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Work-Life Balance, Employee Well-Being, Job Satisfaction, and Subjective Well-Being Among Corporate Employees in Karnataka

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Abstract

This study examined the interrelationships among work-life balance (WLB), employee well-being (EWB), job satisfaction (JS), and subjective well-being (SWB) among 120 corporate employees in Karnataka, India. A quantitative, cross-sectional, ex post facto design was employed. The sample was equally distributed by gender (60 male, 60 female) and mode of work (40 offline, 40 hybrid, 40 online). Standardized instruments—the Work-Life Balance Scale (Hayman, 2005), Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1994), Employee Well-Being Scale (Pradhan & Hati, 2019), and Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985)—were administered. Pearson correlations revealed strong positive associations among all four constructs ($r = .691$ to $.851$, $p < .01$). One-way ANOVA demonstrated that hybrid workers reported significantly higher WLB, EWB, and JS than online and offline workers ($p < .001$). Male employees reported significantly higher WLB and JS than females ($p < .05$; $p < .001$), while no significant gender differences emerged for EWB or SWB. Subjective well-being remained invariant across all grouping variables. None of the four gender × work-mode interaction hypotheses were supported, indicating additive rather than synergistic effects. Findings have implications for organizational policy, particularly regarding the institutionalization of hybrid work models and gender-sensitive workplace interventions.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance, Employee Well-Being, Job Satisfaction, Subjective Well-Being, Hybrid Work, Corporate Employees, Karnataka

1. Introduction

In the contemporary global economy, the nature of work has undergone profound transformation, particularly within corporate sectors characterized by rapid technological advancement, intense competition, and evolving organizational structures. The expansion of information and communication technologies has removed the temporal and spatial boundaries of work, enabling employees to remain connected beyond traditional working hours and thereby blurring the distinction between professional and personal domains (Waller & Ragsdale, 2012). In modern India, the processes of industrialization, urbanization, and globalization have significantly altered employment patterns, work culture, and lifestyle structures, resulting in increased pressure to simultaneously manage occupational and family responsibilities (Census of India, 2001; Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997).

Work-life balance (WLB) has emerged as an essential construct within occupational and organizational psychology. Rather than implying equal allocation of time or effort across domains, contemporary conceptualizations emphasize subjective evaluation—balance exists when individuals perceive their multiple roles as compatible and manageable (Greenhaus & Allen, 2006; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007). Employee well-being (EWB) refers to the overall physical, psychological, and emotional health of employees shaped by work-related experiences and organizational structures (Pradhan & Hati, 2019). Job satisfaction (JS) is defined as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences (Locke, 1976). Subjective well-being (SWB), conceptualized by Diener (1984) as comprising positive affect, negative affect, and cognitive life satisfaction, captures how individuals perceive and evaluate their lives overall.

Despite extensive global research, there remains a dearth of context-specific empirical evidence within the Indian corporate landscape—particularly in Karnataka, a prominent hub for technology and corporate employment. Furthermore, the shift toward diverse work modalities—work-from-home, hybrid, and in-office arrangements—has introduced new dynamics that may differentially influence these constructs. The present study addresses these gaps by investigating the interrelationships among WLB, EWB, JS, and SWB among corporate employees in Karnataka, with attention to gender and mode of work as moderating variables.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Work-Life Balance and Related Constructs

Hayman (2005) operationalized WLB as comprising three dimensions: Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL), Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW), and Work Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE). Research in the Indian corporate context has predominantly framed WLB as a challenge shaped by long working hours, gender role expectations, and the erosion of boundaries between professional and personal life (Mohanty & Jena, 2016; Grover, 2022). Bhatia and Srilatha (2015) found significant gender disparities, with female managers reporting higher work interference with personal domains. Arora and Kushwaha (2024), studying 200 Delhi NCR corporate employees, found that working hours had a stronger impact on women while organizational support significantly influenced men only.

The relationship between WLB and JS has been consistently positive across samples. Thomson and Deepthi (2023) found a significant positive relationship ($r = .439$, $p < .005$) among Indian software developers. Ranjan (2024), in a survey of 1,000 Indian IT professionals, found WLB to be a significant predictor of JS ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < .001$). The WLB–EWB relationship is equally well-established: Srinivas and Battu (2025) reported strong positive correlations ($r = 0.55–0.70$, $p < .01$) between WLB practices and EWB, with flexibility as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.442$, $p < .001$).

2.2 Work Mode and Employee Outcomes

A growing body of post-pandemic research has examined how remote, hybrid, and in-office arrangements influence WLB, EWB, and JS. Gharade and Kediya (2023), reviewing 25 studies involving over 5,000 Indian employees, found that hybrid modes improved WLB significantly. Abirami (2025), studying 250 IT employees in Bengaluru, found hybrid modes significantly predicted higher JS ($\beta = .42$, $p < .001$). Babu and Suhasini (2024) found a strong positive relationship between the hybrid work model and EWB ($r = 0.936$, $p < .01$). However, research on work mode and SWB remains mixed. Pujitha, Shamshuddin, and Mohan (2023) found that work-life integration enhanced psychological well-being through job satisfaction and life satisfaction as mediators.

2.3 Research Gaps

The existing literature is characterized by: (a) heavy reliance on cross-sectional designs that preclude causal inference; (b) studies that address constructs in isolated pairwise combinations rather than integrated frameworks; (c) geographic and sectoral bias toward IT-centric metropolitan samples; and (d) insufficient three-group work mode comparisons in post-pandemic stabilized contexts. No published study, to the investigators' knowledge, has simultaneously examined WLB, EWB, JS, and SWB within a single integrated framework among corporate employees in Karnataka, with a balanced three-group work mode design.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Sample

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional, ex post facto research design. The sample comprised 120 corporate employees drawn from various organizations across Karnataka. The sample was balanced by design: 60 male and 60 female employees, equally divided across three work modes—offline/in-office (n = 40), hybrid (n = 40), and online/work-from-home (n = 40). Stratified sampling was employed to ensure adequate representation across work modes and gender. Inclusion criteria required full-time corporate employment, age 21–55 years, a minimum of one year of work experience, and informed consent. Part-time employees, interns, those on long-term leave, and those submitting incomplete responses were excluded.

3.2 Measures

Work-Life Balance was measured using the Work-Life Balance Scale (Hayman, 2005), a 15-item instrument with a 7-point Likert-type format assessing three dimensions: WIPL (7 items), PLIW (4 items), and WPLE (4 items). Job satisfaction was assessed using the Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1994), a 36-item scale measuring nine facets of satisfaction on a 6-point Likert format. Employee well-being was operationalized using the Employee Well-Being Scale (Pradhan & Hati, 2019), a 31-item multidimensional instrument assessing psychological, social, workplace, and subjective well-being. Subjective well-being was measured using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985), a 5-item global assessment on a 7-point Likert scale. Data were collected through structured online questionnaires (Google Forms) administered over a specified period. All analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics by mode of work. Hybrid workers consistently reported the highest means on WLB (M = 48.07, SD = 7.46), EWB (M = 97.90, SD = 13.63), and JS (M = 134.65, SD = 24.15). Online and offline workers reported lower but comparable scores. SWB means were remarkably homogeneous across groups (range: 19.35–19.95).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables by Mode of Work

Variable	Mode	N	Mean	SD
WLB	Offline	40	42.12	6.20
	Hybrid	40	48.07	7.46

	Online	40	43.23	5.16
EWB	Offline	40	79.95	16.27
	Hybrid	40	97.90	13.63
	Online	40	83.62	15.58
JS	Offline	40	105.32	26.05
	Hybrid	40	134.65	24.15
	Online	40	110.38	21.82
SWB	Offline	40	19.65	3.91
	Hybrid	40	19.95	3.43
	Online	40	19.35	3.53

Note: WLB = Work-Life Balance; EWB = Employee Well-Being; JS = Job Satisfaction; SWB = Subjective Well-Being. N = 120.

4.2 Correlational Findings (H1–H6)

Pearson product-moment correlations were computed for all pairwise combinations of the four primary variables. All six hypotheses (H1–H6) were supported at the $p < .01$ level (Table 2). The strongest association was between WLB and JS ($r = .851$, $p < .001$), indicating that approximately 72.4% of the variance is shared between these constructs. The WLB–SWB correlation ($r = .752$, $p < .001$) and the EWB–SWB correlation ($r = .814$, $p < .001$) are consistent with spillover theory, which posits that affective experiences in one life domain transfer into global life evaluations (Staines, 1980). The JS–SWB correlation, while the weakest of the six pairs ($r = .691$), still constitutes a large effect (Cohen, 1988). These findings underscore that WLB, EWB, JS, and SWB constitute a tightly interwoven network of employee functioning, supporting integrative models such as the Conservation of Resources (COR) framework (Hobfoll, 1989).

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Matrix among WLB, EWB, JS, and SWB (N = 120)

Variable	WLB	EWB	JS	SWB
WLB	—			
EWB	.779**	—		
JS	.851**	.793**	—	
SWB	.752**	.814**	.691**	—

Note: ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed). All correlations are significant at the 0.01 level.

4.3 Gender-Based Differences (H7–H10)

An independent-samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference between male ($M = 46.03$, $SD = 7.77$) and female ($M = 42.92$, $SD = 5.30$) employees on WLB, $t(118) = 2.567$, $p = .012$, supporting H7. Two-way ANOVA revealed a highly significant main effect of gender on JS, $F(1, 114) = 14.843$, $p < .001$,

η^2p = .115, with males (M = 124.82) substantially outscoring females (M = 108.75), supporting H9. No significant gender differences were found for EWB, t(118) = −1.137, p = .258 (H8 not supported), or SWB, F(1, 114) = 0.421, p = .518 (H10 not supported). These gender disparities in WLB and JS are consistent with prior Indian research attributing them to disproportionate domestic and caregiving burdens borne by female employees (Mathew & Panchanatham, 2011; Dadhwal & Bhatheja, 2024). The absence of gender differences in EWB and SWB may reflect compensatory psychological resources—social support networks and meaning-making strategies—that buffer women's global well-being despite domain-specific disadvantages.

Table 3: Independent Samples t-Test and Two-Way ANOVA Results for Gender Differences

Variable	Male Mean (SD)	Female Mean (SD)	Statistic	p-value	Result
WLB	46.03 (7.77)	42.92 (5.30)	t = 2.567	.012*	Supported
EWB	85.40 (16.38)	88.92 (17.49)	t = −1.137	.258	Not Supported
JS	124.82 (25.80)	108.75 (26.18)	F = 14.843	< .001***	Supported
SWB	19.43 (3.55)	19.87 (3.67)	F = 0.421	.518	Not Supported

Note: * p < .05, *** p < .001.

4.4 Mode of Work Differences (H11–H14)

One-way ANOVAs revealed significant effects of work mode on WLB, F(2, 117) = 9.963, p < .001; EWB, F(2, 117) = 15.562, p < .001; and JS, F(2, 117) = 16.971, p < .001 (H11, H12, H13 supported). The approximately 29-point gap in JS between hybrid (M = 134.65) and offline (M = 105.32) workers is particularly striking. In contrast, SWB did not differ significantly across work modes, F(2, 117) = 0.273, p = .761 (H14 not supported), with group means differing by less than one point. This finding indicates that while mode of work shapes domain-specific outcomes, it does not permeate global life evaluations—consistent with the set-point theory of subjective well-being (Luhmann et al., 2012). The hybrid advantage aligns with the Job Demands-Resources model (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), wherein hybrid arrangements optimally configure demands (reduced commuting, flexible scheduling) and resources (social connection, professional visibility). Notably, fully online workers did not consistently outperform offline workers on WLB (43.23 vs. 42.12), challenging the assumption that more remote work automatically produces better outcomes.

Table 4: One-Way ANOVA Results for Study Variables by Mode of Work

Variable	Between SS	df	F	p-value	Result
WLB	801.80	2	9.963	< .001***	H11 Supported
EWB	7193.12	2	15.562	< .001***	H12 Supported
JS	19663.12	2	16.971	< .001***	H13 Supported
SWB	7.20	2	0.273	.761	H14 Not Supported

Note: *** p < .001. Within-group df = 117 for all variables.

4.5 Interaction Effects (H15–H18)

Two-way (Gender × Mode of Work) ANOVAs were conducted for each dependent variable. None of the four interaction terms reached statistical significance: WLB, $F(2, 114) = 0.691$, $p = .503$; EWB, $F(2, 114) = 0.204$, $p = .815$; JS, $F(2, 114) = 0.534$, $p = .587$; and SWB, $F(2, 114) = 0.376$, $p = .688$ (H15–H18 not supported). This consistent pattern indicates that the effects of gender and work mode on employee outcomes operate additively rather than synergistically. Male and female employees follow parallel patterns across work modes, with hybrid arrangements consistently associated with the most favorable outcomes for both genders. The two-way ANOVA model for JS explained the most variance ($R^2 = .320$, adjusted $R^2 = .290$), with both gender ($\eta^2p = .115$) and mode of work ($\eta^2p = .248$) serving as powerful independent predictors. The model for SWB had negligible explanatory power ($R^2 = .015$), further confirming its dispositional stability.

5. Conclusion

This study provides an integrated empirical picture of four core psychological and occupational constructs among corporate employees in Karnataka. Four principal conclusions emerge. First, WLB, EWB, JS, and SWB constitute a tightly interconnected network: interventions targeting one construct are likely to produce ripple effects on others, as evidenced by uniformly strong inter-correlations ($r = .691–.851$). Second, the hybrid work model consistently emerged as the most advantageous arrangement for domain-specific outcomes—WLB, EWB, and JS—suggesting that organizations should institutionalize structured hybrid policies rather than treating them as temporary accommodations. Third, gender remains a significant differentiator for WLB and JS, pointing to the continuing influence of gendered domestic expectations and workplace inequalities that require targeted policy responses, including flexible scheduling, extended parental leave, and caregiving support. Fourth, SWB demonstrated remarkable stability across all demographic and organizational grouping variables, suggesting it is governed primarily by dispositional and temperamental factors rather than organizational variables—a finding consistent with set-point theory.

The absence of interaction effects between gender and work mode indicates that hybrid work benefits are experienced comparably by male and female employees, supporting universally accessible hybrid policies supplemented by gender-specific caregiving support. Limitations include the cross-sectional design, a modest sample size of 120, geographic restriction to Karnataka, reliance on self-report measures, and the absence of post-hoc pairwise comparisons. Future research should employ longitudinal designs, larger and more sectorally diverse samples, fine-grained operationalization of work arrangements, and mixed-methods approaches to unpack the mechanisms underlying the hybrid advantage.

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