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The Impact of Work-Life Balance and Mental Health Well-Being on Women's Performance in the Workplace

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Abstract:

This study examines the complex relationship between work-life balance (WLB), mental health well-being, and women's performance in the workplace. Drawing on the Spillover Theory, it examines how experiences in personal and professional domains influence each other, particularly for women navigating dual roles. Through a systematic review of existing literature, the research identifies that effective WLB and robust mental health support significantly enhance women's productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. On the contrary, poor integration of work and personal life, coupled with inadequate mental health resources, contributes to stress, burnout, and diminished performance. The findings underscore the importance of supportive workplace environments, flexible policies, and mental health initiatives in fostering women's well-being and optimizing their contributions at work. The study concludes with strategic recommendations for organizations to implement inclusive practices that promote both balance and psychological resilience among female employees.

Keywords:

Work-Life Balance, Mental Health Well-Being, Women's Performance, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Support

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Introduction

Historically, societal norms positioned women primarily within the domestic sphere, assigning them caregiving and household responsibilities while excluding them from formal economic participation (Manyuha,2024). Ngomane (2017) emphasizes that in many African contexts, customary practices confined women to reproductive roles such as fetching firewood and water, taking care of the sick, attending community engagements like funerals, and taking care of the family rather than engaging in formal employment.

According to recent researches, women have increasingly transitioned from domestic roles to active participation in formal employment, such as clerical, administrative, and service-oriented sectors (Manyuha, 2024; Rodriguez,2017 and Roopavathu & Kishore, 2020). Booysen (2000) affirms that since the mid-20th century, women have assumed an increasingly vital role in the economic development of both industrialized and emerging economies. This reflects societal transformations that have redefined opportunities open for women in the labor market. Research by Broadbridge and Simpson (2020) highlights that women's growing presence in the workforce is not only a result of economic necessity but also of evolving cultural norms and policy interventions aimed at promoting gender equality. Furthermore, the expansion of educational opportunities and the professionalization of traditionally female-dominated fields such as nursing and teaching have facilitated women's entry into formal employment (Fourie, 2019).

These developments underscore the critical role women now play in economic development across both industrialized and emerging economies. As formal employment becomes an increasingly central aspect of women’s lives, it also brings new challenges related to work-life integration and mental well-being, which are essential to sustaining their performance and engagement in the workplace (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2020). Rodriguez (2017) points out that while women are gaining acceptance and success in business, it is necessary for women to learn how to achieve a balance between their professional and personal lives and accept any obstacles to their attempts by demonstrating their best skills and knowledge.

Screunder and Coetzee (2016) further contend that the profound societal transformations over the past four to five decades have rendered formal employment a central component of many women’s lives. Despite these advancements, numerous women continue to face difficult trade-offs, often sacrificing personal aspirations or well-being in their efforts to reconcile professional responsibilities with familial obligations and societal expectations (Rodriguez, 2017). In agreement Rodriguez (2017) argues that women are compelled to make choices and foregoing ample just to meet the demands of balancing work, family, and the desire to create a positive regard in society and be independent.

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Shaaban (2024) highlights that the evolving demands of the modern workplace, alongside the continuous need to update skills and competencies, have increasingly blurred the boundaries between professional and personal life. This convergence has contributed to a growing imbalance, adversely affecting women's overall well-being. Kulothugan (2021) clarifies that work-life balance (WLB) does not imply an equal distribution of time and energy across domains, but rather a dynamic interplay among various life spheres. The consequences of an imbalanced WLB work-life balance (WLB) can manifest at multiple societal levels. .Roopavathu and Kishore (2020) pointed out that WLB is a mixture of interactions between various areas of one's life, the benefits and drawbacks associated with that equilibrium or imbalance may affect multiple levels of society. The WLB-related drawbacks will affect both the employee and the employer (Roopavathu & Kishore, 2020).

For the employee, the effects may have a negative impact on job and life satisfaction, mental wellbeing, physical health, and individual organisational performance. For employers, low results, absenteeism, sick leave and higher employee turnover, recruiting and training costs would be the effects of low work lifework-life balance (Fayyazi & Aslani, 2015). Collectively, these studies underscore the critical influence of work-life balance and mental health on the performance of female employees across different career stages. However, a visible gap remains in the existing literature regarding the individual experience of women in this context—an area this study seeks to explore and address.

Research Objectives:

1. To assess the relationship between work-life balance and the job performance of women in the workplace.
2. To evaluate how mental health well-being influences women's productivity, engagement, and overall performance at work.
3. To identify organizational practices and support systems that enhance work-life balance and mental health for women employees.

Research Hypothesis

The study is informed by the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and women's performance in the workplace.

Hypothesis 2: Mental health well-being significantly influences the job performance of women in the workplace.

Hypothesis 3: Women who experience better work-life balance and mental health support demonstrate higher levels of productivity and job satisfaction.

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Theoretical Framework

This paper is scientifically grounded by tThe Spillover Theory. The Spillover theory is particularly suitable for the study because it provides a foundational framework for understanding how experiences in one domain of life—such as work or family—this study because it provides a foundational framework for understanding how experiences in one domain of life—such as work or family—can influence outcomes in the other. Staines (1980) defines spillover as the transfer of experiences between work and family domains, where positive experiences in one domain are associated with positive experiences in the other, and negative experiences similarly influence the other domain negatively. The spillover theory posits that factors in the workplace can influence family functioning and vice versa, either positively or negatively. For instance, fatigue or burnout from work may negatively affect home life, while job satisfaction or professional achievement may positively enhance family experiences (Krishma & Lakshymypriya, 2016).

According to Rincy and Panchanatham (2014), several researchers have suggested that individuals carry emotions, attitudes, skills, and behaviors developed in the workplace into their family life and vice versa (Piotrkowski, 1979; Piotrkowski & Crits- Christoph, 1981; Crouter, 1984; Belsky et al., 1985; Kelly & Voydanoff, 1985). Rincy and Panchanatham (2014:7) further note that an employee's performance at work may be negatively influenced by unresolved issues from home. Conversely, positive experiences at work, such as a promotion or the successful completion of a project, may enhance family life, just as a supportive home environment can positively influence workplace engagement (Rincy & Panchnatham, 2014).

Lee et al. (2021:377) elaborate that spillover occurs in two forms: positive and negative. Negative spillover arises when limited resources for managing multiple roles across work and home domains lead to stress and strain. For example, serious family conflicts may hinder concentration at work, thereby reducing productivity. Studies conducted in countries such as the Netherlands, Australia, Sweden, and the United States have found significant associations between negative spillover and mental health issues, including depression (Lee et al., 2021:376).

Positive spillover, on the other hand, refers to the enrichment of one domain by positive experiences in the other (Krishma & Lakshymypriya, 2016). Although fewer studies have explored its association with mental health, some findings suggest that positive spillover may be inversely related to problematic behaviors such as excessive drinking and may even influence the mental well-being of family members—a phenomenon referred to as crossover. However, the relationship between positive spillover and mental health remains underexplored, particularly from a longitudinal perspective.

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Spillover theory views work and family as interconnected domains, often functioning as a single entity. As Rincy and Panchanatham (2014:6) assert, “There is no boundary between the workplace and the home.”

This theory acknowledges that emotions, stressors, and satisfactions are not confined to a single sphere but often transfer between work and home environments (Krishma & Lakshymypriya, 2016). For women, who frequently navigate multiple roles across professional and personal domains, the theory helps explain how imbalances or mental health challenges in one area can affect their performance in another. The theory aligns well with the study’s aim which is to explore the interconnectedness of work-life balance, mental health, and women’s workplace outcomes.

Literature Review

Work-Life Balance

The concept of Work-Life Balance (WLB) has evolved significantly over the past decade, reflecting the dynamic nature of modern work environments. Bird (2010) emphasizes that WLB is not about achieving an equal distribution of time between work and personal life, but rather about finding a balance that aligns with an individual's changing circumstances. This perspective is particularly relevant for women, whose roles often shift across life stages such as marriage, motherhood, and career progression.

Haar et al. (2014) define WLB as an individual's perception of effectively managing multiple life roles. This subjective assessment is crucial for women, who frequently navigate complex intersections between professional responsibilities and domestic obligations. Semlali and Hassi (2016) argue that WLB is essential for both organizational success and employee well-being, noting its positive influence on productivity and performance. For women, effective WLB policies can mitigate the dual burden of work and family, thereby enhancing their contributions in the workplace.

Organizations increasingly recognize the strategic importance of WLB initiatives, particularly in response to gender equality mandates and the need to retain talent (Susana & Ramón, 2013). These initiatives not only support employee integration into the broader community but also reduce turnover and improve organizational efficiency (Helmle et al., 2014). As Au and Ahmed (2014) suggest, managing WLB is central to preserving human capital, a critical asset in today’s competitive business landscape.

Despite the benefits of WLB, many women experience Work-Life Conflict (WLC), particularly when professional demands encroach upon personal life (Messersmith, 2007). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) categorize WLC into three forms: time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based conflicts. These conflicts are especially pronounced among women in academia and other demanding professions,

where long hours and multiple roles exacerbate stress and reduce performance (O'Laughlin & Bischoff, 2005; Kinman & Jones, 2008).

WLC has been linked to job dissatisfaction, poor health, and diminished life satisfaction (Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001). For women, these outcomes are often intensified by societal expectations and caregiving responsibilities. The integration of work into home life, facilitated by digital technologies, further blurs boundaries and contributes to behavioral-based conflict, where women struggle to disengage from work during personal time (Vasumathi, 2018).

Methodology

This study adopts a desktop research methodology, also known as secondary research, which involves the systematic collection, review, and synthesis of existing literature, including peer-reviewed journal articles, academic theses, books, and credible online sources (Largan & Morris,2019). This approach is particularly suitable for exploring the impact of work-life balance and mental health well-being on women's performance in the workplace, as it allows for the integration of diverse perspectives and findings from a wide range of contexts.

According to Moore (2018), desk research can employ both qualitative and quantitative analytical techniques, depending on the nature of the data and the research objectives. In this study, a qualitative synthesis method is employed to identify recurring themes, theoretical frameworks, and empirical findings relevant to the research topic.

The methodology follows a systematic review approach. Systematic reviews can be broadly defined as a type of research synthesis that are conducted by review groups with specialized skills, who set out to identify and retrieve international evidence that is relevant to a particular question or questions and to appraise and synthesize the results of this search to inform practice, policy and in some cases, further research

(Munn et al., 2018). As Rolfe (2014) explains, a systematic approach to desktop research involves clearly defining the research questions, establishing inclusion and exclusion criteria, and critically evaluating the authority and credibility of each source. This ensures that the literature reviewed is both relevant and of high academic quality.

By relying on secondary data, this study benefits from the breadth of existing research also advantageous as it provides a solid foundation for drawing evidence-based conclusions and recommendations.

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Data Collection

Given the nature of this research, a desktop study approach was adopted for data collection. This method involves gathering and analyzing existing data from secondary sources rather than collecting primary data through surveys or interviews (Largan & Morris,2019). The data for this study were sourced from a wide range of scholarly materials, including peer-reviewed journal articles, academic theses, books, and credible institutional reports (Nilsson et al., 2015).

The selection of sources was guided by relevance to the research objectives, with a particular focus on literature that addresses work-life balance, mental health, gender dynamics in the workplace, and performance outcomes (Largan & Morris,2019). Databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, and institutional repositories were utilized to access high-quality academic content. The inclusion criteria emphasized recent publications (primarily from the last 10–15 years), empirical studies, and theoretical contributions that align with the study. As noted by Snyder (2019), desktop research is particularly effective for exploratory studies and theoretical development, especially when time or access to participants is limited.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using qualitative content analysis. According to Krippendorff (2019), content analysis is “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use,” emphasizing both methodological accuracy and contextual interpretation. Berg and Lune (2017) define it as “a careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation of a particular body of material in an effort to identify patterns, themes, biases, and meanings”. The study relied on secondary data sources such as peer-reviewed journal articles, academic theses, books, and institutional reports. The selection criteria for their relevance to the themes of work-life balance, mental health well-being, and women's performance in the workplace. As Roller and Lavrakas (2023) explain, qualitative content analysis is particularly well-suited for synthesizing diverse qualitative data, allowing researchers to uncover latent meanings and contextual insights that are often overlooked in quantitative approaches. Chatfield (2020) recommends that secondary qualitative analysis be guided by clear research questions and a systematic approach to ensure validity and reliability. This method enables researchers to draw meaningful conclusions from existing literature while minimizing bias and enhancing the depth of thematic interpretation.

Findings and Discussion

Findings 1: Positive relationship WLB and women’s performance

According to the study by Latif et al. (2023) a sample size of 384 working women across 11 states in West Malaysia was conducted. Online survey using a structured questionnaire were used and SPSS software with correlation, regression, and reliability testing was used. Based on the findings the study strongly supports that women with better time and involvement balance between their work and family responsibilities perform better at work. This is evident through statistically significant regression results and correlation coefficients. This same data, it revealed there is a positive association between participation balance and working performance of working women. This means that the involvement balance has a direct impact on the work performance of working women in two ways: through family engagement and through employee involvement (Latif et al., 2023).

Based on the findings from the research by Manorama and Singhal (2024), there is a detailed explanation of the positive relationship between work-life balance and women's performance in the workplace, using Harvard referencing style: The study conducted by Manorama and Singhal (2024) provides compelling empirical evidence supporting the positive impact of work-life balance (WLB) on the job performance of women employees in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector in Delhi-NCR, India. Using a structured questionnaire administered to 280 female employees across various BPOs, the researchers identified several key performance indicators that are positively influenced by effective WLB (Manorama and Singhal, 2024)

Firstly, the study found that 77.8% of respondents agreed that a balanced work-life reduces absenteeism, indicating that women with better WLB are more consistent and reliable in their attendance. 89.3% of participants believed that WLB significantly reduces employee turnover, suggesting that women are more likely to remain committed to their organizations when their personal and professional lives are harmonized (Manorama and Singhal ,2024).

In terms of productivity, 85.7% of the women surveyed agreed that WLB enhances their output at work. This aligns with the broader literature that links employee well- being with improved job performance (Aketch et al., 2012). Additionally, 80.5% of respondents reported that WLB improves both physical and mental health, which in turn contributes to higher morale and job dedication (Manorama and Singhal, 2024).

These findings collectively demonstrate that WLB is not only essential for the well- being of women employees but also serves as a strategic lever for improving organizational performance. The study concludes that organizations, particularly in high-pressure sectors like BPO, must prioritize WLB initiatives to retain talent, enhance productivity, and promote gender inclusivity in leadership roles (Manorama and Singhal, 2024).

The study conducted by Vyas (2024) provides valuable insights into the challenges and outcomes associated with work-life balance (WLB) among working women in urban Maharashtra, India. Drawing

on responses from 117 women across sectors such as education, health, IT, commerce, and self-employment, the research highlights a clear connection between effective WLB and enhanced professional performance (Vyas ,2024).

One of the key findings is that 94.9% of respondents reported receiving family support, which significantly contributed to their ability to manage both personal and professional responsibilities. The study's Likert scale analysis revealed that self-employed women had the highest mean score (4.1) for successfully balancing work and life, followed by those in education (mean = 3.77), indicating that autonomy and flexible work conditions enhance performance outcomes (Vyas, 2024).

Stress and challenges were also explored, with 65 women identifying the struggle to balance personal and professional life as a major stressor, and 32.5% citing health issues as a significant challenge (Vyas, 2024). Despite these obstacles, the study found that women who managed to maintain WLB reported higher satisfaction with their professional roles, support from colleagues and supervisors, and overall job performance (Vyas, 2024). The research concludes that while women face considerable challenges in balancing work and life—especially due to societal expectations and dual responsibilities—those who achieve a better balance tend to perform more effectively at work. The study emphasizes the need for organizational and familial support systems to foster environments where women can thrive both personally and professionally (Vyas, 2024)

Findings 2: Mental Health influences performance

The study by Rajeswari et al. (2024) highlights that mental well-being significantly influences the job performance of working women, although it is slightly less impactful than physical well-being. Using multiple regression analysis, the researchers found that mental well-being had a standardized coefficient of 0.360, indicating a strong positive relationship with job performance. This suggests that improvements in mental health such as reduced stress, increased optimism, and emotional resilience can lead to enhanced work outcomes (Rajeswari et al., 2024).

The Friedman test further revealed that among various mental well-being indicators, optimism for the future and the ability to form independent opinions were rated highest by participants, underscoring their importance in workplace performance (Rajeswari et al., 2024). These findings align with previous research indicating that psychological well-being is a key predictor of productivity and job satisfaction (Sharma and Joshi, 2016; Wright and Bonett, 2007). Therefore, adopting mental well-being through supportive workplace environments and mental health programs is essential for improving women's job performance in academic and professional settings (Rajeswari et al., 2024).

The study by Sharma and Kapur (2022) provides a comprehensive exploration of how mental health well-being significantly influences the job performance of working women, particularly through the lens

of work-life balance. The research underscores that women, due to their dual roles in professional and domestic spheres, face heightened psychological stress, which directly impacts their job performance. The study integrates multiple theoretical frameworks and empirical findings to demonstrate that psychological well-being acts as a mediating factor between work-life balance and job performance. Specifically, it highlights that when women experience better mental health—characterized by reduced stress, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion—they are more likely to perform effectively at work, maintain positive relationships with colleagues, and exhibit higher job satisfaction (Sharma and Kapur, 2022).

The authors reference the moderated mediation model by Haider et al. (2018), which confirms that psychological well-being enhances the positive effects of work-life balance on job performance. Women's mental health is more vulnerable to external stressors such as societal expectations, workplace conditions, and family responsibilities, which can lead to work-family conflict and diminished job satisfaction. The mental health well-being of women significantly influences their job performance, especially within the healthcare sector. According to Karakcheyeva et al. (2024), women in healthcare experience markedly higher levels of stress and burnout compared to men, resulting in psychological distress, depression, anxiety, occupational burnout, and in some cases, suicidal ideation. Poor work-life integration is a major contributing factor; many women are expected to prioritise caregiving and household responsibilities over their careers, which often leads to dissatisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and even withdrawal from the workforce—even when they are the primary earners, (Karakcheyeva et al., 2024).

Findings 3: Women who experience better work-life balance and mental health support demonstrate higher levels of productivity and job satisfaction.

The study conducted by Karakcheyeva et al. (2024) Highlights that poor work-life integration negatively affects women's well-being, leading to career dissatisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and even career withdrawal, especially when women are forced to prioritise caregiving over professional advancement even as primary earners. Conversely, positive work-life integration where women are supported in balancing professional and personal responsibilities is associated with greater satisfaction and reduced burnout.

Furthermore, Karakcheyeva et al. (2024) added that approximately 22% of the studies reviewed found that supportive and flexible work environments significantly reduce burnout and improve overall job satisfaction and productivity among women (Karakcheyeva et al., 2024). For example these environments accommodate the unique needs of women, such as childcare responsibilities, and foster professional growth and emotional well-being.

The systematic review by Thilagavathy and Geetha (2023) provides robust evidence that women who experience better work-life balance and mental health support demonstrate higher levels of productivity

and job satisfaction. The study reveals that enhanced work-life balance significantly increases employee productivity, particularly when supported by work-family practices and effective team structures.

Furthermore, a strong positive relationship exists between work-life balance and job satisfaction, where women who perceive a better balance are more satisfied with their roles and more likely to remain in their jobs (Thilagavathy & Geetha, 2023). Support systems especially from family members, supervisors, and colleagues—play a critical role in fostering work-life balance, which contributes positively to emotional well-being and organizational commitment. Additionally, mental health benefits such as reduced emotional exhaustion and burnout are directly linked to improved job performance (Thilagavathy & Geetha, 2023). Flexible work arrangements and greater job autonomy empower women to manage competing demands more effectively, thereby enhancing their commitment and overall workplace outcomes. These findings underscore the importance of organizational policies that promote work-life balance and mental health as key drivers of both satisfaction and performance among women employees (Thilagavathy and Geetha, 2023).

Conclusion and Recommendations

To enhance women's performance in the workplace, organizations must adopt comprehensive strategies that address both work-life balance and mental health well- being. According to the studies explored the primary recommendations is to address excessive workloads and extended working hours, which are key contributors to work- life imbalance. Organizations should consider expanding their workforce or redistributing tasks more effectively to ensure equitable workload distribution and hence this will also give the organization to create more jobs.

Well-structured work-life balance policies are of crucial importance. These policies should be inclusive of all job roles and allow for flexible work schedules, such as remote working, compressed workweeks, and adjustable working hours. Flexibility enables women to manage familial and professional obligations more efficiently, thus reducing stress and enhancing productivity.

It is recommended that organizations are also encouraged to invest in mental health support systems by offering access to psychological counseling, mental wellness workshops, and stress management training. Intentional mindfulness practices, such as yoga, meditation, regular exercise, a balanced diet, and adequate sleep, were also shown to improve emotional regulation and reduce stress, thus supporting workplace effectiveness. Promoting mental health awareness not only fosters a supportive work environment but also destigmatizes mental health challenges, enabling employees to seek help when needed.

As society is transitioning into the 4th Industrial Revolution, digital solutions can play a critical role in WLB. The adoption of advanced digital technologies can streamline communication and reduce manual

tasks, allowing employees to work more efficiently and with less stress. Employers should also enforce clear boundaries between work and personal life, discouraging after-hours work-related communication and promoting a culture that respects employees' personal time.

To support working mothers, the provision of on-site or nearby childcare facilities can significantly alleviate parental stress and allow women to focus on their job responsibilities with greater ease.

Organizations should consider implementing data-driven decision-making frameworks to monitor and enhance women's workplace experiences. Organisations should invest in advanced analytics and AI wherein employers can identify patterns in employee engagement, burnout risk, and productivity, enabling proactive interventions tailored to individual and group needs. After maternity breaks, returnship programs. These programs should be structured pathways for women re-entering the workforce after career breaks offering reskilling opportunities and mentorship to facilitate reintegration.

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