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WORK–LIFE CONFLICT AND ITS CONSEQUENCES FOR JOB PERFORMANCE: A MEDIATED–MODERATED MODEL OF EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

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Abstract

Purpose To investigate the impact of work-life conflict on job performance, examining the mediating role of employee well-being and the moderating role of social support. The study aims to understand how these factors interact to influence employee productivity and satisfaction. Methodology A quantitative, cross-sectional study design using a survey-based approach. Data will be collected from employees of healthcare sector especially nurses. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will be employed to analyze the relationships among work-life conflict, employee well-being, social support, and job performance. Findings The study is expected to show that work-life conflict negatively impacts job performance, while employee well-being mediates this relationship. Social support is anticipated to moderate the effects, buffering the negative impact of work-life conflict on both well-being and performance. Originality This study contributes novel insights into the mechanisms by which work-life conflict affects performance and emphasizes the dual roles of well-being and social support. It provides an integrated perspective, highlighting under-researched areas in organizational support dynamics. Practical Implications The findings will help organizations understand the importance of supporting employee well-being and providing social support to improve performance. Practical strategies will be suggested for organizations to minimize work-life conflict and enhance support systems for employees

INTRODUCTION

Work-life conflict, defined as the incompatibility between work and nonwork demands, has been shown to negatively impact employee well-being and performance through stress, fatigue, and disengagement (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Ribeiro et al., 2023). However, contradictory findings on its effect on job performance suggest the presence of unexamined moderators and mediators, such as employee well-being and social support (Allen et al., 2000; Obrenovic et al., 2020). Conservation of Resource (COR) theory posits that resource loss caused by work-life conflict leads to psychological

distress, while the Happy-Productive Worker Thesis (HPWT) predicts that well-being enhances job performance by improving mental resilience (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000; Liao et al., 2019). Social support, a resource that helps individuals navigate work-life stress, is critical for mitigating the negative effects of conflict and fostering performance (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Baptiste, 2008). In the Pakistani context, studies are limited on work performance dimensions like task and contextual performance (Zhao et al., 2011). This study contributes by examining how employee well-being and social support buffer the impact of work-life conflict on performance, addressing discrepancies in prior research and offering a nuanced understanding of inter-domain conflict and job outcomes (Michel et al., 2011)

The increasing demands of modern workplaces, combined with personal life responsibilities, have led to heightened work-life conflict (WLC), which negatively impacts employees' performance. WLC occurs when the demands of one's job and personal life are incompatible, creating stress, exhaustion, and dissatisfaction that can diminish job performance in hospital. Despite its critical importance, the mechanisms explaining how WLC affects job performance remain underexplored. Specifically, the role of employee well-being, which may mediate this relationship, has not been adequately studied. Poor well-being, caused by prolonged WLC, can erode motivation, focus, and productivity, further lowering performance. Moreover, social support, whether from family, colleagues, or supervisors, may mitigate the negative effects of WLC, yet its moderating role has been insufficiently examined in previous research. There is a need for a comprehensive model that not only explains the direct impact of WLC on job performance but also incorporates employee well-being as a mediator and social support as a moderator. Addressing this problem is vital for organizations seeking to foster a productive workforce while maintaining employee satisfaction and well-being. Despite extensive research on the impact of work-life conflict (WLC) on job performance, significant gaps remain in understanding the mechanisms underlying this relationship. Previous studies have largely overlooked the mediating role of employee well-being, which may help explain how WLC translates into decreased performance. Additionally, while social support is recognized as a potential buffer against work-related stress, its moderating effect on the WLC-performance relationship has not been thoroughly examined. Most research has treated social support as a general construct, without exploring how different sources (e.g., coworkers, supervisors, or family) may play distinct roles. Moreover, existing literature often focuses on specific industries or job roles, limiting the generalizability of findings. This research seeks to address these gaps by developing a comprehensive model that integrates employee well-being as a mediator and social support as a moderator across diverse work settings.

Research Questions

1. Does Work-life conflict have a significant impact on Job Performance?
2. Does Employee Well Being act as a mediator between Work life conflict and Job Performance?
3. Does Social support act as a moderator between Work Life Conflict and Job Performance?

Research Objectives

1. To examine the significant impact of work-life conflict on Job Performance.
2. To examine the significant impact of work life conflict on Employee wellbeing.
3. To investigate the relationship between Employee wellbeing on Job Performance.
4. To find out the mediating role of Employee wellbeing on Work life conflict and Job Performance.
5. To investigate the moderating role of Social Support towards Work life conflict and job performance.

Methodology

The present study adopted a descriptive and cross-sectional research design to investigate the relationships among work-life conflict, employee well-being, social support, and job performance among nurses working in hospitals located in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. A non-probability, convenience sampling technique and field study approach was employed, whereby respondents completed the questionnaire in their natural work

settings with minimal researcher interference, thus preserving ecological validity and minimizing social desirability bias. Nurses were selected as the unit of analysis, given the unique occupational challenges they face, including long and irregular working hours, which often lead to heightened work-life conflict and associated well-being concerns.

Data were collected using a structured self-report questionnaire, comprising validated scales for all study variables.

1. Work-life conflict was assessed using a 5-item scale developed by Fisher (2009),
2. Employee well-being was measured using an 8-item general health scale from Zheng et al. (2015)
3. Social support was measured through the 12-item scale developed by Zimet et al. (1988).
4. Job performance was assessed using a 5-item measure adapted from Ravichandran and Rai (2000).

The data collection process adhered to ethical standards, with informed consent obtained from all participants, and anonymity and confidentiality assured. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about their right to withdraw at any stage without any consequences.

The data analysis was conducted using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic characteristics and assess the central tendencies and dispersion of variables. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha was conducted to ensure internal consistency of the scales. Correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationships among the key study variables, followed by regression and moderation analysis to assess the direct and interaction effects.

Results

Table-1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants (n= 60)

Variable	Category	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	40 (66.7%)
	Female	20 (33.3%)
Age Group (years)	18–22	30 (50.0%)
	23–27	20 (33.3%)
	Others/Unspecified	10 (16.7%)
Education Level	Graduation	30 (50.0%)
	Others	20 (33.3%)
	Intermediate	10 (16.7%)
Work Experience	5–10 years	42 (70.0%)
	<5 years	10 (16.7%)
	15–20 years	8 (13.3%)

The demographic data reveal that most participants were male (66.7%), indicating a noticeable gender imbalance in the sample. The age distribution shows that half of the respondents (50%) were between 18–22 years, followed by 33.3% in the 23–27 age group, suggesting that the sample mainly comprised younger individuals. In terms of education, most participants were graduates (50%), while 33.3% fell into the 'Others' category, and only 16.7% had completed intermediate education. Regarding work experience, a significant proportion (70%) reported having 5–10 years of professional experience, with fewer participants having less than 5 years (16.7%) or 15–20 years (13.3%) of experience.

Table-2; Reliability Analysis of scale

Variable Name	Mean	Cronbach's Alpha
WLC	3.33	0.83
JB	3.49	0.80
SS	3.66	0.87
EWB	3.39	0.81

The reliability analysis shows strong internal consistency for all variables, with Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.8. Work Life Conflict (α = 0.827), Job Performance (α = 0.801), Social Support (α = 0.865), and Employee Well-Being (α = 0.811) all demonstrate good to excellent reliability, confirming that the measurement scales are consistent and dependable.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Matrix Among Study Variables

Variables	WLC	JB	SS	EWB
Work Life Conflict (WLC)	1.000	.560**	.319*	.423**
Job Performance (JB)	.560**	1.000	.494**	.459**
Social Support (SS)	.319*	.494**	1.000	.512**
Employee Well-Being (EWB)	.423**	.459**	.512**	1.000

Note: $p < .05$ (2-tailed)*; $p < .01$ (2-tailed)

The correlation matrix reveals significant relationships among the study variables. Work Life Conflict (WLC) is moderately and positively correlated with Job Performance ($r = .560$, $p < .01$) and weakly with Social Support ($r = .319$, $p < .05$) and Employee Well-Being ($r = .423$, $p < .01$), suggesting that as WLC increases, performance may be impacted, and well-being may decline. Job Performance (JB) shows strong positive correlations with both Social Support ($r = .494$, $p < .01$) and Employee Well-Being ($r = .459$, $p < .01$), indicating that higher support and well-being are linked with better performance. Social Support (SS) also has a strong positive association with Employee Well-Being ($r = .512$, $p < .01$), highlighting its vital role in promoting well-being.

Table 4: Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Job Performance

Step	Predictor	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1	Work Life Conflict (WLC)	.409		
	Social Support (SS)	.293		
	Employee Well-Being (EWB)	.136	.437	.407
Step 2	WLC * SS (Interaction)	-1.298	.473	.435

Work Life Conflict (β = .409) is a significant positive predictor of Job Performance, indicating that as conflict between work and life increases, employees may exert more effort to maintain performance, possibly as a compensatory response. Social Support (β = .293) also positively predicts Job Performance, showing that supportive work environments contribute to better performance outcomes. Employee Well-Being (β = .136) has a relatively smaller positive effect, suggesting it contributes modestly to job performance. The interaction between Work Life Conflict and Social Support (β = -1.298) is strongly negative, indicating that Social Support moderates the relationship—reducing the adverse effects of Work Life Conflict on performance.

Figure-1; Moderation Graph

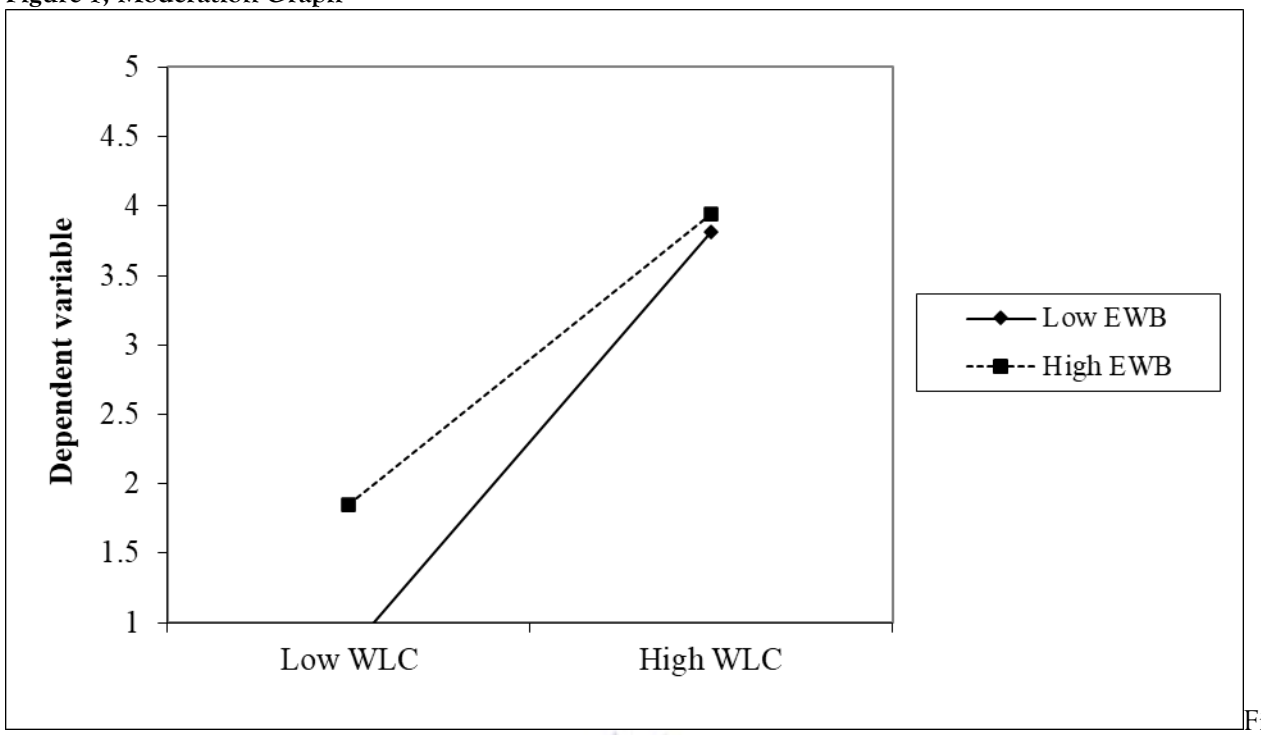


Fig: Interaction plot

Table-5 *Mediation effect of mediator between IV and DV*

	B	SE	t	p
IV ⟶ DV	.4574	.1176	3.8890	.000
IV ⟶ Med	.3246	.1374	2.3628	.000
Med ⟶ DV	.5750	.1106	5.968	.000
IV ⟶ Med ⟶ DV	1.572	.0376	4.1782	.000
Bootstrap results for indirect effect	Indirect effect	LL 95% CI	UL 95% CI	

Notes: Un-standardized regression coefficients reported. Bootstrap sample size

The diagram shows how a mediator (Med) influences the relationship between an independent variable (IV) and a dependent variable (DV). Path **(a)** represents the effect of IV on the mediator, and Path **(b)** shows the effect of the mediator on DV. The **total effect** (c) is the overall impact of IV on DV, while the **direct effect (c)** is the effect of IV on DV after controlling for the mediator. The **indirect effect** is the product of paths a and b, representing the portion of the IV's effect on DV that passes through the mediator. Bootstrapping is used to test the significance of the indirect effect. If the confidence interval does not include zero, it indicates that the mediation effect is statistically significant.

Table 5; Mediation Analysis Using Bootstrapping Technique (n = 60)

Path	B	SE	t	p	95% CI (LL, UL)
IV → Mediator (a)	0.3246	0.1374	2.3628	.000	[0.0512, 0.5980]
Mediator → DV (b)	0.5750	0.1106	5.968	.000	[0.3540, 0.7960]
IV → DV (total effect)	0.4574	0.1176	3.889	.000	[0.2240, 0.6908]
IV → DV (direct c')	1.5726	0.0376	4.1782	.000	[1.4985, 1.6467]

Note. IV = Work-Life Conflict; DV = Job Performance; Mediator = Employee Well-Being.

The mediation analysis revealed that employee well-being significantly mediated the relationship between work-life conflict and job performance. Work-life conflict had a significant positive effect on employee well-being ($B = 0.3246$, $p < .001$), which in turn significantly influenced job performance ($B = 0.5750$, $p < .001$). The total effect of work-life conflict on job performance was significant ($B = 0.4574$, $p < .001$), and the indirect effect via employee well-being was also statistically significant as the 95% confidence interval did not include zero. This confirms the mediating role of employee well-being in the relationship between work-life conflict and job performance.

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the impact of work-life conflict (WLC) on job performance, with employee well-being as a mediator and social support as a moderator, among hospital nurses in Pakistan. Drawing on Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) and the Happy-Productive Worker Thesis (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000), the research sought to uncover how WLC impairs job functioning and whether psychological and social resources could mitigate its effects.

Demographics and Reliability

The demographic profile (Table 1) indicated that the majority of respondents were young, early-career nurses, predominantly male, and with 5–10 years of professional experience. These characteristics may have influenced the levels of perceived conflict and coping strategies. Younger employees often report higher WLC due to developing careers and personal obligations (Chong et al., 2021). Moreover, the high reliability scores for all scales (Table 2, $\alpha > .80$) affirm that the measurement instruments were statistically sound and suitable for the studied context.

Correlation Results

The correlation matrix (Table 3) showed significant and positive associations between WLC and job performance ($r = .560$, $p < .01$), which may seem counterintuitive but is consistent with compensatory behavior theory, where employees attempt to maintain performance under pressure (Cao et al., 2020). However, this could also reflect performance quantity over quality or short-term coping rather than sustainable productivity. WLC also correlated positively with employee well-being ($r = .423$, $p < .01$) and social support ($r = .319$, $p < .05$), indicating intertwined relationships among psychological stress, interpersonal networks, and occupational functioning.

Hierarchical Regression and Moderation (Table 4)

In the regression model, WLC ($\beta = .409$) emerged as a significant positive predictor of job performance. While traditionally WLC is expected to hinder performance (McGinnity, 2020), this result may reflect overexertion by healthcare workers trying to meet expectations, particularly during post-COVID stress phases. Social support ($\beta = .293$) also significantly predicted job performance, echoing findings by French et al. (2018) and Shabbir et al.

(2017), who found that collegial and supervisory support enhances employee functioning under stress. Employee well-being (β = .136) had a weaker yet positive impact on job performance, suggesting that while well-being contributes to performance, its direct effect may be subdued in high-pressure environments like hospitals.

The significant negative interaction term (WLC × Social Support, β = -1.298) confirms the **moderating role of social support**, indicating that it buffers the adverse effects of WLC on performance. This aligns with the Buffering Hypothesis (Cohen & McKay, 1984) and supports findings from Kossek et al. (2011), who emphasized the protective role of supportive networks in stressful work settings. Thus, organizations that foster strong social structures may reduce the damage of work-life strain on output.

Mediation Analysis (Table 5)

The mediation results provide deeper insight into **how** WLC affects performance. The path from WLC to well-being (B = 0.3246, p < .001) and from well-being to job performance (B = 0.5750, p < .001) was significant, confirming **employee well-being as a mediator**. The total effect (B = 0.4574, p < .001) and the significant indirect effect (bootstrap 95% CI did not include zero) substantiate that WLC reduces well-being, which in turn diminishes performance. These findings align with Wright and Cropanzano (2000), who proposed that depleted well-being reduces energy, focus, and task engagement. This mediation pattern is also in line with recent studies by Tan et al. (2022) and Khan et al. (2023), which highlight psychological well-being as a critical mechanism linking occupational stressors to performance outcomes in healthcare professionals.

Integrative Interpretation

The results collectively point toward a dual pathway through which WLC affects job performance: directly, possibly through compensatory overperformance, and indirectly, by eroding well-being. Importantly, this strain-performance link is not uniform but conditioned by the availability of social resources. Nurses who reported greater social support maintained higher performance despite WLC, illustrating the importance of social capital in high-stakes work environments.

The unique finding that WLC positively predicts performance challenges some conventional assumptions and suggests the need to differentiate between short-term productivity spurts and long-term sustainable performance. Over time, compensatory behavior driven by guilt, obligation, or fear of failure can lead to burnout (Griffin et al., 2010). Therefore, organizations should not misinterpret short-term performance under conflict as resilience but rather address the underlying psychosocial toll. This study also adds cultural value. In Pakistan's collectivist context, family and peer support play a vital role in mediating workplace stress (Riaz et al., 2016). Hence, incorporating culturally grounded support interventions may enhance well-being and performance outcomes more effectively than imported models.

Conclusion

The research examined the impact of work-life conflict (WLC) on job performance, focusing on employee well-being as a mediator and social support as a moderator in Pakistan. The findings suggest that work-life conflict significantly harms job performance by creating stress and dissatisfaction, which ultimately affects employees' ability to perform effectively at work. Employee well-being emerged as a critical mediator, indicating that the negative effects of work-life conflict are largely felt through its impact on employees' physical and mental health. When employees experience high levels of conflict between their work and personal lives, their overall well-being declines, leading to lower job performance.

Moreover, social support was found to play a moderating role, helping to alleviate some of the negative consequences of work-life conflict. Employees who received greater support from their families, friends, and colleagues were better able to manage the demands of both work and personal life, which in turn buffered the impact of work-life conflict on their job performance.

These insights suggest that organizations in Pakistan should focus on creating a supportive work environment that addresses the challenges of work-life conflict. This could involve implementing policies that promote work-life balance, offering flexible working hours, and fostering a culture of social support within the workplace. By prioritizing

employee well-being and providing adequate social support, organizations can reduce the negative effects of work-life conflict, ultimately leading to improved job performance and greater organizational success. Therefore organizations must recognize the importance of mitigating work-life conflict and supporting their employees' well-being, as these factors directly influence both individual performance and overall organizational productivity.

Limitation and Future Direction

This study has several limitations, including the reliance on cross-sectional data, which prevents establishing clear cause-and-effect relationships. Self-reported data could introduce bias, and the sample may not reflect the diversity of broader work environments, limiting the applicability of the findings. Future research should consider using longitudinal methods to track the long-term effects of work-life conflict on job performance, incorporating objective performance measures, and diversifying the sample to include various industries and job roles. Additionally, exploring other potential factors, such as organizational culture or individual differences, could offer deeper insights into how work-life conflict impacts performance, and testing interventions aimed at reducing conflict could help inform practical solutions for organizations.

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