

Impact of Work-Life Balance on Employee Performance in Healthcare Settings: A Mediation and Moderation Analysis

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Abstract-

Purpose:

This study aims to explore the impact of work-life balance (WLB) on employee performance in healthcare settings, while examining the mediating role of job burnout and the moderating effect of organizational support.

Design:

A cross-sectional survey was conducted with 506 healthcare professionals across Pakistan. Data were collected from multiple cities, including Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Peshawar, Swabi, and Mardan, ensuring a diverse and representative sample of the healthcare sector. A 5-point Likert scale was employed to assess work-life balance, job burnout, organizational support, and employee performance. The data were analyzed using SPSS, with correlation and regression analyses conducted to explore the relationships between the variables.

Results:

The results reveal a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and employee performance. Job burnout negatively affects performance, while organizational support moderates the relationship between WLB and burnout. Additionally, job burnout partially mediates the link between WLB and employee performance.

Conclusion:

The study concludes that work-life balance is critical for improving employee performance, especially when supported by organizational mechanisms such as flexible work hours and mental health resources. Reducing job burnout through organizational support can significantly enhance employee productivity and overall well-being in healthcare environments.

Key words: Work life balance, organizational support, job burnout, employee performance

I. INTRODUCTION

WLB, is a pivotal factor impacting an individual's psychological health, well-being, and satisfaction in a job. It is described as the balance between the work life commitments and personal life activities, like family, social, and self-care activities. Maintaining a work-life equilibrium is vital for averting burnout, as it directly

supports employee well-being (Agarwal *et al.*, 2020). In contemporary professional fields, particularly healthcare, the intricate nature of interplay between personal and professional responsibilities has become more challenging due to technological advancements, busy schedules, and extended hours (Azzam *et al.*, 2023). An imbalance of work and personal life can lead to poor job satisfaction, increased burnout, and reduced overall performance.

The weak work-life balance among healthcare professionals is due to long working hours, irregular schedules, and high emotional demands (Khawand & Zargar, 2022). The lack of support within these employees' work environments can be detrimental to their mental health, which in turn fuels burnout, chronic stress, and reduced productivity (Hill *et al.*, 2019). One of the major problems within healthcare professions is job-related burnout which comes with physical and emotional fatigue, withdrawal from work (depersonalization), and decreased self-worth. This condition comes as a result of chronic work stress and long hours and is linked with low job satisfaction, high turnover, and poor productivity (Chen & Ye, 2020). The negative impacts of work-life conflict and burnout have organizational support as a recent focus of mitigation (Kim & Cho, 2020). Organizational support refers to the value and assistance provided by an organization to foster both the professional and personal development of its employees. Matsuo *et al.*, (2021) highlighted the connection between organizational support, alleviation of workplace stress, and job satisfaction, emphasizing their role in enhancing overall employee well-being and performance.

Flexible work hours, employee assistance programs, mental health resources, and support mechanisms enable employees to balance professional and personal lives, fulfilling responsibilities effectively within an encouraging environment. In healthcare, organizational support has been shown to improve employee satisfaction and performance (Tawfik *et al.*, 2021). While work-life balance is pivotal in enhancing employee well-being and performance, it is equally important to remember that burnout may serve as a link in the work-life balance and employee performance relationship (Agarwal *et al.*, 2020). The presence of burnout affects employees' ability to perform effectively, which subsequently lowers productivity and increases absenteeism (Zhou *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, to formulate effective strategies to

mitigate the adverse impact of work-life conflict on performance, it is important to consider how burnout mediates this relationship. It is clear that more attention needs to be paid to the role of organizational support in addressing work-life conflicts and reducing burnout. Earlier works dealt with the impact of work-life balance on the satisfaction and performance, but investigation specifically dedicated to the mediating and moderating factors explaining this relationship, particularly in the healthcare domain, is scarce (Giauque *et al.*, 2022). This gap demonstrates the need to focus on the dynamic interplay of WLB with JB and OS, and their collective impact on EP within the healthcare industry.

As in SET or Social Exchange Theory, Employees are said to support their organization's work by reciprocating the aid offered. They do this by increasing their devotion and performance at work (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986). Having a caring organization results in many positive outcomes which include enhanced organizational commitment and satisfaction (Yavuz *et al.*, 2023).

This study seeks to examine the effect of OS on the relationship between WLB and EP, while also assessing the mediating role of JB in this context. It will evaluate the impact of WLB on EP within healthcare settings, specifically addressing the mediating influence of JB and the moderating effect of OS. Additionally, the research will explore how WLB affects JB and the role of OS in mitigating this relationship. The study will also analyze the impact of job burnout on employee performance and determine how job burnout mediates the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance, alongside evaluating the direct effects of work-life balance on performance.

The research is important because it examines the concerns of healthcare practitioners like emotionally charged work and long hours which lead to burnout and low productivity. By targeting organizational support, the study aims to show how healthcare organizations can develop mechanisms for the healthcare employees to balance work and minimize burnout, thus enhancing employee performance and wellbeing. The results will help understand how work-life balance, burnout, organizational support, and performance interact with one another in the context of healthcare, shaping theory for further investigation and practical healthcare management and human resource management strategies.

To conclude, maintaining employee health, satisfaction, and productivity in the healthcare sector necessitates a proper WLB. This research will help healthcare institutions understand how more effective employee support can enhance organizational productivity and the employees' overall health. The results of this research will enhance the strategies proposed regarding the integration of work and personal life, not only in healthcare, but also in other high-demanding fields.

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

This research employs a cross-sectional survey methodology, collecting data at one specific time to explore the impact of work-life balance (WLB) on employee performance in healthcare settings. It further analyses the mediating role of job burnout and the moderating influence of organizational support within the healthcare sector in Pakistan.

The sample consists of 506 employees at various organizational levels, healthcare professionals ranging from entry-level staff to senior staff, across a diverse array of healthcare institutions.

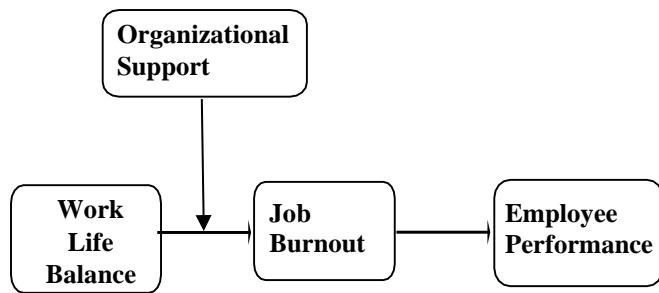
To ensure the generalizability and contextual relevance of the findings, data was gathered from multiple cities in Pakistan, including Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Peshawar, Swabi, and Mardan. This multi-city approach allows for a more holistic understanding of the healthcare industry's workforce dynamics and offers a more representative snapshot of work-life balance and employee performance across different regional contexts.

The data collection was done during a specific period throughout the study, which might have provided a glimpse into the participants' situations at that exact time. The interference with the respondents' activities was minimized as both online surveys and in-person surveys at the hospitals were utilized, allowing participants to complete the survey at their own convenience. Because of this measure, response bias was reduced and, therefore, the quality of the responses was improved. Furthermore, the online survey was economical, as surveys were performed with larger samples at the comfort of the participants. Healthcare practitioners who were easily accessible and willing to participate were selected through convenience sampling because of time restrictions. From 600 respondents who were sent the invitations, 506 completed the survey, which is an adequate number for data analysis.

This study used a five-point Likert scale (1 being 'strongly disagree' and 5 being 'strongly agree') to measure the research variables. Established scales were employed to assess the key variables. Work-life balance was measured using a four-item scale, which included items such as, 'There is enough time for recreation activities,' and 'I do not need to work overtime as I use to finish work within working hours' (Mas-Machuca *et al.*, 2016). Organizational support was assessed using a six-item scale that focused on interpersonal conflict and support within the organization, including the item, "What percentage of the time does your work unit have disagreements about opinions regarding the work being done?" (Singh & Singh, 2010). Job burnout was evaluated using an eight-item scale that measured the prevalence and severity of burnout, with one of the items being, "How frequently does your work unit have disagreements regarding who should do what?" (Berat *et al.*, 2016). Employee performance was evaluated through a six-item scale, with one of the items being, "Worked on a personal matter instead of work for your employer," which measured employee commitment and job efficiency (Azar & Shafiqhi, 2013).

As previously outlined, the research design and methodology were meticulously structured, utilizing standard measurement tools and a sample representative of the healthcare sector across various cities in Pakistan. All participants provided informed consent, and the study's goal was to explore the intricate connections among WLB, OS, JB, and employee performance, ensuring transparency and ethical compliance. Additionally, ethical approval was granted by both public and private hospitals where data collection was conducted, ensuring the integrity of the research process.

Theoretical Framework



IV (Independent Variable): Work-Life Balance
 MOD (Moderator): Organizational Support
 MED (Mediator): Job Burnout
 DV (Dependent Variable): Employee Performance

III. RESULTS

A standardized questionnaire was administered to 506 healthcare professionals across Pakistan, Data analysis was performed utilizing SPSS version 22. Statistical tests, such as reliability, correlation, and regression analyses, were conducted to investigate the relationships among the variables. Data were collected from multiple cities, including Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Peshawar, Swabi, and Mardan. The sample consisted of 64% male and 36% female respondents. Additionally, 20% of participants had over 10 years of experience and held senior-level positions, 32% had 5 years of experience, and 48% had 1-2 years of experience, representing entry-level staff. Among the respondents, 14% were administrative staff, 22% were doctors, 35% were nurses, and 29% were allied health professionals.

Reliability Statistics

The Cronbach's Alpha values indicate the internal consistency of the variables measured in this study. All variables exhibit acceptable reliability:

Table 1:

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Work Life Balance	.822	4
Job Burnout	.781	8
Organizational support	.798	6
Employee performances	.802	6
Total	.796	24

WLB has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.822 with 4 items, indicating good internal consistency. Job Burnout has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.781 with 8 items, which is also acceptable. Organizational Support shows a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.798 with 6 items, demonstrating reliability. Employee Performance has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.802 with 6 items, indicating solid consistency. The total reliability across all items is 0.796, which suggests good overall consistency.

Correlation Analysis

Table 2:

The correlation analysis reveals the relationships between EP, JB, OS, and WLB:

	1	2	3	4
Employee Performance	1.000			
Job burnout	-0.512	1.000		
Organizational Support	0.221	0.326	1.000	
WLB	0.526	-0.423	0.242	1.000

Job Burnout and Employee Performance: The moderate negative correlation (-0.512) is consistent with expectations that higher job burnout leads to lower employee performance.

WLB and JB: The moderate negative correlation (-0.423) indicates that poor WLB is related to higher burnout, aligning with existing literature on the negative impact of WLB.

WLB and EP: The positive correlation (0.526) supports the view that a better work-life balance leads to improved performance.

Organizational Support: The moderate correlation with job burnout (0.326) and weak correlation with work-life balance (0.242) suggests organizational support plays a role, but the influence on WLB is weak.

Regression Analysis:

This study explores the influence of WLB on JB and EP, emphasizing the moderating effect of OS. The following analysis presents the examination of the moderation effect of OS on the relationship between WLB and JB.

Predictors	Employee Performance			
	β	R ²	ΔR	P-value
WLB → JB	-.520	.306	.303	0.001
JB → EP	.379	.130	.126	0.003
WLB → OS → JB	.389	.199	.196	0.002

WLB → JB ($\beta = -0.520$) The regression coefficient of -0.520 reveals a negative link between WLB and JB. This indicates that when WLB improves, job burnout reduces. This study accords with theoretical assumptions, where a better work-life balance often lessens the stress and tiredness associated with work, hence minimizing job burnout. Significance: The p-value of 0.001 confirms that this relationship is statistically significant, implying that the association is not due to random chance and has a meaningful impact on the outcome. Maintaining a balance between work and personal life is essential for lowering employee burnout, as evidenced by the fact that a greater WLB results in lower JB.

JB → EP ($\beta = -0.379$) Employee performance is negatively correlated with job burnout ($\beta = -0.379$), indicating that higher levels of burnout result in worse performance from employees. This finding accords with theoretical predictions, since burnt-out workers are more prone to exhibit lower levels of engagement, disengagement, and productivity. Reiterating that burnout has a detrimental effect on performance, the p-value of 0.003 shows that the relationship is statistically significant. Employee performance and productivity are both negatively impacted by fatigue on the job, and initiatives to alleviate burnout have the potential to reverse this trend.

WLB → OS → JB ($\beta = 0.389$) Organizational support acts as a moderator between WLB and JB, as shown by the moderated connection ($\beta = 0.389$). To be more specific, increased organizational support strengthens the association between WLB and JB. To rephrase, having the backing of one's employer mitigates the impact of work-life imbalance on burnout. The importance: OS plays a crucial role in mitigating job burnout among employees who struggle with work-life balance, as confirmed by the statistically significant moderating effect ($p = 0.002$). To mitigate the detrimental effects of work-life imbalance on burnout, organizational support is essential. Organizations can help reduce burnout among employees dealing with work-life imbalance by providing tools for mental health, flexible scheduling, and social support.

Model Fit and Statistical Considerations

R^2 and R values: $R^2 = 0.306$ for the WLB → JB relationship, indicating that work-life balance explains 30.6% of the variance in job burnout. $R^2 = 0.130$ for the JB → EP relationship, meaning that job burnout explains 13% of the variance in employee performance. These values suggest that while WLB and JB contribute significantly to employee performance, there are other factors not included in the model that also influence performance.

Moderation:

$R^2 = 0.199$ for the WLB → OS → JB relationship suggests that organizational support accounts for some of the variability in how WLB affects JB, but there may be other moderators or variables affecting this relationship. WLB negatively affects JB: As work-life balance improves, burnout decreases.

JB negatively affects employee performance: Higher levels of burnout reduce employee performance. Organizational support

moderates the relationship between WLB and JB: Greater OS helps to mitigate the negative effects of poor WLB on burnout. These findings emphasize the importance of promoting WLB and providing OS to reduce job burnout and improve employee performance.

Table 3: Mediation Regression Analysis

The purpose of introducing a mediating explanatory variable into a mediation analysis is to determine the nature of the causal relationship between two variables, one of which may be external and one internal. There are three stages to the analysis. To begin, we need to get a p-value less than 0.05 to indicate that the exogenous variable has a substantial direct effect on the endogenous variable. Step two entails assessing the significance of additional indirect pathways and adding the mediating variable to the PLS model. Finally, the importance of the indirect path is evaluated via bootstrapping. The value of Variance Accounted for (VAF) determines the degree of mediation. Mediation is considered complete when the VAF is larger than 0.80, partial when it is between 0.20 and 0.20, and nonexistent when it is between 0 and 0.20.

Exogenous variable	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect	VAF	Mediation
WLB>JB->EP	0.438	0.203	0.328	0.618	Partial mediation

The partial mediation (VAF = 0.618) suggests that job burnout explains a significant portion of the relationship between WLB and EP. This result aligns with theoretical expectations.

Table 4: Hypothesis Summary

Hypothesis	Statement	Accepted/Rejected
H1	Higher levels of job burnout will result from a lack of work-life balance.	Accepted
H2	The association between job burnout and work-life balance will be moderated by organizational support.	Accepted
H3	Higher levels of job burnout will lead to a lower level of Employee performance.	Accepted
H4	The relationship between work-life balance and employee performance is mediated by job burnout.	Accepted

IV. DISCUSSION

This research addresses the influence of organizational support as a moderating variable impacting WLB and EP in the healthcare industry in different cities of Pakistan. With a sample of 506 respondents from public and private sector hospitals, this study employs a cross-sectional research design, contributing to understanding the intricate puzzle of WLB, JB, OS, and EP within the context of healthcare. The analysis indicates that WLB is a critical determinant of EP in the healthcare sector. Task conflict, highlighted by Jehn (1995), illustrates how the interplay between personal and professional responsibilities hinders job performance. Employees experiencing cross-domain conflict tend to be less productive and disengaged. The study suggests organizational support to be an important moderating variable and notes that employees who perceive high OS tend to perform better despite work-life challenges.

The earlier examined job burnout by suggests that suffering from burnout within the healthcare industry has quite possibly reached catastrophic proportions. Frequency and severity of burnout is closely tied to level of task conflict and organizational support (Berat *et al.*, 2016). Those employees suffering from higher levels of burnout tend to underperform to a greater extent than their peers. This reinforces the case for organizational strategies that mitigate burnout, promote work-life balance, and increase organizational support. These findings align with other studies concerning the impact of work-related stress including but not limited to exhaustion, insomnia, depression, irritability, and other factors that ultimately lead to lowered performance, reduced engagement, and burnout (Pitre *et al.*, 2017). Work-life balance facilitates enhanced employee engagement, lower burnout, and improved performance (Brown *et al.*, 2021).

Organizational support greatly shifts the WLB and job burnout relationship. Cheesborough *et al.*, (2017) and Cardenas *et al.*, (2024) noted how organizational support positively influences loyalty fostered by improved performance. Organizational loyalty and commitment actively enhance performance. Social Exchange Theory (SET) identifies the relationship accurately as mutual support results in positive exchange (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986; Gaudiose & George, 2019).

The correlation of job burnout and employee performance was confirmed in the study. Work burnout results in estrangement from self, emotional distress, diminished self-worth, and productivity, work satisfaction, and overall contentment reduces (Maslach, 2019; Minamizono *et al.*, 2019). An imbalance between work and personal life also results in lowered productivity (Nair *et al.*, 2017).

In summary, a reinforcement from the organization aids in striking the balance between personal life and work aids in achieving employee effectiveness and mitigating the risk of burnout. Supporting evidence points out to the fact that organizational support in the form of providing employees with flexible hours, open channels of communication, and wellness programs creates a culture that integrates productivity while maintaining balance as highlighted in the work of (Rothacker *et al.*, 2022; Rubin *et al.*, 2021).

Recommendations:

Organizational Support Programs should be Encouraged:

To strengthen a positive work environment, organizations need to put in place clear communication, flexible work schedules, and wellness programs.

Encourage use of positive and valuing communications by management and other employees at their workplace to ensure employees feel cared for and valued.

Increase Work-Life Balance Initiatives:

Provide more paid time off and paid remote work options to ensure employees can balance all their personal and family responsibilities while still working.

Develop training for managing and coping with work stress and time challenges.

Provide proactive burnout strategies:

Provide regular assessments of employee burnout levels alongside other mental health coping programs.

Encourage regular breaks and the systematic pace of work to reduce employee overload and burnout.

Provide Emotional, Informational, and Instrumental Backing:

Offer job-related emotional and practical help from other employees and supervisors to minimize burnout and boost resilience.

Form support groups where employees can explain and discuss approaches for coping to share experiences.

Practical Implications:

Enhancing Employee Well-being and Performance:

Achieved balanced work-life integration through organizational support promote overall employee wellness leading to improved performance. This is beneficial for an employee as well as the organization in terms of productivity and satisfaction.

Cost-Effective Interventions:

Offering flexible work hours or conducting online wellness workshops can yield favorable results at little cost in alleviating burnout and improving performance.

Retention and Loyalty:

As the Social Exchange Theory demonstrates, employees are likely to remain loyal to organizations that adequately support their work-life balance and overall well-being.

Future Directions:

Examine Other Moderating Variables:

The relationship between WLB and burnout could further be moderated by coping strategies, satisfaction with one's job, and workload.

Longitudinal Studies:

Work-life balance in relation to job burnout, alongside support from the organization over time, could best be understood through longitudinal studies exploring these concepts.

Explore Other Forms of Organizational Support:

Research how emotional, instrumental, and informational support from colleagues and supervisors affect organizational burnout alongside overall employee performance.

Conclusions:

In conclusion, OS pertaining to WLB and activities outside of work is crucial for improving performance and preventing burnout. The results highlight the role of organizational support programs like flexibility in working hours, employer-sponsored wellness programs, effective communication, and advocacy for a healthy work-life balance. Organizations that focus on these aspects are most likely to enjoy higher employee satisfaction, reduced burnout, and enhanced performance.

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