

Winning the Case for Well-Being: The Hidden Role of Work-Life Balance in Lawyer's Job Satisfaction and Mental Health

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The legal profession is characterized by long hours, high-pressure deadlines, and demanding caseloads, presenting significant challenges to maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Lawyers face difficulties in balancing professional responsibilities with personal well-being, which has implications for job satisfaction and mental health challenges. This study investigates the relationship between Job Satisfaction, Mental Health and Work-life balance, with an emphasis on the mediating function of work-life balance. The study adopted a quantitative research design, collecting self-reported data from 115 lawyers practicing at the Punjab and Haryana High Court, Chandigarh. The collected data was statistically analyzed using descriptive and regression analysis on SPSS-26 using PROCESS macro software. Job satisfaction, work-life balance, and mental health were found to be positively and significantly correlated. Results indicate that job satisfaction significantly predicts both work-life balance ($B=1.10$, $p<.001$) and mental health ($B=1.17$, $p<.001$). Additionally, Work Life balance has a significant effect on mental health ($B=0.53$, $p<.001$). Mediation analysis confirmed a significant indirect impact of job satisfaction on mental health through work-life balance, supporting a partial mediation model. The findings indicate that work-life balance significantly mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and overall mental health. Lawyer's work-life balance and job satisfaction can be improved by implementing supportive policies. Systemic adjustments should be implemented by legal organizations and regulatory bodies in order to promote professional sustainability and well-being.

Keywords: Work-life balance, mental health, lawyers, mediator, job satisfaction.

In the relentless pursuit of success, modern professionals often find themselves walking a tightrope between career demands and personal well-being. The pressure to excel, meet deadlines, and stay ahead in a competitive world leaves little room for rest, reflection, or self-care. But is success truly meaningful if it comes at the cost of well-being? This study examines the significant yet often overlooked connection between work-life balance, job satisfaction, and mental well-being. Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8) emphasizes the importance of ensuring full and productive employment along with decent work opportunities for everyone. Given its focus on promoting fair

and sustainable working conditions, work-life balance aligns closely with this objective (United Nations, n.d.). It has become difficult to make a balance between job and personal life in the modern world (Johnson and Sinha, 2023).

It has been argued that WLB will increase workers job satisfaction, subjective well-being, and creative work practices. Since job satisfaction is frequently regarded as a prerequisite for an organization's success in the complicated and fiercely competitive workplace of today, contented employees typically display more creative work behavior. Previous empirical research has shown how

crucial human capital is to an organization's ability to innovate and be productive. Therefore, employee well-being is essential to any organization's long-term success. Subjective well-being (SWB) reflects an individual's cognitive evaluation of their job (Arif & Farooqi, 2014; Bakker & Oerlemans, 2011). It encompasses the positive perceptions individuals hold regarding their overall life situation (Butt et al., 2018; Fan et al., 2014).

Numerous studies have found that work-life balance leads to well-being and satisfaction in life (Gropel & Kuhl, 2009). The World Health Organization (2020) states that a healthy balance between work and life enhances employees mental and physical health, reduces stress, and keeps them from missing work. Locke (1969) defines job satisfaction as a favorable emotional response resulting from an individual's job experiences. On the contrary failing to achieve balance leads to poorer life quality (Grant-Vallone & Donaldson, 2001), reduced well-being, and decreased job and life satisfaction (Allen et al., 2000). A healthy work-life balance policy may have an effect on aspects of the job, such as job satisfaction. Studies also indicate that employees who have positive job perceptions as a result of work-life balance rules report higher levels of job satisfaction (Singh et al. 2020; Yadav and Sharma, 2021).

In an effort to prevent burnout and enhance wellbeing, the ABA's (American Bar Association) Young Lawyers Division recently suggested that employers encourage attorneys to take a break from work for at least one week each year (ABA, 2024). In order to succeed in their careers, lawyers typically put in a lot of time and effort and work long hours. The adversarial nature of legal practice has an impact on attorneys personal, professional, and family lives (Reich, 2020; Susskind & Susskind, 2023). Therefore, there is need to find solutions to

address these challenges. Most significantly, the paucity of scholarly research on attorneys emphasizes how critical it is to look into this matter. Furthermore, our study enriched the body of literature by demonstrating that work-life concepts that originated in Western societies may be used outside of these areas.

For its theoretical foundation, the current study adopts the spillover hypothesis of Staines (1980) which postulates that an employee's exposure in one aspect affects their experience in other areas. According to Newstrom (2007), the conditions at work influence how employees feel about their jobs and lives. Accordingly, we suggest the significant effect of job satisfaction on mental health through work-life balance, supporting mediation model. Organizations can greatly benefit from this study's insights into the concept of work-life balance (WLB) and its relationship with mental health, intrinsic motivation, and job satisfaction. These interconnected factors contribute to enhanced productivity, higher employee retention, and overall organizational success. Moreover, a deeper understanding of WLB is essential for fostering a healthier and more engaged workforce. By examining the mediating role of Work-Life balance, this study not only explores the direct link between mental health and job satisfaction but also uncovers the underlying mechanisms that drive this relationship.

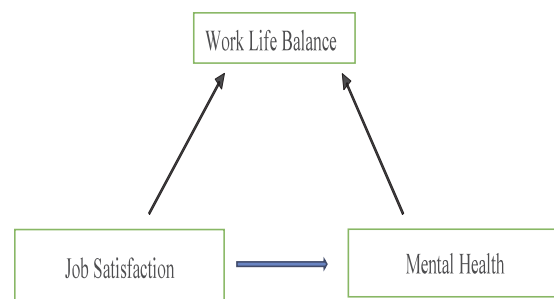


Fig. 1 represents the mediating role of WLB. Source (Author)

Objectives

1. To study the impact of job satisfaction on mental health.
2. To investigate the impact of job satisfaction on work-life balance.
3. To investigate the impact of work-life balance on mental health.
4. To investigate the mediating role of WLB in the relationship between job satisfaction and mental health.

Hypotheses

1. Job Satisfaction will significantly predict mental health.
2. Job Satisfaction will significantly predict work-life balance.
3. Work-Life Balance will significantly predict mental health.
4. Work-life balance will significantly mediate the effect of job satisfaction on mental health.

Method

Sample

Data from 140 lawyers at the Punjab and Haryana High Court, Chandigarh, was collected using a convenience sampling technique. After excluding questionnaires with missing data, the final sample size for this study was 115. Prior Informed Consent was taken to fill the questionnaire.

Ethical Consideration

The current study seeks to investigate the effect of job Satisfaction on mental Health through Work-Life Harmony as a mediator. The following consent form was given to the chosen participants after they were instructed on the purpose of the study before the required information was collected.

If you volunteer to participate, you will be required to fill out a questionnaire that will take approximately 10-15 minutes to

complete. The questionnaire will cover topics related to satisfaction with job, balance between work and life and mental wellness. Your responses will be kept private and will not be disclosed to everyone. Your input on this questionnaire will help us to have a great insight on the role of work-life balance in the legal profession.

Measures

The data was collected using self-report measures. Work-Life Balance scale (Fisher et al.2009) was used to measure the balance between work and life among individuals, which was translated and then updated with new items to better measure variables in a variety of work and organizational settings. It comprises of 17 items. Mental Health Continuum (Keyer,2007) was used to measure the mental health. It comprises of 14 Items. Job satisfaction was measured through the Job Satisfaction scale (Schriesheim & Tsui, 1980). The scale consists of 6 items. Reliability of the scales was high in all the three scales, making them a good standardized test. The survey items of the questionnaire utilised Likert type scales.

Statistical Analysis

The collected data was statistically examined with the help of (model-4) PROCESS macro software by Hayes (Hayes, 2013; 2017) and SPSS-26 (Statistical Package of Social Sciences) using descriptive analysis and regression analysis (specifically mediation analysis).

Results

Demographic Analysis

A total of 115 participants data were analyzed, comprising 30 males (26%) and 85 females (73.9%). Age years ranged from 22 to 59. Fig.1 represents the working hours reported by individuals where 48% work for between 8-12 hours, 46% work for less than 8 hours, and 6% work for more than 12 hours.

Participants were also asked to evaluate their Work-Life balance where 13.91% reported WLB very successful, 57.3 % reported Quite successful, 25.2 % reported neither successful nor unsuccessful and 3.47 % reported unsuccessful (See Fig.2).



Fig.1 represents the working hours.



Fig.2 represents the WLB evaluation.

Regression and Mediation Analysis

A Mediation analyses was conducted to analyse whether balance between work and life mediates the relationship between job

satisfaction and mental wellness. The study used Model 4 of the PROCESS macro to analyse the results. Descriptive analysis showed the mean, SE and standard deviation of the collected data.

Table 1 shows the descriptive analysis.

Descriptive Statistics					
Variable	Mean	SE	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Job Satisfaction	21.69	.383	4.107	.535	1.334
Mental Health	43.29	1.362	14.605	-.507	-.518
Work-Life Balance	60.63	.921	9.878	.064	-.603

Descriptive analysis depict that mean for job satisfaction is 21.69 (SE= .383, SD= 4.107, for mental health 43.29 (SE=1.362, SD= 14.605) and for work-life balance is 60.63 (SE=.921, SD= 9.878). Table 2 depicts the model summary for work-life balance as the outcome variable.

Table 2 depicts model summary for work-life balance as the outcome variable (N = 115)

Predictor	β	SE	t	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	36.67	4.43	8.2694	.0000	27.8916	45.4670
Job Satisfaction	1.10	.2010	5.4959	.0000	.7064	1.5028

Note: Model Statistics: R = .4593, R² = .2109, F (1, 113) = 30.2051, p<0.001

The overall model for the regression analysis for work-life balance as the outcome variable was found to be significant (F=30.2051, p<.001). The study's findings indicate that job satisfaction significantly predicts work-life balance (SE=0.2010, p<.001). According to the beta value ($\hat{\alpha}$ = 1.10), there is a 1.10 unit change in work-life balance for every unit change in job satisfaction. Thus, our first hypothesis which states that job satisfaction will significantly predict work-life balance is accepted.

Table 3 depicts the model summary for mental health as the outcome variable.

Predictor	β	SE	t	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	-14.3789	7.5938	-1.8935	.0609	-29.4250	.6672
Job Satisfaction	1.1697	.3057	3.8257	.0002	.5639	1.7755
Work-life balance	.5327	.1271	4.1904	.0001	.2808	.7845

Note: Model Statistics: $R = .5889$, $R^2 = 0.3468$, $F(2, 112) = 29.7315$.

The overall model for the regression analysis for mental health as the outcome variable was found to be significant ($F=29.7315$, $p<.001$). The outcomes of the study depict that job satisfaction ($SE=.3057$, $p<.001$) is a significant predictor of mental health. The beta value ($\hat{\alpha}=1.1697$) indicates that one unit change in the level of job satisfaction brings a change of 1.1697 unit on the mental health. So, our second hypothesis which states that job satisfaction will significantly predict mental health is also accepted. Further, work-life balance ($SE=0.1271$, $p<.001$) significantly predicts mental health. The beta value ($\hat{\alpha}=.5327$) indicates that one unit change in the level of balance between work and life brings a change of 0.5327 unit on the mental health. So, our third hypothesis which states that work-life balance will significantly predict mental health is accepted.

Table 4 illustrates how job satisfaction influences mental health, with work-life balance serving as a mediating factor.

Table 4 provides an overview of the direct and indirect effects.

Effect	Effect Size	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
<i>Direct</i>	1.1697	.3057	3.8257	.0002	.5639	1.7755
<i>Indirect</i>	.5884	.1695			.3004	.9717

The analysis indicates that job satisfaction has a significant direct impact on mental health ($SE = 0.3057$, $p < .001$) with an effect size of 1.1697. Additionally, job satisfaction indirectly influences mental health through

work-life balance, with this mediation effect also being significant ($SE = 0.1695$) and an effect size of 0.5884. The confidence interval ranges from 0.3004 to 0.9717. As, both direct as well as indirect pathways are significant, it can be stated that work-life balance is a partial mediator for the relationship between job satisfaction and mental health. So, our last hypothesis which states that balance between work and life will significantly mediate the effect of job satisfaction on mental health is also accepted.

Discussion

This study sought to examine the impact of job satisfaction and work-life balance on mental health. Additionally, it investigated the mediating role of work-life balance in the connection between job satisfaction and mental health. The findings revealed a significant association among these variables. Previous findings also indicate the association between work-life balance and job satisfaction (Febrianti & Ririn Handayani, 2022; Khouri, 2021). Although many studies have been conducted to find association between job satisfaction, mental health and work-life balance but less literature is found for the mediating effect of work-life balance especially in the legal profession. It has long been acknowledged that one of the most difficult job pathways is the legal field, which is frequently linked to high stress levels, long workdays, and serious mental health issues. According to Krieger and Sheldon (2015), lawyers frequently report difficulties in balancing their professional and personal lives, leading to strained relationships and

diminished quality of life. Research by Kay and Gorman (2008) indicated that female lawyers face unique challenges in achieving work-life balance, as societal expectations around caregiving often disproportionately affect women. Mental Health Challenge is quite prevalent in all the spheres of life. Devi & Singh, 2024 research indicated that life satisfaction has a significant impact on people's mental health and overall quality of life. Research by Krill et al. (2016) found that approximately 28% of lawyers struggle with depression, and 19% demonstrate symptoms of anxiety.

This study's findings are consistent with the objectives of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically Goal 8, which emphasizes decent work and economic growth, and Goal 3, which prioritizes good health and well-being. By enhancing employee engagement and productivity, the results contribute to sustainable economic growth, while also promoting the overall well-being of employees. Strengthening work-life balance not only supports individual health but also fosters a more resilient and efficient workforce, ultimately benefiting both organizations and the economy.

Conclusion

In accordance with the 2024 World Mental Health Day theme, emphasizing the urgency of prioritizing workplace mental health, this study has highlighted the importance of work-life balance and mental health especially in the legal profession. Our findings suggest that job satisfaction is an important predictor of mental health and it would be beneficial to frame policies accordingly. Institutional or Organizational policies can be framed with the help of these scientific studies. Research findings (Singh et al., 2020; Yadav & Sharma, 2023) highlight that good policies related to work-life balance may develop a positive attitude toward their jobs, which in

turn improves the job satisfaction. This study has broad theoretical relevance and may be helpful to educators, legislators, and mental health practitioners. Psychological interventions such as mindfulness, positive psychology exercises and other interventions can be utilised as they improve life satisfaction (Gunjan & Singh, 2024).

Limitations and Future Directions

This study finds an important finding in the legal profession. We recommend future studies to use a longitudinal study design as this study has collected data on self-report measures at a particular point of time which could lead to biasness. Future researchers may also collect data using random sampling technique for the wider generalization and to check variation in results. This study investigated the direct and indirect relationships between job satisfaction and mental health using work-life balance as a single mediator. Future research should address additional work behaviours, such as organizational commitment, family motivation, supervise support in addition to work-life balance. Demographic characteristics such as gender, education, job tenure, and age could also be explored for the possible variation in their results. Further research can explore how different legal specializations experience work-life balance differently.

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