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Work-Life Balance and Employee Engagement: Key Drivers of Career Success in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's University Faculty

Muhammad Waseem Qureshi

Ph.D. Management Sciences Scholar Qurtuba University D.I.Khan

wasimqureshipp@gmail.com

Dr. Muhammad Imran

Associate Professor Qurtuba University D.I.Khan. muhammadimran@qurtuba.edu.pk

Bela Kundi

Ph.D Scholar Gomal Univeraity D.I.Khan. Email: belakundi1@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between work-life balance, employee engagement, and career success among university faculty in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Recognizing the critical role of work-life balance in fostering job satisfaction and professional development, the research explores how employee engagement moderates this relationship. Grounded in theoretical frameworks such as Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, the study underscores the importance of mutual support and resource availability in enhancing career outcomes. A quantitative approach was employed, utilizing structured surveys distributed to faculty members across universities in the region. The study targeted a sample size of 400 teaching faculty members from a population of approximately 5,000 across 32 universities. A convenient technique was applied to ensure representation from various institutions and academic disciplines. This approach facilitated a comprehensive assessment of the relationships among the variables of interest. The data analysis revealed that work-life balance positively influences career success, and this effect is significantly enhanced when employees are engaged. Engaged faculty demonstrated greater resilience, motivation, and adaptability, which translated into better utilization of work-life balance initiatives and higher

career satisfaction. The findings emphasize that employee engagement acts as a crucial moderator, amplifying the positive impact of work-life balance on career advancement. The practical implications of the study suggest that higher education institutions should implement comprehensive work-life balance policies and engagement strategies tailored to diverse faculty needs.

Keywords: Work-life Balance, Career Success, Employee Engagement, Gender, HEIs

Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving business environment, the value of employees has become more apparent than ever (Testa et al., 2023; Ismail, 2023). Organizations that aim to succeed must acknowledge that their achievements are inextricably linked to the dedication, enthusiasm, and performance of their workforce (Akgunduz et al., 2023). As businesses strive to maintain a competitive edge, identifying and fostering the factors that drive employee performance has become a central focus (Banmairuoy et al., 2022). Employees are more than just the individuals who keep the wheels turning—they are the innovators, problem-solvers, and core drivers of business growth (Akther & Tariq, 2020; Chanana & Sangeeta, 2021). To ensure that employees are equipped to meet the evolving demands of their roles, organizations must prioritize ongoing training and development, which not only improve skills but also boost morale and motivation (Diamantidis & Chatzogloum, 2019).

Another important characteristic for encouraging people for high performance and organizational commitment is the possibility to balance work and personal life. This balance directly impacts employees' physical health, their mental health and their subjective well-being levels, job satisfaction and organizational commitment, all these factors considerably influence productivity and organisational performance (Yadav et al., 2022). When employees can maintain a harmonious work-life balance, their overall well-being and job

satisfaction improve, leading to higher levels of engagement and productivity. Engaged employees are not only more productive; they are also more loyal to the company, demonstrating a greater willingness to go above and beyond in their work (Ismail, 2023).

Achieving this work-life balance, however, is far from simple. Individuals experience and interpret this balance in unique ways—some may find it an opportunity to excel, while others may view it as an ongoing challenge. The complexities of modern work environments—shaped by constant technological advancements and shifting organizational structures—have only made this balance harder to attain (Powell, Greenhaus, Allen, & Johnson, 2019).

Over the last two decades, research on work engagement has expanded, examining how it influences both individual and organizational outcomes like productivity and business growth (Christian et al., 2011; Nutcache, 2019; Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2022). Scholars argue that maintaining a balanced work-life dynamic is essential for fostering job satisfaction, career success, and overall well-being. However, the relationship between work-life balance and career advancement is complex. Numerous factors including rewards, work environment, and organizational culture affect employee engagement, which in turn impacts career progression (Mohd, Shah, & Zailan, 2016; Istiqlal, 2024). Recent studies suggest that engaged employees are better able to achieve a work-life balance, which subsequently enhances their job performance and supports career advancement (Saks, 2023). The link between work-life balance and career success is multifaceted, involving both objective measures (such as salary, promotions, and job level) and subjective factors (such as personal achievements and fulfillment) (Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1995). Objective career success is typically quantified through indicators like income, job promotions, and level of responsibility within the organization (Gattiker & Larwood, 1986).

There are several promising lines of inquiry with regard to the association between work-life balance and career success that need sleuthing. They pertain to the rather shallow understanding we've had to date around whether, how, and in what contexts work-life balance matters for work performance and career progression. It's high time we consider work-life balance as a serious variable in play (Perrigino, 2018, p. 184; O'Brien 2022). Some of the factors that affect career choices include gender, race and or caregiving roles, and the concern with some of the complexities raised in this paper could be well served by further exploration of the experiences of subjects who are enmeshed in multiple identities. Therefore, understanding how all these factors affect career mobility may help researchers attain a better perception as to how work and career balance affects work-life balance. Najam et al. (2020) recommend that future studies should control for variables including; Intelligence Quotient (IQ), personality, and demographics as the moderators that would establish a broad perspective of how these variables influence work-life balance and career success (Houssein et al. 2020). Work-life balance, together with work engagement, has also been addressed in another study by Ugwu et al. (2023), where the authors note that future investigations should enlist subject matter experts from various universities to increase the interperative tenor of the studied results.

Further Zhang (2020), Zhu and al. (2022) as well as Amah & Ogah (2021) have taken studies a notch higher, and recommended that the educational institutions should encourage a sustainable work culture with a focus on employee involvement, Work-life balance, and promotion opportunities for greater growth. As employee work engagement has a major influence on the performance of the organization, employers prioritize it. Organizations aim to provide work-life balance (WLB)-promoting workplaces for their employees. The same pattern applies to an individual's degree of professional accomplishment. As per the findings of Lee et al. (2016) and Mas-Machuca et al. (2016), employees who want

to advance in their careers must exhibit a significant degree of personal and professional autonomy. According to Ferreira et al. (2020) and Najam et al. (2020), social contexts are crucial for assessing work-life balance and professional success variables. Workplace engagement and work-life balance disputes impact workers' professional success; this needs an objective and subjective assessment. Understanding the connection between work-life balance and organizational participation is essential to developing procedures that help academic professionals advance in their careers while preserving their personal well-being. From the above arguments this study trying to investigate that *how does work life balance improves career Success among HEIs academic profession and to what extant employee engagement exaggerate this interaction?*

The dynamics of these interaction can be described with the use of the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory which mainly focuses on preservation and accumulation of resources, including time, energy and social support as key to stress regulation and maintenance of well-being (Hobfoll, 1989). As a concept, work-life balance is used to describe the way by which people balance their working commitments and their off working time. Finding an optimal fit between these two variables is possible and must be achieved in order to minimize stress and increase wellbeing (Greenhaus and Allen, 2011). So through the youlck of COR this study contributes to the following

This research is highly significant as it explores the intersection of work-life balance (WLB), employee engagement, and career success, focusing on university faculty in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Although WLB has been extensively discussed in organizational studies, its specific impact on career outcomes and employee engagement within the academic sector, particularly in the context of Pakistani higher education, has received limited attention. This study aims to fill that gap by providing empirical evidence on how WLB practices

influence career success, emphasizing the moderating role of employee engagement.

The importance of this study is twofold: it advances theoretical understanding and offers practical insights. While previous research has typically examined WLB and employee engagement in isolation or within different industries and regions, there is a lack of integrated research within the higher education context of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. By focusing on university faculty—who face unique challenges such as heavy teaching loads, administrative responsibilities, and research pressures—this study offers targeted insights tailored to the needs of academic professionals.

Literature Review

Conservation of Resource Theory COR Perspective

As per COR theory, people are motivated for getting and maintaining resources such as time, energy, and support (Hobfoll, 2001). When employees' work-to-family or family-to-work help receives support for organization supported flexible work options or wellness programs, organization employees are in a better position of protecting and creating such resources hence minimizing burnout while maximizing job satisfaction and organizational commitment from organizational members (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). Career success is assumed to measure both the quantity, including pay and advancement, or the quality, referring to self-fulfillment and career satisfaction (Ng et al., 2005). In COR theory, the achievement of a particular career is a matter of acquiring and defending organisational resources such as competencies, reputation, and connections. When organisation provides a favourable perception towards the career advancement, the employees feel endowed and receptional, hence, having enhanced career satisfaction (Hobfoll et al., 2018). This process of resource acquisition assists employees attain organizational career developmental milestones as well as enhances their organizational dedication (Wayne et al., 2017). Organizational

commitment can be defined as the extent of interest employees have for their work. Throughout the studies although it is stated that employee engagement leads to attitude improvements and organizational performance (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009).

Self-COR theory explains rather well the relationships between work-to-family conflict, career attainment, and job satisfaction. It proposes that the access and storage of resources are central to the direction of employees' behaviors and attitudes. For example, when employees observe that an organisation cares for them by offering flexibility to work from home or a liberal company time off policy, they consider that both personal and career assets are cared for and preserved (Hobfoll, 2001). They foster availability of valuable resources for utilization in executing organizational tasks, which in turn enhances, the levels of commitment, and satisfaction. On the one hand, career success could also act as an antecedent to engagement while on the other hand could be an outcome of engagement. In the same manner, when employees look for promotions and get them, they look at these promotions as pile up resources in terms of skills and recognition make employees even more engaged and make positive behavior (Wayne et al., 2017). Also, the investment that employee believe that their organization has on them also enhances commitment, leading to long term employee drive (Hobfoll et al., 2018). In conclusion, it is just important that the COR theory has been used to show how work-life balance, career success, and employee engagement interact with each other is important as it highlighted the need to assist employees manage their resources. Those organizations which maintain and pursue the interest of employees in terms of care for the workers as well as in regard to their professional development, can certainly look forward to similar returns in way of active involvement, satisfaction and extent of loyalty in the workers. The benefit of this symbiosis demonstrates why such organizations

need to foster an appropriate and helpful environment to ensure successful and sustainable future for all employees and the company at large.

Work-life Balance and Career Success

Many works (Bloom, 2016; Cramer et al., 2019; Eikhof et al., 2007; Muhr et al., 2012; Orgad, 2019) shown that WLB initiatives very much remain performing rather than real attempts at engagement of effective change management and are more about sustaining a particular corporate image than creating any real culture shift. For instance, Windsor and Auyeung (2006) have established that motherhood has negative effects on women often mainly focusing on the career progression of female accountants and conversely fatherhood improves career prospects such as recognition, prestige and pay according to Fuller and Cooke, (2018). This pattern is also found in (Kugelberg, 2006; King, 2008; Almer et al., 2012).

As a result, accounting and auditing firms have shown reluctance in breaking from conventional career structures, especially the clear path to partnership, which has hindered their ability to attract female talent. Rather than rethinking career progression, these firms have adapted WLB policies to fit within existing career paths, which may unintentionally feminize the profession. Studies (Kossek et al., 2014) show that many employees highly value work-life balance, which strongly influences their job satisfaction and professional attitudes. When personal and professional goals align, employees are more likely to be motivated and engaged in their roles (Poulose & Sudarsan, 2014). Work-life balance research has mostly been conducted in Western Europe and English-speaking countries (Chandra, 2012), with some studies emerging in Eastern Europe (Shaffer et al., 2011). Research in Asian countries has been gaining momentum recently, with contributions from Hassan (2010), Cooke & Jing (2009), Verma et al. (2009), and Bhatnagar & Rajadhyaksha (2001). Greenhaus & Powell (2006) recommend expanding the study of work-family enrichment beyond the U.S. to get a more

global perspective. In countries like Germany and India, new studies on work-family dynamics are enhancing our understanding of work-life balance across cultures (Beham & Drobnič, 2010; Beham, Präg & Drobnič, 2012; Srivastava et al., 2009).

According to Greenhaus & Allen (2011) work-life balance mainly relates to satisfaction and accomplishment in several roles. In extension of the demands-resources fit model, Voydanoff (2005) suggests that, the availability of resources such as supervisor support, work flexible, and spousal support were very essential for maintaining work-life balance. These resources minimizes work to family conflict and enhances work to family facilitation (Byron, 2005; Michel et al., 2011; Carlson et al., 2006). The Conservation of Resources (COR) theory states that personal and contextual resources are required to meet demands in the domains of work and family which in turn will result in positive outcomes in both area (Hobfoll, 1988; ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). The WHRM assumes that resources mobilized include skills, self-efficacy, and positive moods that enhance performance and attitude at both work and domestic arenas thus a ‘resource gain spiral’ whereby every acquired resource facilitates acquisition of yet other resource thus enhancing positive results both at work and at home (Hobfoll, 2002).

Moderating role of Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a crucial and essential factor at the workplace since organizations mostly depend on it to achieve organizational goals. Work involvement refers to the level of person’s satisfaction with the job, extent of identification with the organization, and voluntary emergency performance standards evidently affecting work performance and organizational efficiency. That is why engaged employees put a lot of effort as well as personal passion in their work not only to improve their results, but primarily to feel joyful about it. Work engagement, as defined by Machey and Schneider (in Zahreni et al., 2021), is a desirable state that aligns with organizational goals and involves commitment,

enthusiasm, effort, and energy, manifesting in both attitudes and behaviors. H. Franky Ari Andriprianto and Herry Maridjo (2022) describe engagement as being composed of vigor, dedication, and absorption. Singh and Lalvani (2019) further explain that work engagement reflects the totality of employees' behaviors, including trust in the organization, the willingness to improve, an understanding of the business context, mutual respect among colleagues, and a desire for skill development.

The interaction between work-life balance (WLB) and career success, with employee engagement acting as a moderator, has garnered significant attention. Work-life balance refers to the ability to manage both professional and personal responsibilities effectively, which is vital for reducing stress and enhancing job satisfaction (Greenhaus & Allen, 2017; Beaugard & Henry, 2009). This work has distinguished Career Success, which involves the objective (Career advancement, increase in remunerations) and the perceived (Career satisfaction, personal accomplishment) dimension; and WLB directly connect both. Those workers who manage their work more and family less are likely to report higher levels of job satisfaction and career adaptation (Ng & Feldman, 2014; Wayne et al., 2020). In the view of Bakker and Demerouti (2017), organizational engagement defined as vigor, dedication, and absorption increases the WLB impact on career success.

Regarding workplace well-being and WLB resources, it seems clear that employee engagement facilitates an enhancement of resources necessary to the enhancement of one's career trajectory (as cited in Kular et al., 2022; Saks & Gruman, 2018). The studies revealed that the engaged employees are psychologically healthier as they cope with pressure at the workplace and also hurdle difficult road in career construction than nonengaged employees (Rothbard & Patil, 2022). This is in line with the JD-R model which avers that engagement is the use of resources to achieve career advancement (Bakker et al., 2014). There are noted that engaged employees apply WLB not only for stress management but also

for organizing the effective working performance perspective by maintaining the quality of performance while protecting their health (Tims et al., 2021; Xanthopoulou et al., 2019). Furthermore, engagement leads to an increase in perception of organizational support and thus enhances the WLB – career success relation. Employers who emphasize the involvement between work and the personal life of their workers, and who promote the social interaction of their workers, contribute effectively towards the development of the needed positive organizational culture. For instance, the organizations that the employees are committed to are seen as more supportive to increase commitment, job satisfaction and organizational loyalty (Kular et al., 2022). This perception of organizational support forms a virtuous cycle where employees, who are more engaged, get the most out of WLB measures hence enhancing engagement and subsequently career attainment (Greenhaus & Allen, 2017). From the following review this study hypothesized that:

H1: Positive significant association between work and Work-life Balance, workers’ engagement, & career success.

H2: Work life Balance has a significant impact on career success.

H3: Employee engagement has significant effect as a moderator in relationship to work-life balance with career success.

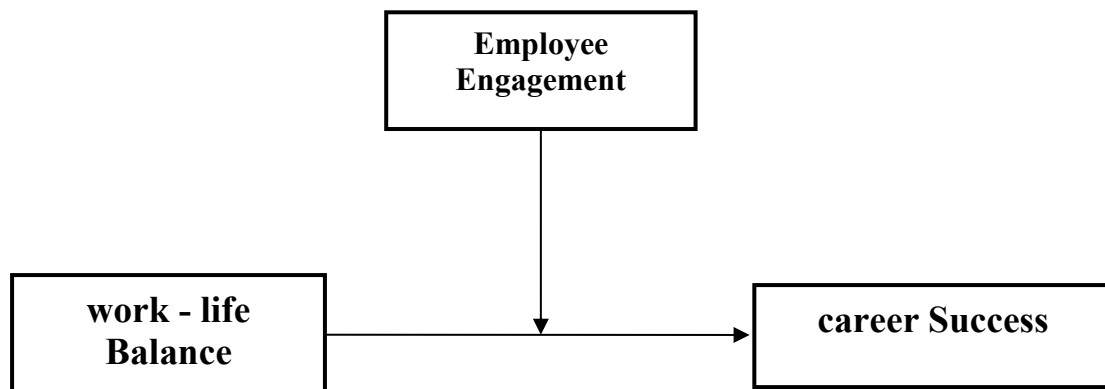


Figure 1: Research Framework

Methods

The primary emphasis of the current study is to accomplish the predetermined objectives and goals outlined in the problem description. This study utilized quantitative research approach. Researchers may employ this strategy to survey small groups or samples and draw broad conclusions while considering the entire population (Martin & Stenner, 2004). Present research population size is around 5000 teaching faculty, comprise of all of the 32 universities of the province (HEC Statistics, 2018). Further, Non-probability technique was used in convenient sampling of present study. Sample size considered acceptable ranged from 30- 500 (Field, 2013). Current study used 400 samples size to manage the questionnaire filled by teaching faculty of the various HEIs by following the guideline provided by Yamane (1967). The study employed an adapted questionnaire to collect primary data, building upon instruments developed by previous researchers for the relevant variables. These existing instruments were modified to better suit the specific context of the study. The questionnaire was designed with a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("strongly agree") to 7 ("strongly disagree"). This scale was utilized to measure participants' responses to various items. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, thorough assessments were conducted.

For data collection, the researcher personally distributed the adapted questionnaire, accompanied by a cover letter that explained the study's purpose, to faculty members at public universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. However The measurement of employees Well being involved utilizing, five items from Gröpel and Kuhl (2009) and sample item is "Because of my work, I have no free time." For employee engagement was investigated through adopted ten questions construct of Gallup Organization (2008). validated by number of studies across world. The measurement of employee's CSC was investigated through 12-item scale created by Shockley et al. (2016) and sample item is "Organizations I worked for have recognized me as a good performer." After collecting data from participants, the

next critical step was analyzing and interpreting the results. To do this, SPSS software (version 25) was used to perform several different analyses, ensuring a thorough and accurate understanding of the data. Importantly, a correlation matrix was used to explore the relationships between different variables. This helped to understand how strongly and in what direction variables were related to each other. While regression analysis was done to examine how independent variables might predict changes in the dependent variables. This analysis tested the hypotheses and showed how well the independent variables could forecast changes. For moderation analysis this step looked at how a third variable, called the moderator, might change the relationship between an independent and a dependent variable, Hayes (2013) process macro was used for the analysis.

Results

Table 4.1: Data Normality Statistics

		Std.		Std.		Std.		$\alpha > 0.7$
	N	Mean	Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis			Cronbach's
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Error	Error	Alpha
WLB	400	4.4857	.48200	-1.103	.398	-.260	.778	.849
CS	400	3.7157	.63057	-.669	.398	-.080	.778	.770
EE	400	3.7505	.59893	-.734	.398	.149	.778	.885
Valid N	400							
(listwise)								

In a sample of 400 university teaching faculty, descriptive statistics were calculated for three key variables: Work-Life Balance (WLB), Career Success (CS), and Employee Engagement (EE). The results showed that the average score for WLB was 4.49 (SD = 0.48), indicating a generally high level of satisfaction with work-life balance. For CS, the average was 3.72 (SD = 0.63), reflecting moderate

perceptions of career success. The mean score for EE was 3.75 (SD = 0.60), suggesting moderate levels of employee engagement.

Further analysis showed that the skewness values for WLB (-1.103), CS (-0.669), and EE (-0.734) all fall within the acceptable range of -3 to +3, meaning there's no significant skewness in the data for these variables. The kurtosis values for WLB (-0.260), CS (-0.080), and EE (0.149) also fall within the same range, indicating no major deviation from normality in terms of the distribution's peakedness. The reliability analysis for the Work-Life Balance (WLB) scale, Career Success (CS) and Employee Engagement (EE) is meeting the threshold, therefore suggesting a good internal consistency in the items. This implies that, the items used are valid in measuring the phenomena, under the concept of Work-Life Balance. These findings confirm that the data for all three variables follow a normal distribution, and reliable justifying the use of parametric statistical tests for further analysis.

Table 4.2: Correlation Analysis of WLB, SC and EE

		WLB	CS	EE
WLB	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	400		
CS	Pearson Correlation	.548**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	400	400	
EE	Pearson Correlation	.595**	.695**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	400	400	400

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Pearson correlation tests showed that Work–Life Balance (WLB) was positively correlated with Career Success (CS) and Employee Engagement (EE). More particularly, WLB was found positively relate to CS ($r = .548$, $p < .001$) and

EE ($r = .595, p < .001$). Moreover, a significant positive relationship was obtained between CS and EE ($r = .695, p < .001$). All coefficients show moderate to strong positive associations with each other and all tests of significance are conducted at the 0.01 level (two-tailed). This means that where there is high work-life balance, there is high career success and high employee engagement; and there is high career success and high employee engagement. Hypothesis H1 is to accepted.

Table 4.3: Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Table a) Model Summery

Model Summary								
Model	R	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change	
				R Square	F	df1		df2
1	.548 ^a	.301	.46620	.301	171.170	1	398	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), WLB

From the model quantification it is observed that WLB has significant impact on the dependent variable, CS. The analysis results for this part indicate a correlation coefficient of .548 proving that the relationship between WLB and CS is moderate and positive. The R Square value of .301 means that 30.1% of the variation of Career Success can be accounted by Work-Life Balance. The Adjusted R Square value of .299 indicates that an other aspect of the model offsets over estimation of R Square due to sampling by ensuring the value is an optimal fit. The standard error of the estimate is .46620 indicates the average distance of observed values from the regression line. Also, F Change ($F(1, 398) = 171.170, p < .001$) this suggest that Work-Life Balance used in this study is an excellent predictor of Career Success.

Table b) Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized		t	Sig.
		Coefficients		Coefficients			
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	3.535	.172			20.506	.000
	WLB	.395	.030	.548		13.083	.000

a. Dependent Variable: CS

This study reveals that Predictors are correlatively linked to Outcome – Work-Life Balance and cs. It is an unstandardized coefficient $B = 0.395$ for WLB the predict that, if WLB rises 1 then CS also rises by 0.395 this showing positive relationship between WLB and CS. The constant is $B = 3.535$ The base level of the Career Success at WLB will be 0.

WLB has shown moderate and positive relationship with Career Success having regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.548$) the regression equation shows that WLB explained about 54.8% of the variation in CS. As is demonstrated even in greater detail in there, this is a statistically significant difference, ‘WLB has an independent samples $t(398) = 13.083$, $p < .001$ ’ value of CS. Similar to the theoretical framework assertion, empirical assessment of this study establishes that Work-Life Balance is hypothesized to have a direct positive impact and is statically significant on the construct referred to as Career Success whereby increase in levels of WLB is likely to bring about positive shift in perception of career success. Hypothesis H2 then states If managers of departments with positive culture scores enact positive workplace culture, their organization’s sustainability performance will be positively affected. Therefore, Hypothesis H2 has to be accepted.

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

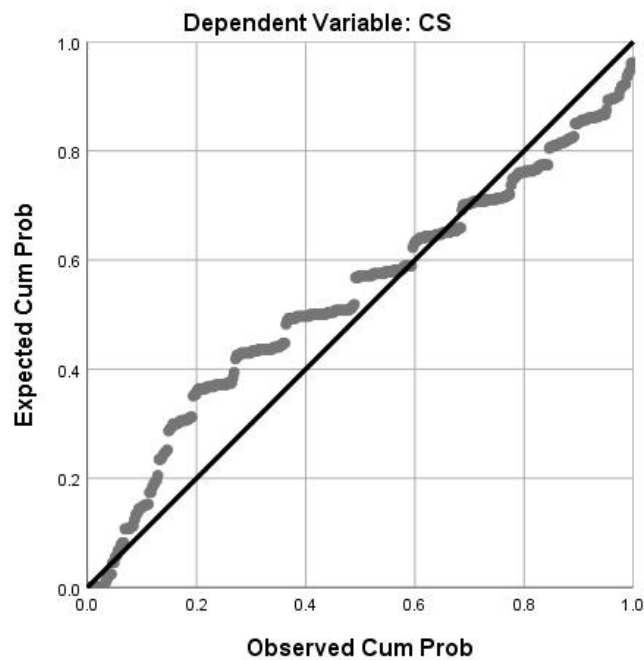


Table 4.4 Moderation Analysis Multiple Hierarchical Regression

Table a): Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.7195	.5177	.1507	141.7117	3	396	.000

The model for work-life balance, $F(1, 132) = 37.11, p < .001$ was also significant as was the model for employee engagement $F(1, 138) = 123.36, p < .001$. This research establishes that the model accounts for about 51.77% of the assessed career success variability, and as such, presents a large effect within the scope of this study; this estimation is evidenced by the R^2 value of .5177. The obtained significance coefficient of .7195 demonstrates a strong and positive regression between the predictors and the outcome variable. To conclude, the research has found that the work-life balance has a moderation role mediated by employee engagement between the career success and university teaching faculty of the HEI in KP province, Pakistan. This means that work-life balance and employee engagement partial out a large portion of the variation in career success outcomes.

Table b) Coefficients

Model	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	3.9031	.4514	8.6464	.0000	3.0156	4.7905
WLB	-.0408	.0895	-.4559	.6487	-.2167	.1351
EE	.1326	.1051	1.2610	.2081	-.0741	.3393
Int_1	.0439	.0193	2.2775	.0000	.0060	.0817

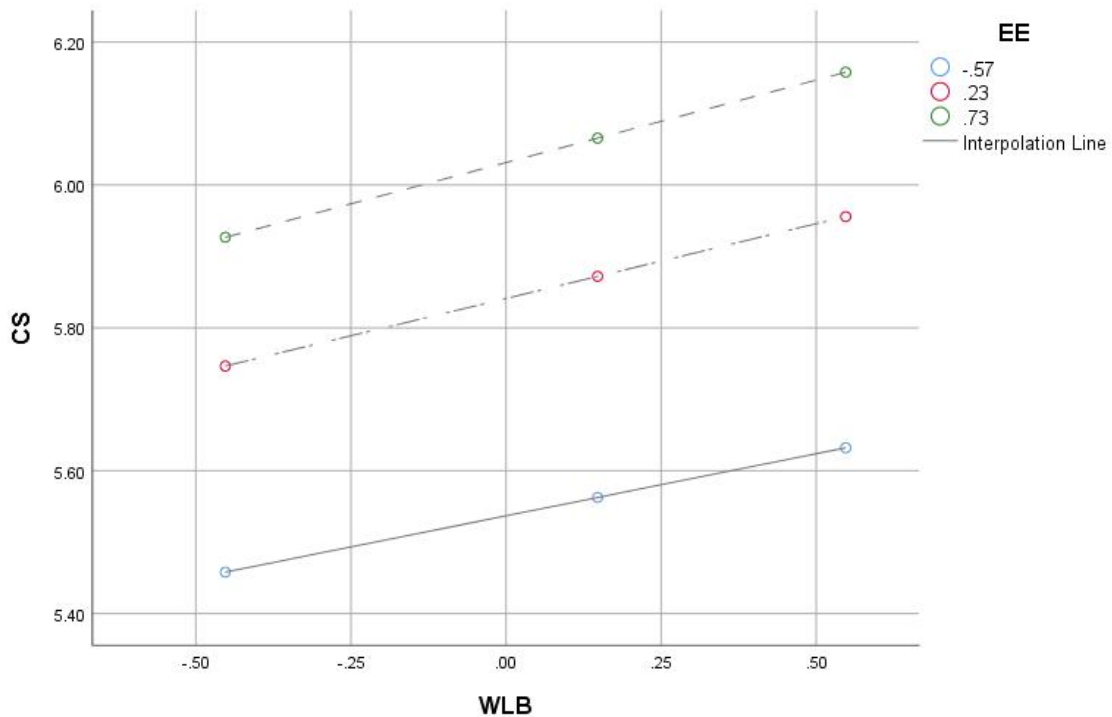
Table B shows the regression coefficients that were used in the moderation analysis test on how well EE predicts WLB and career success. Main effect of work-life balance on career success was found insignificant, $b = -0.0408$, $t(396) = -0.456$, $p = 0.649$ with 95% CI of -0.2167 and 0.1351 . This implies that work and family life balance does not determine ones career progress in this model. Likewise, the main effects obtained for employee engagement by using $B = 0.1326$, $t(396) = 1.261$, $p = .208$, 95% CL $(-0.0741, 0.3393)$ that indicate that the variable employee engagement does not have a main effect on career success. Nevertheless, the results found that the interaction term: Int_1 was significant with the variable, $b = 0.0439$, $t(396) = 2.278$, $p < 0.001$, at CI, 95% CI $[0.0060, 0.0817]$. This mean implies that employee engagement has a large moderation effect on the work-life balance and career success equation. More specifically, the coefficient sign is positive just as we hypothesized that when employee engagement level is high, work-life balance and career success are more positively related.

Table c) R² increase due to interaction(s):

R2-chng	F	Df1	Df2	P
.0063	5.1868	1	396	.0000

Table C below shows the results while comparing the R² change of the interaction effect of WLB and EE on career success of employees: The test for the interaction was significant, $\Delta R^2 = .0063$, thus showing that when including the interaction term in a model composed of work-life balance and engagement, the model added and explained an additional 0.63 percent of the variance on career

success. Although this increase in explained variance is fairly small, it is however statistically significant $F(1,396) = 5.19$ $p < .000$. This indicates that work-life balance and engagement multiplied together go a long way in defining career success even as the total amount of variation in Career Success is therefore low.



(Moderation Plot: EE as moderation upon WLB and CS)

Discussion

The first hypothesis, H1 predicts a positive relationship between WLB, engagement and career success meaning that all the three factors enrich each other. Using the case of universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan, this hypothesis is essential because higher WLB engagement leads to improved career outcomes. From the literature it is clear that work life balance plays a critical role in determining the interaction of an employee with their job. When the employee can manage both his work and his outside responsibilities, the resultant effect is that the employee is likely to display high levels of energy and commitment to his

work. By so doing this energy leads to increase in productivity, creativity and going the extra mile in their work thereby improving their careers.

The prior works have provided a clear perspective that work-life balance, organizational commitment together with productivity and career satisfaction experience a positive relationship. The arguments from Setiadi et al., (2024) reveal that work-life balance is positively related to overall engagement with boost in the career progression of the new generation /millennium employees . In the sample of academic professionals, they revealed that institutions which offered support to work-life balance programs were effective in enhancing the support from employees and thus outcome in better career advancement.

In the same vein, Demir and Budur (2023) stated an understanding of work-life balance during the school to work transition period. In this case, this study has confirmed the fact that more employees are likely to achieve a balance between work and other crucial life aspects, which was the essence of establishing that there exists a positive relationship between career development opportunities and other career related variables.

The third hypothesis relates to the moderating role of employee engagement upon work-life balance and career success. According to this hypothesis, it is indicated that if engagement levels of the employees are high, then the enhancement of WLB acts as a positive predictor to career advancement. In other words, work life balance is on its own advantageous however the impact is exacerbated by heightened employee engagement. Employer engagement on the other hand refers to motivation, commitment and passion for one's job. Apart from that, employees with high level of engagement make use of every channel available to ensure that they gain promotion with the company. Thus, raising engagement level will improve job satisfaction and career success fostering a motivated academic workforce. According to Houssein et al., (2020), there was a positive and significant correlation between employee engagement and career

development, and employee retention. The study has shown that among the factors affecting the retention of employees, engagement has a much bigger effect than the effect of career development. Moreover, Monata & Yuliharsi, (2024) examines the mediation effect of work-life balance, employee engagement, and job satisfaction on organizational commitment. These findings suggest that engagement and job satisfaction are major predictors of organizational commitment. There is correlation between level of engagement and satisfaction of the employees with their commitment level. Further, an interaction between WLB-s and job satisfaction was identified – a good WLB improved the satisfaction of employees.

Implications

The practical contributions of the current study recommend that universities should implement policies that support work-family balance while encouraging the faculty members. The paper finds that engagement has a moderating and amplifying effect that helps staff optimise on work-life balance policies. Such supportive policies can help to increase reasonable rates of retention, enhance the veil of institutional commitment, and ensure highly satisfactory job experiences among faculty. While this study demonstrates such relationships, further investigations required on demographic correlates including age and gender. Awareness of these discrepancies is beneficial when it comes to aligning work-life balance and engagement interventions so that a greater number of faculty member's needs can be addressed and career contentment realized.

Therefore, the sponsorship of professional work & life balance and workforce engagement is central to the advancement of the academic career. The implementation of the theoretical frameworks supports the premise that high support and resource supply have beneficial effects on the institution and the academic staff. These are true because recognizing special needs that academic professionals undergo in their working places institutions can establish a busy

working force that is in the interest of the university as well as the candidates in question.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this research, work life balance emerged as a central moderator in university faculty workforce with employee engagement acts as the moderator factor for career success. A study also shows that balanced faculty members are happier with their jobs and have done better in their careers. Such moderate division not only improves efficiency but also sustains durable and healthy career satisfaction. The results also support the hypothesis that positive faculty work attitudes and work-related affect, including dedication, vigor, and active interest, make it easier for the faculty to access work-life balance resources to advance their career. These actions foster motivation, resolve and flexibility in order to create a positive cycle of work outcomes and promotion. Specifically, COR Theory offer background to these ends. COR Theory adds to this by positing that people try to gain and maintain resources which can include time and energy. When institutions provide resources that enhance work-life balance for the faculty, stress is easily managed, well-being is enhanced and high faculty engagement is maintained. Such positive cycle assist in career enhancement for continued accumulation of resources and job satisfaction as resources are conserved.

Limitations and Future Research Direction

This study, while providing significant insights into the relationship between work-life balance, employee engagement, and career success among university faculty, is not without its limitations. One key limitation is the scope of data collection, which was confined to universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This geographical focus may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions or academic settings with differing cultural, economic, or institutional frameworks. Additionally, the study employed a quantitative approach, relying heavily on

survey data, which, while effective for drawing broad correlations, may not capture the nuanced, subjective experiences of faculty regarding work-life balance and career success. The use of self-reported data also poses the risk of response biases, such as social desirability bias, potentially affecting the accuracy of the findings.

Future research should expand on these findings by incorporating a broader sample that includes universities from various regions and countries. This would help determine whether the relationships observed in this study hold across different cultural and institutional contexts, enhancing the generalizability of the results. Additionally, qualitative research methods, such as interviews or focus groups, could be employed to capture deeper insights into the personal experiences and perceptions of faculty members regarding work-life balance and career success. This mixed-methods approach would provide richer data that could complement and extend quantitative findings.

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