

Research Paper

## Impact of Work Life Balance on Stress Level and Performance

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### ABSTRACT

Work-life balance, or WLB, remains one of the most important modern concerns for employees as it relates to their overall satisfaction, health, and performance at work. This research aims to study the interplay between WLB, stress, and productivity through surveys and interviews with professionals from different fields. Our analysis emphasizes that neglecting personal life in favor of work is one of the strongest stressors affecting an individual's health and performance. Organizations that adopt policies like flexible hours and soft benefits have higher employee productivity because these policies lead to increased employee satisfaction. Our findings illustrate the importance of organizational policies for creating a balanced work environment. In light of heightened global competition, companies need to formulate robust policies aimed at creating work-life balance within the organization to improve the health and productivity of their employees. Focusing on employee well-being helps both—organizations and employees—achieve stronger performance in the future.

**Keywords:** *Work-Life Balance, Stress, Job Performance, Employee Well-Being, Workplace Policies*

**D**ue to the ever-increasing pace of life business, balancing work and personal time in such a setting has become more difficult than ever. Work-life balance (WLB) refers to the ability to handle work responsibilities while still taking care of personal health, social life, and leisure activities. The growth of remote jobs, flexible hours, and the internet has blurred the line between professional and personal life, negatively impacting the mental of employees and their performance at work. An imbalance here will lead to higher stress levels and less efficient work, while a balance can improve mental well-being, satisfaction with a job, and productivity.

### *The Impact of work- Life Balance on Psychology*

Work-life balance refers to the allocation of one's time and effort to the fulfillment of work, as well as social and personal responsibilities. The ability of people to maintain the work-life balance varies affects their psychological and occupational health. One of the most popular tools for measuring the self-perception of balancing professional and personal life is The Work-Life Balance Scale (WLBS). These days particularly difficult workplace

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condition such as long working hours, high job expectation, or the company culture can help or interfere with the work- life balance is associated with heightened stress levels, emotional exhaustion, and reduced job satisfaction. In contrast, work-life balance positively correlates with employee engagement, motivation, and overall mental health for the better.

### ***Work Life Balance and Its Effects on Psychology***

The capacity to successfully handle the work- related responsibilities while simultaneously meeting social and personal commitments is known as work- life balance. The degree to which people attain this equilibrium might differ greatly, impacting their mental and professional health. A popular tool for evaluating how well people believe they can manage their personal and professional lives is the Work- Life Balance Scale (WLBS). Work- life balance can be helped or hampered in today's demanding workplace by elements including lengthy workdays, high job demands, and company culture. According to studies, a lack of balance between work and personal life can result in higher stress levels, emotional exhaustion, and a decrease in job satisfaction in general. On the other hand, workers who maintain a healthy work- life balance are more likely to be motivated, engaged, and have better mental health overall.

### ***The Impact of Stress on Performance in the Workplace***

Stress is a salient component of the individual's life that impacts their performance both personally and professionally. The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) measures how overburdened, unable, or overwhelmed people feel by their daily responsibilities. Heavy workloads, strict deadlines, and minimal autonomy are examples of job- related stressor which negatively affect decision- making, emotional, and cognitive processes due to prolonged exposure. After sometime these energetic factors are bound to constrain work performance. The higher the stress level, the worse one's ability to concentrate, be productive, and solve problems. On the other hand, those who cope with work- related stress effectively are generally stronger and more effective at their jobs.

### ***The Relationship Between Work -Life Balance, Stress and Performance at Work***

Changes in performance on the job is the most comprehensive of the descriptors of performance as it includes meeting the job targets, productivity and the output. Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) is widely used as a self- report questionnaire which measures multiple aspects of work performance, such as task performance, contextual performance, and even performance of counterproductive work behaviors. The demands of the job that encroach into personal time can lead to cognitive overload which leads to disengagement and decreased productivity. There is also evidence that employees with positive work- life balance are more productive, committed and satisfied with their jobs. Increased effort made towards attaining a balanced work life may contribute to increased stress levels, lowered motivation, and difficulty concentrating therefore impairing performance.

Considering the increased attention given to productivity and well- being, it is increasingly important to understand the interrelation between work- life balance, stress level, and work performance. This research aims to study the relationship between work- life balance as measured by the Work Life Balance Scale (WKBS), and performance (IWPQ) and stress level (PSS). By understanding these relationships, researchers can gain a better understanding of the modern work environments impact on employees' effectiveness and well- being. This study's findings may be applied in formulating policies and programs that seek to improve work- life balance, reduce stress, and increase productivity.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

According to **Aryan and Kathuria (2017)** Empirical data illustrate the engagement of employees and the well-being of employees are vital for heightening an individual's performance and productivity. The data was collected in the private sector of Jammu & Kashmir, and the study aimed at collecting data through 550 distributed questionnaires out of which 513 questionnaires were valid for using. Through regression analysis and SEM, the study obtained results where psychosocial well-being ( $r^2 = 0.46$ ) was significantly predicted by mastery of the environment, autonomy, and self-acceptance. Furthermore, psychosocial well-being was shown to influence the employee's perception of performance as contributing to productivity ( $r^2 = 0.42$ ). This research adds to practical and theoretical framework regarding psychosocial factors concerning the workplace in relation to performance.

According to **Jalagat (2017)** work-related stress is becoming a major concern in the modern world, and this particular study aims to uncover its impact at the Petroleum Development Oman (PDO). This research was conducted with 65 selected respondents from the Al-Bahja Center using a survey as a tool for data collection. The results showed that the relationship of job stress to employee performance was strongly associated ( $r=0.955$ ). Also, skills underutilization and work overload were found to have a significant impact ( $p=0.000$  and  $p=0.033$ , respectively), while role ambiguity had no significant relationship ( $p=0.324$ ). Based on the results, PDO seems to be neglecting the issues of skill enhancement and employee potential recognition which are crucial for productivity. Conducting a skills audit as well as reviewing the criteria for promotion are some of the suggested policy changes. It is recommended to perform elaborate and comprehensive follow up studies with broader scope and sample size in order to better understand the phenomenon of work stress and its impact.

According to **Johari (2019)**, "Occupational stress is one of the key areas of concern for organizations because of its negative effects on health, creativity, productivity, and finances." While mental health issues have received adequate attention, other areas of healthcare are still under-explored. Moreover, there seems to be a lack of understanding how various components work together in this domain, especially in light of recent attempts to better integrate occupational stress and psychosocial wellness. This study intends to analyze the relationship between psychosocial distress due to work and well-being as well as psychological capital, proposing the idea that psychological capital could moderate the relationship between these variables. Given that little research has been carried out in this context within the healthcare sector, practical considerations could be useful for employees and organizations in future work.

**Johari (2020)** Work-related stress has received greater attention in Western literature, but coping strategies are less analyzed in Asian contexts. This review analyzes the stressors encountered in different occupations and how these stressors are managed. This review involves keywords related to stress and coping from online databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, and Medline, which yielded 17 relevant articles. Major stressors include: excessive workload, role ambiguity, job specific tasks, job control, unfavorable physical conditions, conflict, inter and intra personal relations, and managerial issues. Workers tend to rely upon several coping resources including problem and emotion focused coping to manage their stress. Despite the efforts documented in research, there still remains a gap that needs to be addressed, especially in understanding the intricate relationships between stress, coping, and work health outcomes.

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According to **Pandey (2020)**, "Stress is universal, particularly for people working in high demanding professions like banking." Banker's experience immense stress for reasons including high positional responsibility, job instability, overcrowded schedules, and inadequate staff interactions, leading to reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, and anxiety, and other health complications such as headache. One of the studies done concerning the stress of 200 bankers in the capital city of Kathmandu attempted to figure out these stressors and how they affect job performance. The outcome showed that all the stress factors identified severely undermined performance, demonstrating the paramount importance of appropriate stress management mechanisms in the banking industry.

**Tamunomiebi and Oyibo (2020)** consider the significance of work life balance on a worker's well-being, in-depth research on the factors that affect this balance was conducted. Focusing on the impact of gender on these relationships, the study analyzed the interrelations between work – related stress, and point of control both internal and external. The findings are drawn from a sample of 320 employees from the banking sector in Lebanon, with 160 females and 160 males.

**Tamunomiebi and Oyibo (2020b)** In this Nigerian case, work-life balance needs more attention in conjunction with employee performance. It is indicated that employees perform better when they are able to harmoniously balance personal and professional obligations, thus, policies that are supportive in nature are vital. The review notes the presence of systemic obstacles like corruption and weak institutions which impede the adoption of work-life balance practices and add to work-life conflict. The authors suggest that greater understanding of workers' rights and well-being by employers, together with government support for flexible work patterns, would help promote employee welfare. They cite the lack of managerial training focus designed to improve fostered work environment as a policy gap that policies aligned with supportive work policies.

In workforce areas such as nursing, accompanying job-related stress, as described by **Mensah (2021)**, is prevalent and significantly more pronounced among women. Nurses seem to struggle the most with mental issues such as depression or burnout and the lack of social support worsens the problem. Analyzing the data set of over 30,000 employees throughout Europe, researchers found a tendency of job stress to impair mental health, while the effect seemed to be greater for women than men. Social support was reported to play a buffering role in the association between job stress and mental health for both men and women. This study shows how important the support from managers and colleagues is in reducing stress related to work, thereby improving mental health. It also explains why research focusing on workplace issues and challenges needs to pay attention to the welfare gaps that exist between men and women.

In the work of **Kulothungan and Roopavathi (2021b)**, the focus was using organizational performance to assess the productivity of the companies, specifically looking at how personal and family issues impact work. With respect to organizational performance, the condition of employment, retention rates, relationships within the organization, and any flexibility in labor are all critical factors for considering labor productivity. The findings suggest that there is an unrecognized suffering among employees which indicates that managers have to consider enhancing the conditions of work- life balance to increase productivity. The conclusion explains work life balance in its contemporary meaning.

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**Wilson et al. (2022)** states that organizational role stress is an important determinant of the employees' experience, especially in the private sector. A cross-sectional study conducted on 100 employees from several companies in Mumbai sought to explore the relationship between this stress, burnout, and well-being. The Organizational Role Stress Scale and Ryff's Psychological well-being Questionnaire were utilized. Results indicated that individuals with higher organizational role stress experienced increased burnout and diminished psychological well-being. On the other hand, lower organizational role stress correlated with reduced burnout and improved mental health.

**Susanto et al. (2022)** study addresses the effects of work- life balance on employee performance in small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) which has largely been ignored by other scholars. To address these relationships, the authors developed a model that includes supervisor supportive behaviors and family- work happiness. The collected data from small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) indicates that work life balance positively impact job happiness and performance. Importantly, work related and family work balance are partially mediated by job satisfaction. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that family-supportive supervisors enhance the work life balance benefits concerning performance and job satisfaction. These findings are significant for academic research as well as practical application in professional settings.

**Zerhouni (2022)** notes that the modern-day worker is often overwhelmed with managing work alongside family and personal responsibilities. This problem can result in increased stress levels, inadequate work-life balance, negative attitudes toward work, and overall reduced well-being. Further, it is critical to develop managerial approaches that help employees attain work balance to improve performance and productivity. One of the most powerful strategies for achieving this goal is the use of Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs). This study seeks to understand the impact of FWAs on the wellness, job satisfaction, and overall performance of employees at Pastel Agency Services in Morocco. The study is divided into three chapters: the first explains FWAs with the study's problem statement, purpose and objectives, research questions, hypotheses, and methodology; the second is a literature review, and the last chapter is devoted to presenting and discussing the results of the study.

**Paramita and Supartha (2022)** highlight the role of human resources in the success of an organization, as well as a Bank Perkreditan Rakyat (BPR) institution that specializes in community lending. An investigation was recently carried out at BPR Sandi Raya Utama examining the relation of work stress with compensation, work-life balance and employee performance with a sample of 51 respondents. The research utilized questionnaires based on a Likert scale and analysis using Smart PLS. Findings from the study suggested that both compensation and work-life balance have positive effects on employee performance and alleviation of work stress. Furthermore, work stress has an adverse effect on employee performance and partially acts as a mediator in the area of compensation, work-life balance, and performance.

**Borgia et al. (2022)** Both work-life balance and job performance are understudied in the context of automation, legacy systems, cybercrime, and technology knowledge risks, which lack comprehensive research coverage. We sought to fill this gap by studying the impact of technology risks on employees of cooperative credit banks during the pandemic. With the use of a quantitative survey, PLS-SEM analysis showed that knowledge-related technology risks influence the degree of work-life balance and job performance in credit banks.

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In developing nations, and Nigeria in particular, (**Omeke et al., 2023**) notes that a good number of employees are grappling with poor working conditions, work dissatisfaction, and job insecurity. These factors have contributed to the unfavorable image of the workplace, leading to counterproductive behaviors among public employees. Understanding the risks associated with jobs and the complex variety of satisfaction distorted by dissatisfaction, we researched the use of rational-emotive occupational health coaching in enhancing work-life quality and coping with occupational stress in Nigeria's education system administration.

According to **Dwitanti et al. (2023)** In this research, we analyze the influence of work-life balance on employee performance at PT. Bank Negara Indonesia (Persero), Tbk. Brawijaya Branch Office focusing on work stress and workload. Work-life balance is the equilibrium between work demands and a person's life, while work stress pertains to the pressure that comes from heavy job requirements, and workload is the amount of work an employee has to deal with. The study approach utilized was survey, collecting data from employees and analyzing it statistically to establish the relationships among the various factors. The findings show that work-life balance improves performance; on the other side, high levels of work stress and workload diminish it. Additionally, the study showed that work-life balance is a mediator, meaning that work-life balance can reduce negative effects of stress and workload on performance improvement. These conclusions illustrate how important it is to support work-life balance toward improving employee performance and leveraging productivity. The results can help the management in the formulation of policies, although it has also been noted that some other factors may affect performance which calls for additional research.

**Nika and Bashir (2023)** In this study, the authors analyzed the impact of burnout and optimism on the interplay between occupational stress and mental health of the workers from Cabo Verde and China, seeking to mitigate the blind spots introduced by prior works focused on WEIRD countries. For the purposes of the study, mental health was defined in terms of its positive and negative dimensions. The authors employed a range of statistical techniques, including SEM and regression analysis, to test the relational posits of the study. The analysis outcomes showed that greater occupational stress was associated with a decline in the psychosomatic health level of the individual, while the individual experienced a rise in psychopathological symptomatology. Moreover, burnout attributable to one's job was escargot stress on the health of the individual, and burnout set moderated the effect which optimism was perceived to have on stress and burnout. In contrast, if there were no stressors impacting one's health, then it would not be possible to talk about health in general. The outcomes of the research indicate the need to take into account various cultural settings when analyzing mental health.

As noted by the author **Bello et al. (2024)**, for other specialists such as HR managers who develop notifications, work- life integration has emerged as a primary concern. This research analyzes the connection between work- life harmony and overall organizational productivity, employee satisfaction, and well- being. With the persistent progress of technology and shifts in societal norms, many traditions are being redefined, resulting in a transformation in employees' perception of work and life. Work- life balance is important and with HR at the center of developing policies that enhance these balance, organizational performance and retention are positively impacted. Alongside the challenges the business face, such as conventional workplace conflict and the need to provide to different employee's needs, various strategies are explored such as wellness programs and even flexible working hours. Different approaches to work life integration are beneficial in many

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ways including higher employee participation, lower chances of burnout, and good organizational reputation. Furthermore, the research considers how human resource is evolving to respond to the challenges posed by the Covid 19 pandemic, as well as the context of emerging technological change. It also outlines the level to which HR practitioners need to shift to a pro-active approach by employing design processes at policy level that draw on data and diversity to foster better work- life fit while advancing organizational goals.

**Thamer (2024)** study aims to analyze the effect of work-life balance policies on productivity and employee wellbeing of Baghdad Soft Drinks Company. The findings revealed that the policies had a positive impact on productivity and employee satisfaction. Workers reported that the policies assist them in balancing professional and personal responsibilities which helps create a more adaptable work environment and lowers stress levels. However, there are some shortcomings within some of the policies. The study proposes further refinements such as greater flexibility in work hours, improving leave policies, better addressing employee needs, and establishing a culture of work-life balance. It appears that proposed changes can substantially enhance employees' performance, wellbeing, and loyalty to the organization.

### DISCUSSION

The literature review strived to demonstrate how complicated work- life balance is and its clear influence on performance, satisfaction at work, and success within the organization. The case studies have demonstrated that work- life balance is a core concern of the organizations management and not merely an employee personal issue. Incoming literature highlights a range of factors that balance work and life, such as stress at work, company procedures, technological developments, involvement of employees as well as supervisor to care for their employees.

Research suggests that work- life balance stress has been thoroughly studied and recorded and in fact some scholars have identified this is one of the most crucial areas of work-life balance. All job stress studies done by Pandey (2020), Zaheer (2016), and Johari (2019) focus on how stress at work resulting from heavy workload, job uncertainty, and lack of managerial support results into efficient performance, high rates of absenteeism, and low employee satisfaction and wellness.

Balanced approach to life is not only about alleviating stress, but involves creating a better work environment that enhances job satisfaction and employee's engagement. A study conducted by Susanto et al. (2022) contributes to this claim by outlining that work -life balance positively affects satisfaction, as well as employee's performance. Other positive study such as Tamunomiebi and Oyibo (2020) emphasized the role of psychological wellbeing on employee motivation sustaining over time, further strengthening this. Aryan and Kathuria (2017) build upon this showing employee with greater psychological wellbeing are more likely to be engaged and productive.

But workplace policies and HR approaches to fostering work- life balance have equally notable relevance. Bello et al. (2024) offer insights on how HR can work with flexible scheduling, wellness initiatives, and other employee- focused policies to balance work and personal life. Zerhouni (2022) studies how effective Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) are at relieving stress and improving employee performance. Results indicate that these HR

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practices greatly enhance employee retention and burnout, resulting in improved organizational culture.

Moreover, the impacts of technology on work- life balance have evolved in new areas. Digitalization enables remote work and flexible hours; however, it also depends the gaps between personal and professional life (Borgia et al, 2022). As the study explains, the blurring boundaries of personal and professional life come with unique challenges such as technological disruptions, cyber threats, outdated systems and the other systems which worsen work stress. There is a need for organizations to find a balance in the use of technology for operational efficiency and safeguarding the health of the employees from burnout.

Another discussion point involves the feminized effect of work- life balance challenges. Mensah (2021) reveal that women encounter greater challenges with the integration of work and personal life due to their perceived societal and familial roles. It becomes clear from the findings that organizations need to shift towards developing gender- responsive frameworks to foster inclusivity and equitable access to policies designed for work – life balance by catering to diverse employee needs.

### *Identifies Gaps in Literature and Trends for Future Research*

1. In- Depth Analysis of a particular Industry- Relatively few studies analyze the impact of work life balance (WLB) on different industries as a whole, focusing instead on more specific fields like banking, education, or SMEs. Further studies are necessary to look into WLB impacts on various sectors.
2. The impact of WLB strategies on Organizational Policies Over Time- Aside from a few, most studies focus on short- term impacts of WLB policies, neglecting to assess how these policies influence employee retention, job performance, and organizational success over a more extended period.
3. Consideration of Diversity in Work- Life Balance (WLB) Policies- Neglected is the impact WLB policies have on different socio- economic and job role employees of diverse age groups and genders. Further research should investigate the policies that respond to these diverse characteristics.
4. Remote Work- Digital workplace create additional Work Life Balance (WLB), job stress, and productivity challenges yet to be fully understood. Studies should explore the efficiency of work life balance policies designed specifically for remote settings.
5. Organization Underuse of Work life Balance Policies- Some company may decide not to implement work life balance policies for fear of productivity and operational budget costs. Future studies should focus on balancing employee wellbeing with business goals to explore how organizations could manage this.
6. Empirical and Case- Based Studies- Some students do not sufficiently include empirical data to substantiate their arguments. Additional case studies, longitudinal studies, and quantitative studies are necessary to verify the outcomes and assess work life balance appropriately.

## **CONCLUSION**

The body of literature on work life balance clearly highlights the foundational nature of work- life integration on employee performance, job satisfaction, and overall organizational productivity. work life harmony is not only required from a wellbeing perspective for individuals, but also for maintaining a competitive and motivated workforce.

*The primary takeaway from the literature suggests that:*

- 1. Work life balance improves satisfaction and commitment** – Employees are more productive and committed to their employers when they balance various works and personal obligations.
- 2. Job stress undermines work life balance** – stressors like excessive workload, job insecurity, and inadequate managerial support tend to undermine employee wellbeing and efficiency.
- 3. HR policies are a major factor-** Organizations need to allow employees the flexibility of working remotely to enable them achieve balance in their lives.
- 4. Technology is both beneficial and detrimental-** While technology provides grater freedom, it also leads to new form of stress, including digital burnout and cyber stress.
- 5. Differences between men and women must be considered-** Further, women tend to shoulder more responsibilities which necessitates that organizations implement gender- sensitive strategies to work- life balance policies.

Considering these findings, companies should implement work- life balance as an integral part of their strategic management planning. Companies can develop a proactive workforce that performs exceptionally well on a professional level as well as thrives personally by cultivating a supportive environment, promoting a flexible work policy, and alleviating occupational stress. Future studies should examine more deeply sector- specific approaches and comprehensive efforts to maintain work- life balance as an achievable goal in an ever-changing working environment.

### ***Future Implications***

From the perspective of an employee's well-being and productivity work life balance is likely to have long-term effects across sectors, especially considering remote work, digitalization, and gig work. Organizations need to adopt AI-driven stress workload management, mental health monitoring, and flexible policies to relieve and optimize productivity. Public and private sectors need to establish standardized policies regarding work life balance that ensure inclusion and prevention of burnout. There is also a need to design culturally-relevant studies to target diverse work settings with tailored WLB policies. Solving these issues will enhance the sustainability and healthiness of workplaces while improving professional and personal well-being.

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