

Effect of Work-Life Balance on Employees' Well-Being

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Abstract

Work-life balance has become a major concern for people nowadays, especially after the pandemic. Employees are paying more attention to having more time with family or their personal life and are increasingly aware of the importance of well-being. This literature review aims to explore the relationship between work-life balance and employees' well-being. The review collects findings from multiple studies, highlighting important aspects of work-life balance and their effects on physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Scopus database is used as the primary database to collect articles for this study's objectives. The review has found that work-life balance brings significant influence and plays a positive role in employee well-being. By evaluating diverse research methodologies and findings, this review identifies trends, challenges, and gaps in the existing literature. The findings suggest that a positive work-life balance significantly enhances employees' overall well-being, leading to improved job satisfaction, productivity, and mental health. On the other hand, poor work-life balance is highly associated with increased stress, burnout, and negative health impacts. The review concludes with recommendations for future research to explore specific determinants and interventions that can improve a healthier work-life balance, ultimately benefiting both employees and organisations.

Keywords

Employee, Organizational Climate, Well-Being, Work Culture, Work-Life Balance

1. Introduction

With the rise of mental health issues, managing one's well-being becomes a priority element for most to consider. In the pursuit of navigating one's career and

managing their well-being, the request for work-life balance in organisations increases in demand. Multiple research has been done to study the effects of work-life balance and well-being and whether these two elements are correlated (Yang et al., 2018; Hasan et al., 2020; Abdul Jalil et al., 2023; Stankevičienė et al., 2021; Nabawanuka & Ekmekcioglu, 2021; Rahim et al., 2020). For instance, Yang et al. (2018) found that individuals with a better work-life balance reported significantly higher levels of psychosocial well-being, as well as greater job satisfaction and mental health stability.

Before diving deeper into the objective of this paper, it is best to fully understand the key concepts that are emphasised in this paper, which are “work-life balance” and “well-being”. The concept of well-being comes from various aspects and is influenced by local cultural factors. One of the studies on South Korean and Hong Kong workers discussed how societal expectations, long working hours, competitive and fast-paced working culture impacted the perceptions of well-being and work-life balance (Yang et al., 2018; Wong et al., 2021). In Malaysia, factors such as job security, family support and organisational climate are critical elements of well-being, reflecting the local collective social values (Abdul Jalil et al., 2023; Rahim et al., 2019).

Many researches have attempted to define these two concepts in respect of their nature and characteristics. However, according to Stankevičienė et al. (2021), the idea is viewed as having multi factors like generational differences, regions, countries, social values and customs that affect the overall definition of well-being. Likewise with defining the concept of work-life balance, Yang et al. (2018) state that there is no consensus to the accepted definition of work-life balance as the idea is complex. In their research, they have cited various definitions from different studies and narrowed it to include multiple definitions such as the “‘equilibrium or an overall sense of harmony in work and private life’, ‘an adequate amount of resources to respond effectively to the demands of their and family roles’, and ‘balancing the life demands of various life-roles’” (p. 3). They did not, however, attempt to define the concept of well-being. In a different study, work-life balance is further defined as a state of equilibrium where work demands and personal responsibilities—emotional, behavioral, and personal—are aligned. This balance is also shaped by individuals’ subjective evaluation (Abdul Jalil et al., 2023). Well-being is also defined as the experience of positive emotions outweighing negative ones, accompanied by the absence of mental illness, which can enhance overall life functioning (Zhang et al., 2017, as cited in Abdul Jalil et al., 2023). Hassan et al. defined well-being as the positive evaluation individuals make about the state of their lives. Meanwhile, Rahim et al. (2019) focused on the psychological aspect of well-being, describing it as living a good life, which combines positive feelings with the ability to function effectively.

2. Objective

In the current landscape, achieving work-life balance has gained increasing

importance, especially in the aftermath of the pandemic. According to [Sandoval-Reyes et al. \(2021\)](#), the pandemic has influenced work arrangements by increasing the demand for remote work, which has had a negative impact on work-life balance. The sudden shift to remote work brought challenges, including overworking, extended working hours, and blurred boundaries between work and personal life, resulting in poorer work-life balance ([Sandoval-Reyes et al., 2021](#)). For instance, in the IT sector, many companies started to adopt work from home practices, which made it more challenging for working women to balance their professional and personal responsibilities. As a result, individuals are now getting more eager on understanding ways to improve their well-being, raising the question: Does work-life balance play a significant role in enhancing employee well-being? This literature review seeks to address this question by specifically examining the impact of work-life balance on employees' well-being.

3. Literature Review

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted multitudes of aspects from economy to sociopolitical issues, pushing the working industry to adapt to new challenges in order to maintain and update their organisational performance and workforce management. Today, employers acknowledge the importance of their employees' wellbeing as a business management strategy, which impacts not only the financial welfare of the organization, but also, the productivity of the company.

It was found that higher employee wellbeing is attributed to the support received from coworkers at the workplace ([Apouey et al., 2020](#)). Additionally, work-life balance is also a crucial element for employers and employees ([Wong et al., 2021](#)). According to Hassan et al. work-life balance is also a cost-efficient strategy of improving working conditions, developing innovation and creativity, and ensuring the welfare of employees. Companies that offer work-life balance have a significant impact on their employees' work performance, productivity and relationship among colleagues ([Wong et al., 2021](#)). Whereas, companies that do not offer such flexibility, would have an adverse effect on their employees ([Haider et al., 2018](#)). Balancing work and personal life can be challenging and has an effect on one's satisfaction in life and at work ([Rahim et al., 2019](#)).

Majority of research on the relationship of work-life balance and well-being will touch on elements of work-family conflict and its influence on one's life and job satisfaction, and overall state of physical and mental health ([Rahim et al., 2019](#)). [Gaikwad et al. \(2021\)](#) highlighted three factors that negatively impacts work-life balance; long working hours, lack of flexibility in working arrangement and work pressure such as overload of work and increase in job demand. Poor balance between work and personal life has been found to reduce job satisfaction, diminish psychosocial well-being, and lower overall quality of life, while also contributing to mental health issues such as burnout, depression, and family conflict ([Allen et al., 2000](#); [Grant-Vallone & Donaldson, 2001](#); [Grzywacz & Bass, 2003](#); [Peeters et al., 2005](#) as cited in [Yang et al., 2018](#)). Current studies confirmed these and have

shown that work-life balance contributes positively to the well-being of individuals and their families (Shams & Kadow, 2019). Evidently, the significance of this study lies in its potential to improve understanding and explore factors enhancing work-life balance, ultimately improving mental health and overall quality of life for employees.

4. Methodology

The literature review began with searching across the Scopus, utilising the subscription access of Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). The search was conducted with keywords related to the effect of hybrid working models on work-life balance of employees and subsequent impact on employee well-being. The primary keywords identified such as “work-life balance”, and “employee well-being”. In order to capture a broader range of related literature, associated keywords and phrases synonymous with the primary terms were also being used in search query. **Table 1** shows the primary keywords and associated keywords used in the search strategy.

Table 1. Primary keywords and associated keywords for searching process.

Primary Keywords	Associated Keywords
work-life balance	work life balance, work-life balance
employee well-being	employee wellbeing, employee well-being, employee well being, emotional wellbeing, emotional well being, emotional well-being, employee mental health, mental health

Note. This table show the primary keywords and associated keywords used in the search strategy.

The combinations of keywords were used to screen based on title, abstract, and keywords of results. The search continued to filter by document type of articles, research papers, and journals that were published in English from the year 2018 to 2024. At this stage, a total of 123 documents were identified as potentially relevant. After reviewing the titles and abstracts, the number of literature was reduced to 25 based on their alignment with the review’s objectives. Furthermore, there were 13 articles being excluded due to inaccessible document’s full texts within the UPM’s subscription resources. **Table 2** is showing the inclusion criteria, while **Table 3** is presenting the exclusion criteria being conducted during the searching process. Meanwhile, **Figure 1** illustrates the PRISMA flowchart, which visualises the selection process for the review studies. After this screening process, 11 documents remained and were thoroughly reviewed to contribute the findings of this literature review.

5. Findings

The summary of findings from the selected articles is presented in **Table 4**. The

Table 2. Inclusion criteria of literature screening process.

Inclusion Criteria	Particulars	Literature Identified	Literature Remained
Keywords	work life balance, wellbeing, well being, mental health	623	623
Language	English	597	597
Year range	From 2018 to 2024	221	221
Document type	Articles, Journal, Research papers	123	123

Table 3. Exclusion criteria of literature screening process.

Exclusion Criteria	Particulars	Literature Identified	Literature Remained
Literature's title and abstract	Irrelevant title and abstract with reasons	123	25
Access to document full-text	No	25	12

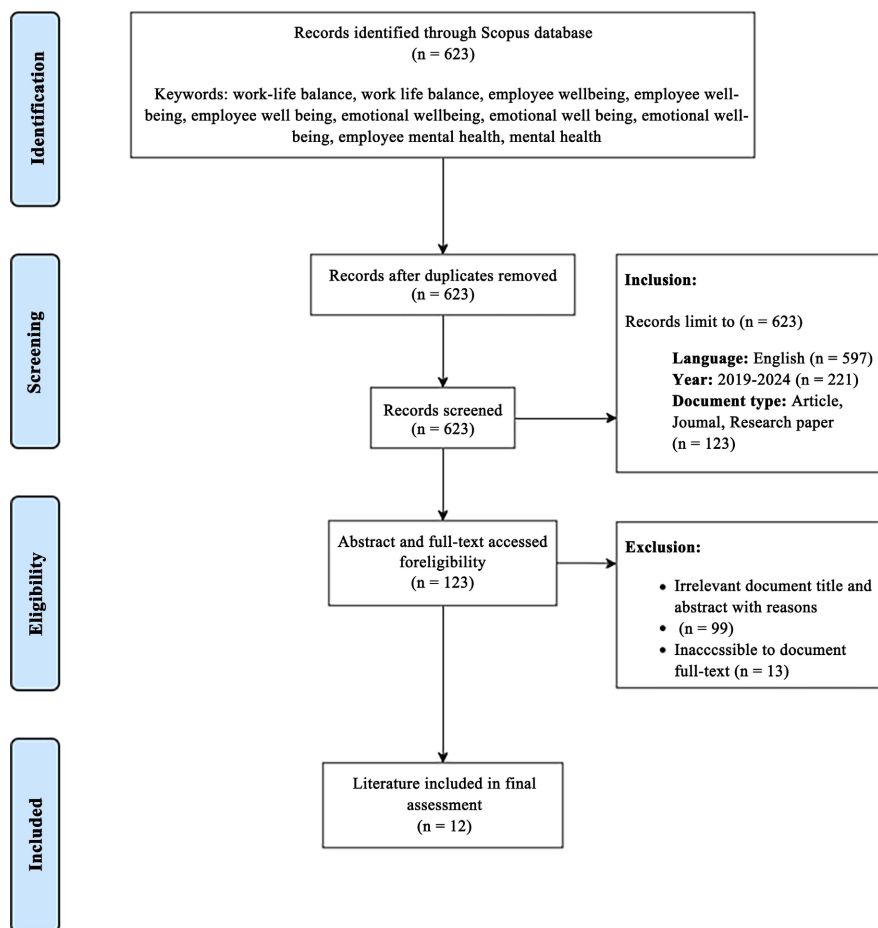
**Figure 1.** Prisma flowchart for selection review of studies on the effects of work-life balance on employees' well-being.

table outlines the author, year of publication, title of the literature, country or region of the study, sample details, and the main findings. This format offers a clear overview of research on the impact of work-life balance on employees' well-being. The information is organised to highlight data relevant to the objectives of this literature review.

Table 4. Summary of selected literatures.

Authors (Year)	Literature's Title	Country/Region	Sample	Findings
Yang et al. (2018)	The work-life balance and psychosocial well-being of South Korean workers	South Korea	Data were collected among 30,649 paid workers aged 15 and above.	The study revealed that individuals with a balanced work-life exhibited notably higher scores for psychosocial well-being. Enhanced psychosocial well-being was associated with reduced working hours, greater job autonomy, more workplace support, job security, younger age, higher education levels, increased income, and employment in white-collar occupations.
Shams & Kadow (2019)	The Relationship Between Subjective Well-Being and Work-life Balance Among Labourers in Pakistan	Pakistan	A stratified sample of 640 labourers was chosen from five major industries across different provinces in Pakistan.	The research indicated that maintaining a balanced work-family life significantly enhances overall well-being, aside from socio-economic factors like health, education, and income of a labourer.
Abdul Jalil et al. (2023)	The Relationship between Job Insecurity and Psychological Well-Being among Malaysian Precarious Workers: Work-Life Balance as a Mediator	Malaysia	442 respondents collected using purposive and snowball sampling methods.	Job instability had a negative correlation with work-life balance and psychological well-being. A positive relationship was found between work-life balance and psychological well-being.

Continued

Stankevičienė et al. (2021)	The Mediating Effect Of Work-Life Balance On The Relationship Between Work Culture And Employee Well-Being	Lithuania	402 employees from business and government organisations in Lithuania.	The research concluded that work culture has a significant impact on employee well-being, both directly and indirectly through work-life balance. The direct impact of work culture on well-being is more significant than the indirect effect mediated by work-life balance. A family-friendly culture enhances work-life balance, leading to higher overall job satisfaction and well-being.
Wong et al. (2021)	The Interplay of Socioecological Determinants of Work-Life Balance, Subjective Wellbeing and Employee Wellbeing	Hong Kong	1063 employed individuals aged eighteen and above in Hong Kong (52.96% male, 47.04% female).	Relational, community, and societal factors positively affect intrapersonal factors, which are positively associated with work-life balance (WLB). WLB is positively related to subjective well-being, which moderates the relationship between WLB and employee well-being and the quality and quantity of personal life time.
Hasan et al. (2020)	The Balance between Work and Life for Subjective Well-Being: A Moderated Mediation Model	Pakistan	301 employees of government and private sector hospitals in Pakistan (Most of the participants were male (74.42%), with an average age of 37.14 years. The majority of respondents had 18 years of education (50.83%), followed by above 18 years of education (40.20%). In terms of work experience, the highest percentage of respondents had 3 - 5 years of tenure (38.21%).	Work culture significantly affects employee well-being both directly and indirectly through WLB. Temporal flexibility, supportive supervision, and operational flexibility were all significant predictors of employee well-being.

Continued

Yang & Jo (2022)	Roles of work-life balance and trait mindfulness between recovery experiences and employee subjective well-being: A moderated mediation model	China	A convenience sample of 348 full-time Chinese hotel employees from 3 - 5-star hotels was collected using a self-administered online survey.	Psychological well-being mediates the link between work-life balance and job performance, while employees' satisfaction with coworkers enhances job performance by strengthening the effect of work-life balance on psychological well-being.
Haider et al. (2018)	Moderated Mediation between Work Life Balance and Employee Job Performance: The Role of Psychological Wellbeing and Satisfaction with Coworkers	Pakistan	284 workers in the banking sector	The study discovered that psychological well-being acts as a mediator between work-life balance and job performance, while employees' satisfaction with coworkers boosts job performance by amplifying the impact of work-life balance on psychological well-being.
Nabawanuka & Ekmekcioglu (2021)	Millennials in the workplace: perceived supervisor support, work-life balance and employee well-being	Turkey	The article does not provide specific details about the participants or data collection procedure.	The research discovered that support from supervisors had a positive impact on both work-life balance and employee well-being. The findings underscore the critical role of supportive supervisors in enhancing millennials' workplace experiences and overall well-being.
Rahim et al. (2020)	Linking Work-Life Balance and Employee Well-Being	Malaysia	The specifics of the participants and the data collection procedure were not detailed in the article.	The importance of supervisor and family support in enhancing work-life balance and employee well-being was emphasised. The findings suggested practical implications for improving organisational support systems to boost employee satisfaction and productivity.

Continued

Gaikwad et al. (2021)	Impact of Work-Life Balance on Job Performance-Analysis of The Mediating Role of Mental Well-Being and Work Engagement on Women Employees in IT Sector	India	128 working women employees	No significant relationship was found between work-life balance and job performance. However, work engagement showed significant associations with job performance, work-life balance, and mental well-being. Mental well-being and work engagement did not mediate the relationship between work-life balance and job performance. The COVID-19 pandemic increased pressure on employees, impacting their work-life balance and mental well-being.
Rahim et al. (2019)	Evaluating Work-Life Balance and Individual Well-Being with the Moderating Role of Organisational Climate	Malaysia	94 employees from an ODL University in Northern Malaysia.	The study found significant relationships between work-life balance, career satisfaction, psychological well-being, and organisational climate. The organisational climate was a significant moderator in the relationship between work-life balance and well-being.

6. Discussion

The relationship between work-life balance (WLB) and employee well-being has been extensively studied across various sectors and regions, revealing complex dynamics influenced by multiple factors. This review synthesises findings from 12 articles, offering insights into how WLB affects job performance, mental well-being, and subjective well-being among employees, with a focus on different mediating and moderating variables.

6.1. The Importance of Work-Life Balance

The studies consistently demonstrate that maintaining a healthy work-life balance positively affects various employee outcomes. Employees who are able to effectively manage their professional and personal responsibilities tend to experience higher levels of job satisfaction, psychological well-being, and job performance.

This is attributed to factors such as reduced stress, increased engagement, and a greater sense of gratitude towards the employer.

6.2. The Mediating Role of Well-Being and Satisfaction

The research underscores the role of job satisfaction and psychological well-being in mediating the link between work-life balance and job performance (Stankevičienė et al., 2021). Employees who maintain a better work-life balance report greater job satisfaction and higher levels of psychological well-being, which in turn enhances their job performance. This suggests that organisations should focus on fostering a supportive work environment that enables employees to maintain a healthy work-life balance, as this can have a cascading positive effect on employee outcomes.

6.3. Work Culture and Employee Well-Being

The study on South Korean workers by Jae et al. reveals that WLB partially mediates the relationship between work culture and employee well-being. Temporal flexibility, supportive supervision, and operational flexibility are significant predictors of well-being, both directly and through improved WLB. Creating a supportive work culture with these elements can significantly enhance employee well-being by promoting better WLB.

6.4. The Moderating Influence of Organisational Factors

Several studies point to the moderating influence of organisational climate and supervisor support moderate the impact of work-life balance on employee well-being (Rahim et al., 2019; Rahim et al., 2020; Nabawanuka & Ekmekcioglu, 2021). Studies have discussed factors such as peer and supervisor support, job autonomy, and flexible working hours contribute to a supportive organisational climate that enhances employee satisfaction and well-being (Yang et al., 2018; Wong et al., 2021; Nabawanuka & Ekmekcioglu, 2021). For instance, Yang et al. (2018) highlighted that job autonomy and flexibility are essential factors, as they allow employees greater control over their work and personal life, which in turn enhances work-life balance and well-being.

Furthermore, a supportive organisational climate and supportive supervisors can amplify the beneficial effects of work-life balance on satisfaction. This emphasises the need for cultivating a work culture that values work-life balance and supplies the required resources and support for employees' success. Organisations should prioritise training supervisors to provide the necessary support to employees.

6.5. Organisational Climate and Individual Well-Being

A positive organisational climate enhances the beneficial effects of WLB on individual well-being. Employees who perceive a supportive organisational climate report higher well-being when they experience good WLB. Organisations should

foster a supportive climate alongside promoting WLB to maximise employee well-being (Rahim et al., 2019).

6.6. Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance varies across countries, whether developing or developed. In developing countries, maintaining work-life balance can be challenging due to uncertain socio-economic conditions and a lack of resources that heavily impact factors such as health, education, and income. Furthermore, the lack of workplace support, such as fostering a positive culture, work flexibility, and supervisory backing, further hinders the existence of work-life balance for employees. Conversely, in developed countries, greater emphasis is placed on creating a family-friendly work culture and allowing personal time beyond work, which positively contributes to work-life balance.

7. Implications and Future Studies

7.1. The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted on work-life balance, with increased remote work and blurred boundaries between professional and personal responsibilities (Susanto et al., 2022). This has led to heightened pressure on employees, impacting their mental well-being and work engagement. Maintaining a healthy work-life balance has become even more crucial in the post-pandemic context to ensure employee retention, productivity, and overall well-being.

7.2. Implications for Organizations

The research findings suggest that organisations should prioritise policies and practices that encourage work-life balance, such as flexible work arrangements, remote work options, and supportive supervision (Rahim et al., 2019; Rahim et al., 2020; Nabawanuka & Ekmekcioglu, 2021). By fostering a work environment that allows employees to effectively manage their professional and personal commitments, organisations can enhance job satisfaction, psychological well-being, and ultimately, employee performance and retention. Additionally, investing in supervisor training and development to cultivate a supportive work culture can further amplify the positive impacts of work-life balance on employee outcomes.

7.3. Theoretical and Practical Contributions

The studies reviewed make significant contributions to the literature by describing the complex relationships between work-life balance, job performance, and employee well-being. Theoretically, they highlight the importance of considering multiple factors and their interactions in understanding these relationships. Practically, the findings guide organisations in developing effective strategies to support employee well-being and performance, including the implementation of

flexible work arrangements and supportive supervision.

7.4. Future Research Directions

Future research could explore the long-term effects of work-life balance interventions on employee well-being and performance. Additionally, studies could investigate how different industries and cultural contexts impact the relationships between work-life balance, job performance, and employee well-being. Further research could also examine the role of technology and digital tools in supporting work-life balance and employee well-being, particularly in the post-pandemic context.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, work-life balance significantly influences employees' well-being. This literature review has emphasised the strong connection between work-life balance and various aspects of employee well-being, such as mental health, job satisfaction, and productivity. By implementing policies and practices that support a healthy balance between work and personal life, organisations are not only able to improve their employees' well-being but also bring positive influences to overall productivity and job satisfaction.

The comprehensive inclusion of studies from various industries and geographical regions provides a broad perspective on the link between work-life balance and well-being. However, the criteria for screening may have been too generalised, resulting in a wide range of resources. Although there is extensive research on work-life balance and employees' well-being, there is a lack of research on the determinants of both concepts, such as job satisfaction, working arrangements, and working culture for work-life balance, and physical, emotional, and mental aspects for well-being. Most studies rely on self-reported data, which can be subject to response biases.

Future research should focus on identifying specific factors of influencing work-life balance and well-being and explore their interrelationships in different contexts. Additionally, it's suggested that future researchers include longitudinal studies in order to provide deeper insights into the long-term impacts of work-life balance initiatives. By addressing these gaps, future studies can offer more comprehensive guidance for organisations seeking to enhance employee well-being through effective work-life balance strategies.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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