



Work–Life Balance, Supervisor Support, and Life Satisfaction in the Higher Education Sector

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Abstract. The study explores the relationship between work–life balance and supervisor support in the Indian higher education sector. More specifically, the study explores the effects of supervisor support on the work–life balance of female employees working in academia. We used online panel data comprised of 300 employees working in various universities, which we analysed by employing structural equation modelling. Results reveal that supervisor support is positively related to employee work–life balance and ultimately their life satisfaction. The findings also stress the importance of supervisor support for female employees, as its presence is a major boost in helping women reach the desired work–life balance. With the objective to augment work–life balance of women academicians, the work would guide managers as well as decision makers involved in the academic sector to implement women-friendly policies and programmes.

Keywords: work–life balance, supervisor support, academics, working women, higher education sector

JEL Classification: M1

1. Introduction

Most working Indians are not satisfied with their work–life balance. Among Indian professionals, most employees rate work–life balance from average to terrible (Basu, 2019). Working hours put in by Indian employees are among the world's highest.¹

¹ National Statistical Office. (2021). Periodic Labour Force Survey [Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation]. Retrieved from: http://mospi.nic.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/Quarterly_Bulletin_PLFS_April_June_2019_M_0.pdf.

The Indian education sector is the third largest in the world, behind only China and the United States.² Since 2001, India has witnessed an almost four-fold expansion in enrolments as well as institutions (Varghese, 2015). The number of students enrolled in numerous programmes run at various colleges and universities is a whopping 35.7 million.³ A major credit of this increase goes to privately owned institutions, especially in the post-1990 period. It is noteworthy that a booming service economy in developed countries tends to generate more jobs and income. However, this is only possible when there is a universal access to higher education that is able to bring every student into the system. Despite its size and potential, the higher education sector is notorious for its poor work–life balance. As a matter of fact, few academic researchers have focused on this sector. Therefore, it can be safely claimed that unless there is a mismatch between work demands and employees' personal/family life, the future of the entire higher education sector could be at stake, further straining India's already fragile economy.

Many previous studies have shown that supervisor support can play an important role in helping employees achieve work–life balance (Julein et al., 2011; Lucia-Casademunt et al., 2018; Talukder et al., 2018; Rashid et al., 2022). Supervisor support received at workplace tends to improve an employee's work–life balance equation (Jang, 2009; Russo et al., 2016; Campo et al., 2021). In order to properly meet personal and professional commitments, supervisory support plays a crucial role through offering flexible work schedules and similar other adjustments (Latip and Amirul, 2022). Employees receiving adequate supervisor support find themselves in a conducive work environment. Therefore, they can easily devote themselves towards activities that promote better work–life balance.

Allowing employees to schedule their time for the competing demands of work- and home-related duties not only helps improve employee performance but also enhances their experienced work–life balance (Lazar et al., 2010; Koon, 2022). Indeed, the presence of a better work–life balance automatically implies the presence of positive work-related attitudes among workers. For example, providing flexible working hours to employees is linked to job satisfaction and organizational commitment, especially for those with family responsibilities (Namasivayam and Zhao, 2007). Satisfaction with work flexibility is positively associated with organizational commitment (Caillier, 2013), and reduced working hours create greater job satisfaction as well as organizational commitment (Scandura and Lankau, 1997).

2 Press Information Bureau (22 April 2019). India needs a world-class higher education system. Retrieved on: 23 February 2021, from PIB: <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=189828>.

3 Varghese, N. V. (2015). Challenges of massification of higher education in India. New Delhi: National University of Educational Planning and Administration.

Against this backdrop, women employees expect support at workplaces and support to enable them to cope with the various challenges and complexities of the home and work spheres (Budhwar and Debrah, 2013). It is important to understand that the coexistence of different role demands with limited support has many negative consequences; not only for women but also for the organizations they work in (Akintayo, 2010; Rehman and Waheed, 2012). Therefore, there is increasing attention and interest in how women manage work and life and the support they receive in doing so.

The present study was initiated by gaps in the existing work-life balance literature. First, it is noted that the subject of work-life balance has been extensively researched in the United States (e.g. Malone and Issa, 2013; Shanafelt et al., 2015; Guo and Browne, 2022). It is only quite recently that studies are being done to investigate this issue in other national contexts (Doherty and Manfredi, 2006; McGinnity, 2021). This clearly shows that the dominance of research studies performed within the United States has created a body of knowledge that lacks a link and context with other countries. Those trying to understand this topic outside the United States often find a conflicting and disconnected understanding of the interplay of work and life within their cultural context (Poelmans et al., 2013; Brown and Faerman, 2021). Secondly, previous research has focused on personal as well as institutional predictors of work-life balance. However, the influence of supervisor support on work-life balance has been examined by many past researchers. To shed more light on this issue, it is important to theorize and identify the mechanisms through which supervisor support plays a role in helping employees reach equilibrium. Additionally, past work has investigated several subsequent outcomes of work-life balance (e.g. job satisfaction, low turnover, work engagement, better time management, better quality of life, increased job performance, life satisfaction, etc.), but the influence of better time management, quality of life, job performance, and their subsequent effects on life satisfaction has not been fully evaluated. To clarify this issue, it is important to theorize and identify the interplay between all the above components. In this study, a conceptual model (see *Figure 1*) is formulated to investigate the same. By empirically testing the relationships in our model, the researcher intends to contribute to the existing body of knowledge.

The research contributes to the existing literature in several ways. Firstly, several theoretical perspectives that link supervisory support to work-life balance (WLB) outcomes have been presented. Moreover, insights from social support theory (Pierce et al., 1991; Perrin and McDermott, 1997; Lakey and Cohen, 2000) helped make a distinction between various constructs of supervisory support and employee WLB. It can also be concluded from the literature review of social support and human resource (HR) practices that supervisor attitude and HR practices can heavily influence employee's work outcomes (Batt and Valcour, 2003; Weyant et al.,

2021; Hari and Vaithianathan, 2022). Despite evidence of the association between supervisor support and WLB (Rahim et al., 2020; Campo et al., 2021), not many studies have been done in the field of higher education, particularly in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir (India). The present study addresses this gap.

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the conceptualization of life satisfaction in the relevant research by examining its relationship with work–life balance, which may hold a key to better life satisfaction. It should be noted that work–life balance has attracted considerable attention in the industrial and academic sectors; however, its relationship with life satisfaction has not been studied much. A good work–life balance has been shown to be a predictor of positive outcomes in employees’ work and life domains; life satisfaction is one such important outcome (Wahyuni and Rahmasari, 2022). In this regard, there is a need to understand its direct effects and relationship with work–life balance.

The number of important findings in this area (esp. in this unique socio-geographic region) seems quite modest. Links between the concept of work–life balance and the community under study appear to be highly limited. The article attempts to bridge this gap. Section 2 of the paper presents the latest perspectives in this field of study along with the development of a conceptual model. Section 3 discusses the theory and hypotheses of the study. Methodology is discussed in section 4. The results are discussed in section 5. Finally, Section 6 concludes the paper with limitations, implications, and scope for further research.

2. New Perspectives and Conceptual Model

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everything. The future trend of supervisory support that employees receive will be based on how well organizational policies improve and strengthen this relationship. The importance of managerial support on employee job satisfaction cannot be overestimated and has been well documented in many studies (Ko et al., 2013; Riyanto et al., 2021; Crucke et al., 2022). Therefore, organizations need to understand that if they want to create healthy WLB for their teams, they need to heavily focus on employees in supervisory role in the workplace and analyse the same in the light of COVID-19 developments.

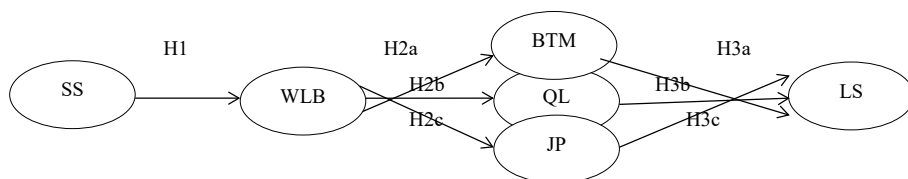
Training supervisors to be more supportive of family-friendly policies has a positive impact on organizational culture (Chenot et al., 2009). It is important to note that the pandemic has changed the paradigm from the worker who is available 24/7 and is willing to sacrifice personal life for work to the “classic corporate warrior” worker who seeks a supportive work environment, i.e. a “balanced framework worker”.

Perceived uncertainty caused by the pandemic was found to be negatively related to supervisory support, a study of university employees during the outbreak

indicated (Campo et al., 2021). However, many studies re-emphasized that during trying times such as the COVID-19 disease outbreak, supervisory or managerial support can go a long way in helping employees maintain a healthy WLB (Contreras et al., 2020; Nabawanuka and Ekmekcioglu, 2021; Vyas, 2022).

The post-pandemic world has evoked debates, speculations, and ambiguity on how futuristic supervisory roles will look like. Organizations need to carefully study the post-pandemic paths and remodel supervisory roles in the light of creating connection between WLB and the “new normal” at workplaces.

To investigate this further, a conceptual model (see *Figure 1*) has been developed to examine the relationship between work–life balance and supervisor support. The model has been justified as well as rationalized in the study. By empirically testing this model, the present study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in this field.



Note: SS = Supervisor Support, WLB = Work–Life Balance, BTM= Better Time Management, QL= Quality of Life, JP = Job Performance, LS = Life Satisfaction

Figure 1. *Hypothesized model*

3. Theory and Hypothesis

George Homans’s Social Exchange Theory suggests that perceived supervisor support has a positive effect on employees’ work–life balance. In his theory, Homans (1958) promoted “social behavior as exchange” (p. 606) and described the theory as one of the oldest theories of social behaviour. Because desired behaviours at work are usually implemented in response to the employee’s receiving support from the supervisor, they fall within the purview of Homans’s remarkable theory. This provides an argument for a direct relationship between employees’ organizational support and work–life balance because social exchange processes are involved in the establishment and maintenance of employee–employer relationships. Theoretically, if organizations assist individuals in managing the domains of work and life, effects will be realized in better work–life balance experienced by employees specifically, decreased work–family conflict, role conflicts, etc.

Work–Life Balance

Coined in 1986, the term work–life balance nowadays finds its usage in everyday corporate language. Work–life programmes are not new to organizations. They existed as early as in the 1930s. Before World War II, the W. K. Kellogg Company replaced the traditional three eight-hour shifts with four six-hour shifts. The new changes resulted in increased employee morale and efficiency (Lockwood, 2003).

Work and life used to be integrated in pastoral and agrarian societies. However, the industrial revolution changed this. These sectors began to have their own needs, often conflicting with each other. Hence, the demand for some balance was felt and especially raised by women employees (Jones, 1996). The expression work–life balance was first used in the mid-1970s to describe the balance between an individual's work and personal life (Newman and Matthews, 1999). Some 50 years ago, Kanter (1977) talked about the “myth of separate worlds” and called attention to the reality that work and home are unavoidably linked. It should be noted that interest in work–life balance has grown in many quarters over the past 15 years, especially in press, government management, and employee representatives (Cabrera, 2018).

Work was not broadly divided on the basis of gender until the arrival of knowledge industry. As this industry did not require performance based on physical capabilities, as was previously required in factories and farms, women started entering like never before. This fact coupled with changes in the marital patterns and increase of smaller families resulted in increase in the number of working women (Grossman, 1981). Ismail and Ahmed (1999) observed that women's employment poses unavoidable challenges to women themselves besides their household and society by and large. Women face challenges in terms of work interference with family roles, attainment of economic and gender equality with respect to men besides many other similar issues. This creates strain and role overload for them due to which women are not able to fulfil so many role demands and obligations adequately. Although multiple roles help in self-enhancement in terms of increased skills and better self-esteem, the pressures they create cannot be overlooked (Vasumathi and Prithi, 2018).

Organizational support certainly helps an employee achieve a better blend of professional and personal activities. According to research by Ainapur et al. (2016), strong and inclusive organizational policies have a positive relationship with work–life balance. Ahemad and Chaudhary (2013) concluded that successfully achieving work–life balance will ultimately lead to a more satisfied workforce that will contribute to workplace productivity and success. This requires the introduction of flexible timings, maternity leave, child care, pick and drop, special leaves for women (Wani and Gul, 2014; Balamurugan and Thendral, 2016).

Supervisor Support

Supervisors can provide support in form of leaves, sabbaticals, child care, remote working, etc., which will alleviate employee strain coming from the incompatible quarters of work and family. Supervisors can help by providing child care and related benefits especially to women and employees without a proper family support (Kosseck and Nichol, 1992; Talukder and Galang, 2021). Scholars have confirmed the importance of supervisors' work-/family-specific support in reducing family conflict experienced by workers (Goh et al., 2015). Supervisor support driven by family-friendly benefits elicits job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and reduced turnover (Allen, 2001). Employees show greater willingness to stay with organizations that believe in supervisors' employee care in terms of looking after their family needs and similar other issues. Substantial empirical support has been received by all such arguments.

This paper addresses the issue of what characterizes the relationship between supervisor support and life satisfaction, focusing on the work–life balance of female employees. What does ultimately happen to life satisfaction when we continuously try to make improvements in all other domains preceding it? The paper strongly argues that studying a person's engagement in key areas of work and life can yield substantial gains in understanding this relationship.

Research Question: How does supervisor support lead to life satisfaction?

Supervisor Support and Work–Life Balance

The role and importance of supervisor support has been extensively reviewed in the literature (Rathi and Lee, 2017). Supervisory support in terms of work schedule flexibility, workplace support, etc. helps workers to put in more effective efforts at the workplace (Jang, 2009; Zhang and Bowen, 2021). The Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1958) proposes that persons who give something to others also try to get something from them. This creates a balance in exchanges and tends to lead towards equilibrium. Therefore, support at work can contribute towards the creation of a healthy exchange where one party shows care for employees and the other party manages their work commitments better. This certainly builds a more balanced life where women employees encounter fewer work–family conflicts. In this light, it is proposed that:

H1. Supervisor support will positively influence work–life balance among the working women.

Work–Life Balance and Better Time Management

Time management is one of the most studied parameters in work–family research, and many studies report positive relationships between work–life balance and time management (Michel et al., 2014; Usmani, 2021). Several researchers have stressed that ill time management can prove an occupational stressor disturbing work–life balance (Fisher, 2002). The literature confirms the possibility of a positive relationship between work–life balance practices and employees' time management (Mani, 2013). Past research indicates that having too many tasks to accomplish and an inability to manage time can cause work–family conflict (Balaji, 2014). Examples include time management grid theory (Harris, 2008), multiple resources theory (Wickens, 2017), and Covey's time management grid (Covey, 2013). These theories confirm that individuals who get positive feelings about their work–life balance often have better time management skills. Women who experience poor work–life balance may also find the juggle between multiple roles and responsibilities quite challenging (McGee-Cooper and Trammell, 1993; Reverberi et al., 2021).

It is therefore hypothesised that:

H2a. Work–life balance will positively relate to better time management.

Work–Life Balance and the Quality of Life

The integrative quality of life (IOQL) theory (Ventegodt et al., 2003) suggests that satisfaction with life, happiness, meaning in life, fulfilment of needs, and the biological information system (balance) will lead to a better quality of life. Balance is also one important ingredient towards attaining this attribute (Sirgy et al., 2008). According to the WLB perspective, individuals who could effectively combine work and family roles experienced a higher quality of life than those who could not find this balance (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Su and Zabilski, 2022). Better quality of life is thus achieved through a better balance as well. When women perceive a control over their work and family spheres, they get positive feelings of involvement and satisfaction. Indeed, work–life balance can be seen as an important part of a broader focus on an individual's quality of life. Therefore, it is proposed that:

H2b. Work–life balance will positively relate to quality of life.

Work–Life Balance and Job Performance

Job performance is considered one of the leading indicators of a better work–life balance experienced by employees (Rego, 2009; Puspitasari and Darwin, 2021; Borgia et al., 2022). Work and family roles are among the most important ones in a person's life, and any conflict between the two can lead to a lot of dissatisfaction in

life. Poor job performance can not only create issues at work but also unhappiness at the home front. Research has shown the subjective and behavioural impact of better work–life balance on the individual’s desire to contribute positively towards an organization’s productivity (Leitão et al., 2019). Balanced employees endure stress presumably because they are able to experience a feeling of making a positive contribution towards organizational performance. Additionally, balanced individuals experience job satisfaction, a greater sense of job security, and better control over work life (Garg and Rani, 2014). A balanced engagement with work and family is more likely to be associated with better work engagement, creativity, retention, and productivity (Lazar et al., 2010). Therefore, it is proposed that:

H2c. Work–life balance will positively relate to job performance.

Better Time Management and Life Satisfaction

Time management research in industrial and organizational psychology has shown its positive effect on perceived control over time, health, and job satisfaction (Claessens et al., 2007; Gholipour et al., 2022). According to Macan et al. (1990), people who had control over their time reported better performance and greater life satisfaction. Time management behaviours, often understood as time control, have direct and indirect relationships with the work–family interface (Adams and Jex, 1999). Although the relationship between time management and life satisfaction has been the subject of much debate, it is hypothesised that this connection is linked to the concepts of Demirdağ (2021). Time management was a predictor of life satisfaction. Conversely, poor time management will have a negative impact on life satisfaction levels. Therefore, it is proposed that:

H3a. Better time management will positively relate to life satisfaction.

Quality of Life and Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction and happiness are interrelated; self-fulfilling, happier, and less depressed individuals are more satisfied with life (Schütz et al., 2013). Happy employees are more likely to be open-minded, creative, and content. Those who are happier also have the spirit of seeking more opportunities. This makes such people successful in various fields of life. Quality of life (work and non-work) serves as an important antecedent to life satisfaction (Erdogan et al., 2012; Geprägs et al., 2022). Thus, employees’ QL may have a strong influence on their LS. When employees do not enjoy a good quality of life, there may be spillover effects on LS. Employees with a better quality of life may enjoy a better satisfaction with life; employees with a poor quality of life may be dissatisfied with life as well. As such, it is predicted that:

H3b. Employees’ quality of life will positively relate to employees’ life satisfaction.

Job Performance and Life Satisfaction

Motowildo et al. (1997) suggest that job performance includes task as well as contextual performance. All relationships between life satisfaction and performance measures are statistically significant (Jones, 2006). There is a positive relationship between job performance and life satisfaction (Judge and Hulin, 1993; Bernales-Turpo et al., 2022). Previous research has clearly shown that employees with better performance levels are more likely to be satisfied with their lives. Better performance is inversely related to stress. Therefore, such employees are able to perform better. A happy worker is a productive worker not only because s/he will be better committed to working harder at work, but also because s/he is generally satisfied with life (Wright and Cropanzano, 2000). Therefore, it is proposed that:

H3c. Employees' job performance will positively relate to employees' life satisfaction.

4. Method

The data obtained was analysed using quantitative analysis. Quantitative data were entered into statistical software (SPSS version 22), and various tests were run, including confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modelling (SEM). Factor analysis was also performed to reduce the data to a meaningful size. Correlation analysis was used to test the direction of relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

Data Collection

Data was collected through an online survey of women employees working in various universities and colleges across Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) between October 2020 and February 2021. Online data collection simplifies data transfer into a database for analysis besides protecting against data loss (Carbonaro and Bainbridge, 2000). The participation was voluntary. The survey took approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. A final sample of 205 responses was obtained, out of which 25 responses were removed due to providing incomplete data. This resulted in a final sample of 180 participants. Most participants were married (66%) and under the age of 50 (see *Table 1*). Established WLB scales were used to obtain survey questions. Revisions were performed to make the scales relevant for women employees working in academics.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the sample

Variables	Number	Percentage (%)
Age		
21–30	21	12
31–40	83	46
41–50	39	22
51–60	31	17
Above 60	6	3
Area of Posting		
Urban	124	69
Rural	56	31
Marital Status		
Single	46	25
Married	129	72
Separated/Divorced	5	3
Number of Children		
None	29	16
1	26	14
2	113	63
2 <	12	7
Designation		
Assistant professor	90	50
Associate professor	49	27
Professor	15	8
Administration	26	14
Institute Where Employed		
University	126	70
College	54	30

Note: N = 180.

Measurement Scales

A 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) was used. Unless otherwise indicated, the higher the score, the higher the degree of each construct.

Supervisor support. The supervisory scale was measured with five items, some of which being: “My supervisor tries to meet my needs.”; “My supervisor knows me well enough to know when I have concerns about residential care.”; “My supervisor makes time to listen to me” (McGilton, 2010). Some other items were: “I look forward to supervision.” and “I feel my stress was reduced” (Fukui et al., 2014).

Work–life Balance. WLB is defined as good performance and satisfaction at work as well as at home with minimal role conflict (Clark, 2000). WLB was measured

with five items: The first item was “My personal life suffers because of work” (Hayman, 2005). The next two items were: “I often neglect my personal needs because of the demands of my work.” and “When I am at work, I worry about things I need to do outside work” (Fisher-McAuley et al., 2003). The last two items were: “I currently have a good balance between the time I spend at work and the time I have available for non-work activities.” and “Overall, I believe that my work and non-work life are balanced” (Brough et al., 2009).

Better Time Management. Time management is the process of planning the time one spends on their activities (Crutsinger, 1994). This was measured with five items: “I set deadlines for myself when I set out to accomplish a task.”; “I set priorities to determine the order in which I will perform tasks each day.”; “My workdays are too unpredictable for me to plan and manage my time to any great extent.”; “During a workday, I evaluate how well I am following the schedule I have set down for myself.”; “I finish top priority tasks before going on to less important ones” (Macan et al., 1990).

It is important to mention that the Time Management Behaviour Scale (TMBS) developed by Macan et al. (1990) originally had 33 items. To enhance the applicability as well as administration of the measure, a content validity study was conducted by a panel of experts. After thorough analysis and feedback from the panel, it was determined that a shortened version of the scale should contain the most appropriate five statements. Considering the nature of the study, these five items were found to be better indicators than others.

Quality of Life. Quality of life has been defined “as the satisfaction of an individual’s values, goals and needs through the actualization of their abilities or lifestyle” (Emerson, 1985: 282). QL was measured with five items using the Flanagan Quality of Life Scale (Flanagan, 1978). The five items were: “I am physically fit and vigorous.”; “My relationships with my parents, siblings, and other relatives are good.”; “I am able to socialize.”; “I participate in organizations and public affairs.”; “I participate in active recreation.”; “I have close friends.”

Job Performance. JP can be defined as the overall expected value from employee behaviour that is performed over a specified period of time (Motowildo et al., 1997). JP was measured with five items from Trifiletti et al’s (2009) Proactive Personality Scale. It must be noted that proactivity is a dispositional construct in which individuals are differentiated by the degree to which they act to change their environment to achieve effective performance (Bateman and Crant, 1993). Proactive employees try to persevere until desired changes are achieved in organizational settings. Therefore, proactive personality type is a predictive objective measure of job performance (Crant, 1995; Thomas et al., 2010). Taking this view into account, Trifiletti et al’s (2009) Proactive Personality Scale was considered appropriate.

Proactive personality job performance scale questionnaire: “Wherever I have been, I have been a powerful force for constructive change.”; “Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn into reality.”; “No matter what the odds, if I believe in something, I will make it happen.”; “I excel at identifying opportunities.”; “I am always looking for better ways to do things.”

Life Satisfaction. LS is the fulfilment of essential conditions and the attainment of a desired end (Wolman, 1973). LS was measured with five items of the Satisfaction with Life Scale by Diner et al. (1985). The five items were: “In most ways, my life is close to my ideal.”; “The conditions of my life are excellent.”; “I am satisfied with my life.”; “So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life.”; “If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.” (Slocum-Gori et al., 2009).

It should be noted that both quality of life and life satisfaction are considered important for achieving a healthy and productive lifestyle (Anand and Arora, 2009). However, many a time, the concepts are equated – creating confusion. Life satisfaction is an overall assessment of one’s feelings and attitudes about life at a particular point in time, ranging from negative to positive (Buetell, 2006), whereas quality of life is a general and constant state of well-being (Zullig et al., 2005).

Factor Analysis – An Assessment

Factor analysis was performed using varimax rotation. All measurement items were entered, and factors with Eigenvalues > 1 were extracted from all survey items. The extracted factors accounted for 68% of the variance. The variance inflation factor (VIF) scores below 3 and tolerance statistics above 0.3 indicated that there were no multicollinearity problems.

Table 2. *Reliability and correlation analysis*

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. SS	4.87	1.31	(0.91)					
2. WLB	4.19	1.83	0.555**	(0.93)				
3. BTM	4.63	1.92	0.271**	0.413**	(0.92)			
4. QL	4.03	1.73	0.283**	0.417**	0.552**	(0.91)		
5. JP	4.63	1.13	0.348**	0.344**	0.558**	0.348**	(0.89)	
6. LS	5.65	0.78	0.126**	0.279**	0.336**	0.320**	0.356**	(0.91)

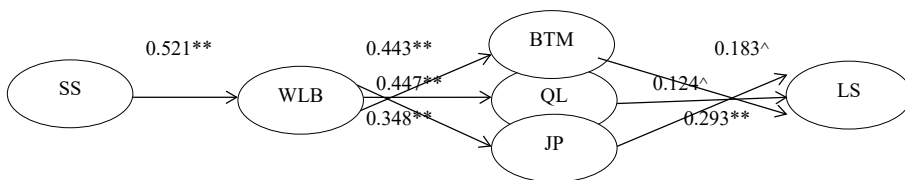
Notes: ** p < .001. Figures in parentheses on the diagonal are coefficient alphas.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

CFA was applied to test the scales used in this study. The model was tested using SEM. AMOS 21 with maximum likelihood extraction method was applied. However, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to assess the fit of the measurement model prior to testing. For the constructs used in the study, Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.89 to 0.93 (see *Table 2*). The range exceeded the recommended cut-off value of 0.70 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1978). The fit of the overall measurement model was examined using various indices such as the Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI). For a reasonable model fit, the values of TLI, IFI, and CFI should be above 0.90 and RMSEA below 0.08. A six-factor measurement model was estimated for constructs such as supervisor support, work–life balance, better time management, quality of life, job performance, and life satisfaction. The χ^2 value for the model was 391.171 with 291 df ($p < 0.001$), with RMSEA = 0.061, TLI = 0.977, IFI = 0.971, and CFI = 0.971 (Bentler and Bonett, 1980; Browne, 1993). This clearly indicates an acceptable model fit, as all fit indices are within the recommended range.

Results

The analysis and findings supporting the proposed hypothesis are presented in *Figure 2*.



Notes: ** $p < 0.001$, ^ $p < 0.04$.

Figure 2. Path diagram of the structural model

The structural model shown in *Figure 2* was tested, and model adequacy was assessed by examining the model fit indices (see *Table 3*).

Assessing model fit requires testing a range of fit indices. A normal chi-square ratio is 1.728, and the value falls within the recommended range of 1 to 2. GFI and AGFI values were slightly below the acceptable limit, as they do not exceed the threshold value of 0.9. However, as suggested by Baumgartner and Homburg (1996), they can still be accepted if values are above 0.8. RMSEA is also considered

satisfactory at 0.061, in line with the recommendation of Browne (1993). Therefore, the overall results show that the model can be considered appropriate.

Table 3. *Fit indices for the proposed model*

Fit Indices	Proposed Model
Chi-square	391.118
Degrees of freedom (df)	291
Normed chi-square (CMIN/df)	1.728
p-value	<0.001
Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.061
Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)	0.899
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI)	0.875
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.976
Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI)	0.987
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.907

It is pertinent to mention that the model does not measure the direct effects of SS and WLB on LS or of SS on BTM, QL, and JP. This has been done because of the assumption of independence among these dimensions. One of the strengths of SEM is the ability to test models that represent a complex set of theoretical hypotheses without impairing model fit. This economy with dimensions is not offered by classical path model or other regression models. Thus, SEM was considered the best choice.

Table 4. *Latent variables and Squared Multiple Correlations (SMCs)*

Latent Variables	SMCs
WLB	0.266
BTM	0.174
QL	0.199
JP	0.252
LS	0.182

Table 4 shows Squared Multiple Correlations (SMCs) being used for assessment. The model explains 18.2% of variance in employees' life satisfaction. Remarkably, the highest SMC is observed for WLB at 0.266. This suggests that SS alone helps explain 26.6% of the variance of WLB.

The results from Table 5 provide support for all proposed hypotheses. It should be noted that to test the proposed model link, summated scores were created by averaging the corresponding items for all six variables. Clearly indicated by a positive relation between SS and WLB ($\beta = 0.521$, $p < 0.001$), better SS for employees would in turn lead to better WLB. WLB is positively linked to BTM

($\beta = 0.443$, $p < 0.001$), QL ($\beta = 0.447$, $p < 0.001$), and JP ($\beta = 0.348$, $p < 0.001$). Results also show that WLB has the greatest impact on QL. Variables such as BTM, QL, and JP showed a positive association with LS. The strongest link was observed between JP and LS ($\beta = 0.293$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 5. Hypothesis test results

Direct Effects	Path Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Results
SS → WLB (H1)	0.521	10.329	< 0.001	Supported
WLB → BTM (H2a)	0.443	8.983	< 0.001	Supported
WLB → QL (H2b)	0.447	9.973	< 0.001	Supported
WLB → JP (H2c)	0.348	7.512	< 0.001	Supported
BTM → LS (H3a)	0.183	2.954	0.031	Supported*
QL → LS (H3b)	0.124	2.665	0.011	Supported*
JP → LS (H3c)	0.293	4.643	< 0.001	Supported

Note: * Hypothesis supported at $p < 0.04$.

5. Discussion

The main objective of the study was to examine the effects of SS on employees' WLB through a test model. Therefore, a conceptual model containing predictors and outcomes was tested regarding WLB of women working in the higher education sector of Jammu and Kashmir. Many findings add to the existing literature. First, the results of this work suggest that supervisory support received at work (Greenhaus et al., 2012) can play an important role in the achievement of WLB for employees. There are many types of support that can be offered at the workplace. However, in this study, a supervisor who makes time to listen to his/her employees, tries to meet their needs, and shows concern about similar other issues can have a huge impact on their WLB.

Second, the findings reveal that WLB bears a positive relationship with BTM, QL, and JP. Several studies (e.g. Greenhaus et al., 2003; Michel et al., 2014; Rego, 2009) have investigated the impact of better time management, quality of life, and job performance on work–life balance. This research work reiterates the same. Conversely, any incompatibility between work and family roles reduces the well-being of workers, especially of working parents (Davies and McAlpine, 1998). Commuting between work and the family environment can create a lot of challenges for the employees. The notion of work not interfering with family and vice-versa is quite invalid and obsolete. Only those organizations are able to generate positive attitudes among their workers where supervisors are ready to help employees strike a balance between the two opposing worlds they are a part of. The good news is that this intervention does not always require expensive HR plans and strategies.

Support for all hypotheses was received indicating that productive, satisfied, and efficient employees displayed higher levels of LS. This positive relationship between BTM and LS is supported by Macan et al.'s (1990) findings. Similarly, Hypothesis H2b was also supported, and many researchers reported a strong correlation between QL and LS (Erdogan et al., 2012; Yildirim et al., 2013).

The strongest link to LS was of JP at $\beta = 0.293$, thus providing further support to findings of Duckworth et al. (2009) that there is a positive relationship between the two. The results show that despite the many other factors that contribute to life satisfaction, the importance of performing well at work is critical to enjoying life satisfaction. This argument is supported by Feyerherm and Vick's (2005) study that strongly concludes that women, especially Generation X women, are changing the whole idea of priorities. For them, personal fulfilment was closely related to their professional success. Therefore, they expect their supervisors to support, guide, mentor, and develop them so they can attain a healthy WLB.

It is important to note that the findings of the study are from a sample of a developing country: India. Therefore, the results may not always be generalized in developed countries. Power distance between supervisor and subordinate is present in all societies; however, this phenomenon is more pronounced in a society like India (Sriramesh, 2013). The findings have many local, regional, and cultural undertones especially with regard to women. Considering the fact that the study has been conducted amongst women academicians of J&K (India), its context is also a novel one. Therefore, the current study contributes to the work–life balance literature by providing an understudied as well as a non-Western perspective.

Studies have emphasized the critical role of supervisors in responding to work–life imbalances. This imbalance is buffered when supervisors support their employees. The present findings clearly indicate that in the context of female employees, supervisory support is an important work-related resource. Our findings are consistent with previous research such as Ling Suan and Nasurdin (2016) and Jolly et al. (2021), who highlighted the importance of instrumental support that supervisors provide to employees in reaching their work goals and meeting family demands.

Interestingly, the results of the study showed that the relationship between supervisor support and gender was a typical one, with women expecting more from supervisors than men. An incompatible orientation between the two may weaken a woman's work commitment. Compounding this situation is that women in India are expected to be driven by a sense of nurturing and communal goals (Chadda and Deb, 2013).

As already mentioned, this study highlights the important role of supervisory support in helping working women achieve the desired work–life balance. Applying this information, academic institutions must sensitize themselves

towards improvement in their dealing with female workforce. This can be highly facilitated by proper supervisory support.

It is worth noting that the findings of the present study came from a non-Western perspective. However, several comparisons can be made with studies conducted in the West on this topic. The significant relationship between work-life balance and BTM, QL, and JP is consistent with the socio-cultural context findings, e.g. Greenhaus et al's (2003) research in the West and Goyal and Babel's (2015) study in India. The significant relationship between SS and LS is consistent with earlier research conducted in a Western context (Duckworth et al., 2009).

The results of studies conducted in affluent Western countries cannot be generalized in most cases to developing countries. This is due to local, regional, cultural, and economic factors that have to be taken into account when generalizing the results. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to occupational groups, cultures, and female employees worldwide. There is still a universal application of the study in terms of homogeneity in the problems faced by women all over the world. This study provides a non-Western perspective on the relationship between supervisory support and work-life balance of working women.

6. Limitations, Implications, and Scope for Further Research

No study is without limitations. Still, the results of this work can propel future research in this area. First, the data were collected from a single source. Had multiple sources been used, the conclusions could have carried more weight. Response biases, such as self-presentation, may exist because all variables were self-reported at only one point in time. In order to reduce single-source bias, adequate steps (following Avolio et al., 1991) were taken. Moreover, the design of the study is non-experimental. Thus, a direct investigation of causality is not possible. In order to mitigate the study limitations, a systematic replication of this work in different samples using different measures would be useful for generalization. Another shortcoming is that no mediators have been considered in the study model. Nonetheless, it is recognized that other variables, such as individual factors, non-work as well as environmental factors, may play a role in explaining the relationship between SS, WLB, and LS. Finally, the data used in the research was compiled from J&K, India. The Western world and Asian cultures have idiosyncratic values, which may greatly differ. Therefore, findings should not be generalized without first determining the cultural context. This is especially important with reference to women, as the treatment they receive may

vary from culture to culture. It would be interesting to replicate this study in other cultures as well.

Forthcoming research could be aimed at looking into WLB in a more integrated manner. Therefore, investigating WLB along the lines of life enrichment and satisfaction could provide a deeper understanding of this concept to all stakeholders (employees, families, organizations, etc.). An examination of life satisfaction and its relationship with WLB could also assist understanding in terms of creating new theories as well as perspectives.

The results also suggested several additional possibilities for research in future. Further analysis of SS and its different dimensions may provide better and deeper insights into the role it plays in helping employees achieve the desired WLB. An additional inquiry is necessary to increase the validity (internal and external) of the present findings. The shortcomings of the cross-sectional design used in the study can be improved by a longitudinal design. Further, concerns about common method variance can be addressed by using multiple sources of data.

SS is of utmost importance since it is related to several outcomes, including the WLB, QL, LS, etc. of employees. The results of this work suggest that managers can improve WLB, BTM, QL, and JP and increase employee LS through better SS. Managers today are becoming more wary of work–life balance issues than their predecessors. Their efforts aim to improve connections between the domains of work and life by improving employees' job-related skills, networks, and coping strategies – this is supported by relevant research. This piece of enquiry reveals that SS along with WLB will have an important and positive impact on employees' LS. These findings are particularly relevant for the education sector, which has recently become a high-stress sector for its employees in Jammu and Kashmir (India) and elsewhere. Therefore, it is noteworthy that SS has a positive effect on WLB, BTM, QL, and JP and ultimately on employees' LS.

In conclusion, this study examined the relationship between SS and LS through WLB, BTM, QL, and JP. This research fills a gap by building on theories like George Homans's Social Exchange Theory, Time Management Theory, Multiple Resources Theory, IOQL theory, etc. to examine the ultimate relationship between SS and LS. According to these theories, much of an individual's social life involves interactions between individuals (corporate actors in this case). Organizations can be viewed as social exchanges where supervisory support can result in better work engagement and sense of control over time. Employees and supervisors must be viewed as two critical resources that, if they work in harmony, can alleviate all kinds of negative emotions at work. Recognition and effective management of a worker's socio-emotional needs results in the improvement of his/her quality of life.

This puts us in a better position to answer our research question: "How does supervisor support lead to life satisfaction?" It seems that SS does provide support

that has been related to employees' LS in the education sector of J&K (India) for a long time.

Ethical Approval

All ethical guidelines were followed. All procedures followed were in accordance with the ethical standards of the responsible committee on human experimentation (institutional and national). Informed consent was obtained from all participants for being included in the study. This article does not contain any studies with animal subjects performed by any of the authors.

Informed Consent

The participants have consented to the submission of the case report to the journal.

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