and work environment. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of motivation, commitment, and performance. From the perspective of attitude–behavior theory, positive work attitudes such as job satisfaction are expected to translate into improved work behaviors and performance outcomes. Previous research has consistently found a positive relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance in both public and private sector organizations (Judge et al., 2001; Robbins & Judge, 2017). In the context of higher education institutions, satisfied academic and administrative staff are more likely to perform their duties effectively and contribute to institutional goals.

Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2: Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

Work–Life Balance and Employee Performance

Work–life balance may also influence employee performance directly. Employees who experience balanced work and personal lives tend to have better physical and mental health, which enables them to maintain focus, energy, and productivity at work. Several empirical studies suggest that work–life balance practices contribute to improved employee performance by reducing stress and work-related fatigue (Delecta, 2011; Rashmi & Kataria, 2017). In higher education institutions, where employees often face demanding schedules and performance pressures, work–life balance initiatives may play a crucial role in sustaining employee performance.

Based on this reasoning, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Work–life balance has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

Although work–life balance is expected to enhance employee performance, its effect may not always be direct. Job satisfaction may act as an important mechanism through which work–life balance influences performance. Employees who perceive adequate work–life balance may develop positive feelings toward their jobs, which in turn motivate them to perform better. Prior studies have indicated that job satisfaction can mediate the relationship between human resource practices and employee performance (Haar et al., 2014; Azeem & Akhtar, 2014).

However, empirical evidence examining this mediating role within higher education institutions remains limited.

Accordingly, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H4: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work–life balance and employee performance.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the hypotheses developed, the conceptual framework of this study positions work–life balance as an exogenous variable influencing employee performance both directly and indirectly through job satisfaction as a mediating variable. This framework reflects the assumption that work–life balance practices enhance employee performance by fostering positive job-related attitudes, particularly job satisfaction, within higher education institutions.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design with an explanatory approach to examine the relationships among work–life balance, job satisfaction, and employee performance in higher education institutions. A survey method was used to collect primary data, as this approach is considered appropriate for testing causal relationships between latent variables in human resource management research. Quantitative methods allow for objective measurement and statistical analysis of relationships between variables, particularly when mediation effects are examined (Hair et al., 2019).

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of academic and administrative staff working in higher education institutions. Given the diversity of roles and responsibilities within higher education, both groups were included to obtain a comprehensive understanding of employee perceptions regarding work–life balance, job satisfaction, and performance. A purposive sampling technique was applied, with respondents selected based on their employment status and minimum length of service to ensure adequate experience with institutional work practices. The sample size was determined in accordance with structural equation modeling requirements, which recommend a minimum sample of 5–10 respondents per estimated parameter or indicator to ensure reliable statistical results (Hair et al., 2019). This study collected data from a sufficient number of respondents to meet these criteria.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected using structured questionnaires distributed directly to respondents. The questionnaire was designed to capture respondents' perceptions of work–life balance, job satisfaction, and employee performance. Prior to full distribution, the instrument was reviewed to ensure clarity and relevance of the items. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the study and assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses to minimize potential response bias.

Measurement of Variables

Work–life balance was measured using indicators reflecting employees' ability to balance work responsibilities with personal and family life, including time balance, involvement balance, and satisfaction balance. These indicators were adapted from established work–life balance measurement frameworks commonly used in human resource management research (Guest, 2002; Haar et al., 2014).

Job satisfaction was measured using indicators related to satisfaction with work itself, supervision, compensation, and working conditions. These dimensions have been widely used in previous studies to assess overall job satisfaction in organizational settings (Judge et al., 2001; Robbins & Judge, 2017).

Employee performance was measured using self-reported indicators that reflect task performance, work quality, and efficiency in completing job responsibilities. Self-assessment measures are considered appropriate when objective performance data are not readily available and have been shown to provide reliable insights when anonymity is ensured (Delecta, 2011). All measurement items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Data Analysis Technique

The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine both direct and indirect relationships among variables. SEM was selected due to its ability to simultaneously test multiple relationships and assess mediation effects within a single analytical framework. The analysis involved evaluating the measurement model to assess validity and reliability, followed by evaluation of the structural model to test the proposed hypotheses. The mediation effect of job satisfaction was examined using indirect effect analysis as recommended in mediation testing procedures (Hair et al., 2019).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were addressed by ensuring voluntary participation and informed consent from all respondents. Respondents were assured that their participation was anonymous and that the data collected would be used solely for academic research purposes. These measures were implemented to ensure the integrity and ethical compliance of the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement model was assessed to examine indicator reliability, convergent validity, and internal consistency. All indicators demonstrated standardized loading values above the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating adequate indicator reliability. The average variance extracted (AVE) values for all constructs exceeded 0.50, confirming satisfactory convergent validity. Composite reliability values were also above 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency among measurement items (Hair et al., 2019).

These results confirm that the constructs of work–life balance, job satisfaction, and employee performance were measured reliably and validly, allowing further evaluation of the structural model.

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model was evaluated to test the proposed hypotheses by examining path coefficients, t-statistics, and significance levels. The results of the hypothesis testing are summarized below.

Direct Effects

The analysis indicates that work–life balance has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.52$; $t = 7.14$; $p < 0.001$). This result supports **H1**, suggesting that employees who experience a better balance between work and personal life tend to report higher job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction was also found to have a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.41$; $t = 5.62$; $p < 0.001$), supporting **H2**. This finding indicates that job satisfaction plays a critical role in enhancing employee performance in higher education institutions.

Furthermore, work–life balance showed a positive and significant direct effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.29$; $t = 3.98$; $p < 0.001$), providing empirical support for **H3**. This result suggests that work–life balance initiatives contribute directly to improved employee performance.

Mediation Effect of Job Satisfaction

To test the mediating role of job satisfaction, indirect effect analysis was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure. The results reveal that the indirect effect of work–life balance on employee performance through job satisfaction was significant ($\beta = 0.21$; $t = 4.87$; $p < 0.001$). Since both the direct and indirect effects were significant, job satisfaction is identified as a partial mediator in the relationship between work–life balance and employee performance. Thus, H4 is supported, indicating that job satisfaction strengthens the influence of work–life balance on employee performance.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination (R^2) values indicate the explanatory power of the structural model. Work–life balance explains 27% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.27$), while work–life balance and job satisfaction jointly explain 46% of the variance in employee performance ($R^2 = 0.46$). These values suggest that the model has moderate explanatory power, which is acceptable for behavioral and human resource management research (Hair et al., 2019).

Refined Interpretation of the Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination (R^2) provides an indication of how well the independent variables explain the variance of the endogenous constructs in the structural model. In this study, work–life balance accounts for 27% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.27$). This finding suggests that work–life balance constitutes a substantial organizational factor influencing employees' job satisfaction. Practically, this implies that improvements in work–life balance policies, such as flexible working arrangements, workload management, and supportive organizational culture, can meaningfully enhance job satisfaction, although other factors outside the model also contribute to employees' satisfaction levels.

Furthermore, the combined effect of work–life balance and job satisfaction explains 46% of the variance in employee performance ($R^2 = 0.46$). This indicates that nearly half of employee performance outcomes in higher education institutions can be attributed to employees' perceptions of work–life balance and their resulting level of job satisfaction. From a practical perspective, this level of explanatory power demonstrates that organizational interventions aimed at improving work–life balance and job satisfaction are likely to produce tangible improvements in employee performance. These interventions may include the redesign of work processes, implementation of employee well-being programs, and enhancement of supervisory support systems.

From a theoretical standpoint, the R^2 values confirm that the proposed model captures a meaningful proportion of variance in key human resource outcomes, supporting the relevance of work–life balance and job satisfaction as central constructs in behavioral and human resource management research. At the same time, the unexplained variance highlights opportunities for future research to incorporate additional determinants—such as leadership

style, organizational culture, workload, and individual psychological resources—to develop a more comprehensive explanatory model of employee performance.

Overall, the R^2 results demonstrate that the structural model offers both practical utility and theoretical value. Practically, it provides a clear basis for managerial decision-making in prioritizing work–life balance and job satisfaction initiatives. Theoretically, it contributes to the refinement of human resource management models by empirically illustrating the relative explanatory strength of these constructs while encouraging further model development in future studies.

Table 1. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient (β)	t-value	Result
H1	Work–Life Balance → Job Satisfaction	0.52	7.14	Supported
H2	Job Satisfaction → Employee Performance	0.41	5.62	Supported
H3	Work–Life Balance → Employee Performance	0.29	3.98	Supported
H4	Work–Life Balance → Job Satisfaction → Employee Performance	0.21	4.87	Supported

Discussion

This study examines the relationships among work–life balance, job satisfaction, and employee performance in higher education institutions using simulated data for learning and analytical purposes. Despite the use of simulated data, the results provide meaningful insights into how work–life balance practices may influence employee attitudes and performance within organizational settings, particularly in higher education institutions.

The findings indicate that work–life balance has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. This result is consistent with role theory, which suggests that individuals experience greater satisfaction when role demands from work and personal life are aligned and manageable. In higher education institutions, employees often face overlapping responsibilities related to teaching, research, administration, and service activities. When institutions provide supportive policies that allow employees to manage these responsibilities effectively, employees are more likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction. This finding aligns with previous studies that emphasize the importance of work–life balance in enhancing employee well-being and satisfaction (Guest, 2002; Haar et al., 2014).

The results also show that job satisfaction has a significant positive effect on employee performance. This finding supports the attitude–behavior perspective, which posits that positive work attitudes lead to improved work behaviors and performance outcomes. In the context of higher education institutions, satisfied employees are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of commitment, efficiency, and responsibility in performing their roles. This outcome is consistent with prior empirical evidence suggesting that job satisfaction is a key predictor of employee performance across various organizational contexts (Judge et al., 2001; Robbins & Judge, 2017).

Furthermore, the analysis indicates that work–life balance has a direct positive effect on employee performance. This suggests that work–life balance practices not only enhance performance indirectly through job satisfaction but also contribute directly to employees' ability to perform their tasks effectively. Employees who experience balanced work and personal lives tend to have better physical and psychological conditions, enabling them to

maintain focus and productivity. This finding is in line with earlier research highlighting the role of work–life balance in reducing stress and improving performance outcomes (Delecta, 2011; Rashmi & Kataria, 2017).

The mediation analysis demonstrates that job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between work–life balance and employee performance. This finding implies that work–life balance initiatives may influence performance through multiple pathways. While balanced work arrangements directly support employees' capacity to perform, their effectiveness is strengthened when employees perceive these arrangements as contributing to overall job satisfaction. This result reinforces the view that job satisfaction functions as an important psychological mechanism linking human resource management practices and performance outcomes.

Although the data used in this study are simulated, the discussion provides a useful illustration of how work–life balance, job satisfaction, and employee performance are theoretically and empirically interconnected. The findings highlight the relevance of integrating work–life balance policies into human resource management strategies in higher education institutions. For learning and analytical purposes, this study demonstrates how structural equation modeling can be used to examine complex relationships among human resource variables and to interpret both direct and indirect effects within a conceptual framework.

Overall, the discussion emphasizes that work–life balance should be viewed as a strategic human resource management practice that supports employee satisfaction and performance. Even within a simulated data context, the analytical results reflect well-established theoretical perspectives and empirical patterns found in prior studies, thereby providing a valuable reference for understanding and applying SEM-based analysis in human resource management research.

Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the data used in this study were generated through simulation for learning and analytical purposes. Although the simulated data were constructed based on theoretical assumptions and empirical patterns commonly found in human resource management research, they do not represent actual responses from employees in higher education institutions. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted as illustrative rather than conclusive evidence of real organizational conditions.

Second, the research model focuses on a limited number of variables, namely work–life balance, job satisfaction, and employee performance. While these variables are important in explaining employee attitudes and behavior, other relevant factors such as organizational culture, leadership style, workload, and individual characteristics were not included in the model. The exclusion of these variables may limit the explanatory power of the model and suggests that employee performance is influenced by a broader set of organizational and personal factors.

Third, employee performance in this study was measured using self-reported indicators. Although self-assessment is commonly used in human resource management research, particularly when objective performance data are not available, this approach may be subject to response bias. Employees may overestimate or underestimate their performance due to social desirability or personal perceptions, which could affect the accuracy of the measurement.

Fourth, the cross-sectional design of the study limits the ability to capture changes in employee perceptions and behavior over time. Work–life balance and job satisfaction are dynamic constructs that may evolve in response to organizational policies and individual life

circumstances. As a result, the causal relationships identified in this study should be interpreted with caution, particularly in the absence of longitudinal data.

Finally, although the conceptual framework and analytical approach provide useful insights for learning purposes, the findings may not be generalizable across different institutional contexts. Higher education institutions vary widely in terms of size, governance, and human resource practices. Therefore, the applicability of the results may differ depending on organizational and cultural contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationships among work–life balance, job satisfaction, and employee performance in higher education institutions using simulated data for learning and analytical purposes. The findings illustrate that work–life balance plays an important role in shaping job satisfaction and employee performance. The analysis indicates that work–life balance has a positive effect on job satisfaction and directly influences employee performance. In addition, job satisfaction was shown to have a positive effect on employee performance and to partially mediate the relationship between work–life balance and employee performance.

These results reinforce the theoretical perspective that work–life balance practices contribute to positive employee attitudes and behaviors. Even within a simulated data context, the findings reflect patterns that are consistent with established theories in human resource management and organizational behavior. The study demonstrates how work–life balance initiatives may enhance employee performance both directly and indirectly through job satisfaction, particularly in organizational settings characterized by high job demands such as higher education institutions.

From a learning perspective, this study provides a practical illustration of how structural equation modeling can be applied to examine complex relationships among human resource management variables. The conceptual framework and analytical approach offer a useful reference for understanding the role of mediating variables and interpreting direct and indirect effects in SEM-based research.

Future Research

Future research is encouraged to extend this study by using empirical data collected from employees in higher education institutions to validate the relationships examined in this research. The use of primary data would allow researchers to test the robustness of the proposed model and enhance the generalizability of the findings. Longitudinal research designs are also recommended to capture changes in work–life balance, job satisfaction, and employee performance over time and to provide stronger evidence of causal relationships.

In addition, future studies may consider incorporating additional variables that influence employee performance, such as leadership style, organizational culture, workload, and psychological well-being. Including these variables could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how human resource management practices interact to shape employee outcomes. Comparative studies across different types of higher education institutions or across countries may also offer valuable insights into contextual factors that affect work–life balance and employee performance.

Finally, future research may explore alternative analytical approaches or mixed-method designs to complement quantitative findings with qualitative insights. Such approaches could deepen understanding of employees' experiences and perceptions regarding work–life balance and provide richer explanations of how human resource management practices influence job satisfaction and performance in higher education institutions.

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