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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Exploring the Impact of Organizational Factors on Work-Life Balance: The Mediating Role of Emotional Intelligence among IT Professionals in Bangalore's Leading Firms

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, the mediating effect of emotional intelligence is explored to identify work-life issues among Indian IT workers. We gathered information from 450 IT professionals from 5 top-ranked Bangalore companies. This research considers six independent constructs, workload, job flexibility, leadership style, organizational support, the work environment, and career advancement, and calculates their impact on work–life balance with SEM. They find that workload undermines work–life balance and that job flexibility, leadership, organisational support, work culture, and career development do the opposite. Emotional intelligence partially mediated these connections to assist workers in stress reduction and work–life balance. Real-world implications are that employers should strive for emotionally smart leadership, flexible work and improved organizational resources. The study has regional connotations and is cross-sectional, indicating that more research is needed on additional constructs, such as resilience and technostress, to widen the scope of the analysis to other regions and sectors. This study offers insights for promoting employee health and corporate performance in India's rapidly growing IT ecosystem.

1. INTRODUCTION

India's IT industry has witnessed an exponential rise and turned India into an IT metropolis. The IT industry (which includes software development, IT enabled services (ITES) and hardware industry) is India's primary source of GDP and one of the largest employers. India has 55% market share in the world's IT outsourcing market and is the largest IT service provider in the world, according to NASSCOM (2018). Another study by Sengupta et al. (2019) emphasized that it has diversified beyond services to new emerging areas, such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning and cloud computing, expanding globally. Rajaraman (2020) outlines the influence of IT exports on India's economy; it results in approximately $150 billion per year from overseas markets, notably the U.S. and Europe. While IT remains a force of economic expansion, Dutta and Ramesh (2019) emphasize that it contributes to employment, infrastructure and foreign exchange earnings, making it a major economic growth engine. Additionally, Jain and Nair (2021) emphasize that the IT industry is one of the largest employment-creating sectors in the country owing to more than four million direct IT-related employees. Menon et al. (2020) highlighted the increasing significance of the Indian IT industry for sustaining global business resilience, particularly in the context of COVID-19, when remote work and digitalization accelerated. Indian IT providers were already ready for cloud technology and cyber protection so that business could be carried out across borders. This flexibility further reinforces India's dominance of international IT services.

Even though India's IT sector is increasing, it also has its present challenges. It is a globally operating industry and is thus subject to changes in international policy, consumer demand, and economic dynamics, according to Kumar and Malik (2020). In the event of COVID-19, for example, IT organizations witnessed business disruption and labor management at a new level that increased digital transformation (see Agarwal et al. (2021)). The transformation emphasized the industry's reliance on cutting-edge technology, such as AI and blockchain, to remain competitive.

As Rao and Desai (2019) noted, the Indian IT workforce is facing a new digital divide in which technological innovation exceeds skills and knowledge workers. This is further complicated by the explosive growth of automation (Sofrai et al. (2022)), the lack of everyday jobs and the rise of extremely specialized expertise in cloud computing, cybersecurity, and AI. Singh and Gupta's study (2022) describes a rising problem in the wellbeing of the IT workplace. Working from home and in hybrid working environments has increased stress and burnout, as workers struggle to reconcile straddled lines between personnel and professionals. This has re-emphasized the necessity of work–life balance in the industry, which has become more critical in the Indian IT industry because of the long hours and projects involved. India's IT sector has multiple operational and organisational barriers that slow growth. Sharma and Banerjee (2020) highlight increasing competition among talent, with demand for specialists in AI, machine learning, and cybersecurity being far greater than the supply. This talent gap has become an inhibitor for most organizations, curtailing their innovation and scale. Joshi et al. (2021) address another issue: high levels of turnover caused by stress, tight deadlines and pressure to continuously update skills. In addition, employee retention has become a problem in a sector with limited skilled workers. In regulatory terms, Srivastava (2022) noted that there is an increase in complexity and compliance costs for IT firms in the face of new data privacy regulations, including the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and data protection legislation in India. This has increased operating costs and imposed more security measures. Geopolitical risks, such as trade conflicts between large economies or the restriction of visas for Indian IT professionals, have also affected industry performance globally (Nasscom, 2021). Finally, long hours, especially offshore outsourcing, have led to dissatisfaction and burnout among employees, as Singh and Gupta (2022) noted. The isolation of work-life in the age of the remote work model during the COVID-19 pandemic has added to the problems of work-life balance. This problem is further exacerbated by the sector's performance-oriented culture, which often makes for little to no downtime for staff.

While the IT industry has enjoyed strong growth, few have background knowledge of workforce problems pertaining to work–life balance. As Joshi et al. (2023) suggested, although IT firms have taken a long time to adopt innovative technology, they are far behind in the prevention of workplace violence and the psychological and psychological effects of long hours and high-stress jobs. There are still few studies addressing work–life balance in IT and how EI can assist with balancing this balance. Studies such as Gupta and Menon (2022) point to emotional intelligence as a primary factor that can influence how workers manage their work–life balance. High EI can reduce stress and maintain a balance between work and home life. With the rapid changes in the IT industry and ever-increasing demands on the workforce, the paper tries to close this gap by investigating how workload, leadership style, organisational structure and work/life flexibility affect work/life balance through the mediated function of emotional intelligence. This study is important because it addresses increasingly important questions concerning burnout and retention among IT workers. This combination of emotional intelligence and work will provide IT companies with insights into how they can provide a positive, healthy working culture. These results can have profound effects on HR policies and management practices within IT companies. This study addresses IT workers who are working in companies with more than 500 employees in India. It reveals the impact of workload, work-hour flexibility, structure and management on employees' work–life equilibrium (with emotional intelligence acting as an intermediary). By analyzing these relationships, this research proposes practices to optimize work–life balance, burnout among employees and organizational performance across India's IT industry. The results of the research will be useful for HR executives, business owners and policymakers who desire a more equal and employee-friendly work culture. The overall aim of this research is to evaluate the effects of various factors, such as workload, work schedule, organization, and leadership style, on employees' work–life balance in the Indian IT industry. It also aims to investigate the mediating role of emotional intelligence in this context. In particular, research has attempted to pinpoint how emotional intelligence can assist workers with

work stress and improve their work–life balance. By mapping these elements, this research provides practical recommendations for ensuring employee wellbeing, burnout reduction, and organisational productivity. Such knowledge is likely to be used to help create stronger HR practices and leadership plans that accommodate work–life balance in today's evolving IT landscape.

1. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Theoretical Background

The idea of work–life balance has taken over in both the academic literature and business circles, especially in industries such as information technology (IT), which is fraught with high workloads, high expectations and a high pace of technology development. Work–life balance theory has shifted toward theories that ask how workers cope with work–life tensions. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) proposed the work-family conflict theory, which posits that conflict is the result of work-family demands being incompatible. This concept has seen widespread use in research on work–life balance, particularly in pressure-laden areas such as IT, where the distinction between personal and professional life is increasingly fluid (Allen & Shockley 2020). Role theory is also a key model for work–life balance. This hypothesis was proposed by Kahn et al. (1964), as humans occupy several different roles (worker, parent, spouse) that are sometimes in tension. The work itself, such as the long hours and deadlines of projects—in IT, this is exacerbated only by the fact that employees lack flexibility in managing their personal commitments (Sharma & Banerjee, 2020). Research conducted by Hammer et al. (2021) and Müller et al. (2020) revealed that work–life asymmetry is a growing problem for global IT companies, with workers feeling stress and burnout from having two roles demanding different levels of attention.

The model of emotional intelligence (EI) developed by Goleman (1995), for example, opens a perspective on the mediating influence of EI on work–life balance. Emotional intelligence—knowing how to express and regulate one's own emotions and those of others. Mayer and Salovey (1997) determined that four areas of EI should be identified: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. In recent studies, such as Gupta and Menon (2022), we have shown that workers with greater emotional intelligence can handle stress and interpersonal tension and achieve greater work-life satisfaction. IT professionals with high EI have been reported to adapt better to the demands of workload and management (Côté & Miners, 2016) and are less prone to work–life balance conflict. Second, the job demands-resources model (JD-R) (Demerouti et al., 2001) describes how job demands (e.g., workload, time pressures) and resources (e.g., job flexibility, support systems) affect employees' health. This highlights that highly pressed jobs can result in burnout, especially when working in high-work-volume, time-constrained sectors such as IT (Joshi et al., 2021). However, work resources such as leadership and job flexibility can offset the negative impact of these demands, providing a more favorable work–life balance, especially for highly emotional intelligent workers (Allen & Shockley, 2020). Its theoretical synthesis of work-family conflict theory, role theory, emotional intelligence and the JD-R model offers a well-rounded set of frameworks for exploring the influence of workload, flexibility, and leadership on work–life balance. Emotional intelligence is thus a vital bridge that employees can use to escape their situation, increasing their well-being and job satisfaction (Singh & Gupta, 2022).

2.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study examines the relationship between multiple independent constructs (workload, job flexibility, leadership style, organizational support, work environment, and career growth opportunities) and work–life balance, with emotional intelligence serving as a mediator. This section provides an in-depth exploration of each construct, supported by empirical literature from both Indian and foreign studies, followed by the formulation of hypotheses.

2.2.1 Workload and quality of work life

Workload is the workload per employee at which they are given tasks, and it can directly affect their productivity in the area of work and personal life. A higher workload also means stress and less time for oneself and thus a work/life balance conflict. Byron's (2005) study highlighted that work is a powerful predictor of work–family conflict because we cannot consider the needs of both work and family at the same time. The situation becomes worse in the IT industry, where the project delivery

times and customer demands are very strict (Rajaraman, 2020). On the basis of empirical data, Allen and Shockley (2020) reported that a heavy workload is associated with burnout and job dissatisfaction in IT roles. In addition, in national research, Van der Hulst (2003) noted that extended time spent on high workloads is detrimental to employees' well-being and work–life balance. According to Sonnentag and Fritz (2015), in a meta-analysis, too much work inhibits employees' capacity to recharge after hours, contributing to an increase in work-life tension. Additionally, a study by Haar et al. (2014) across seven cultures revealed workload to be a global stressor, leading to lower well-being and work–life conflict. The time they tend to spend things other than work such as online shopping enhances the work life balance.

Hypothesis 1: Workload negatively influences the work–life balance of employees.

2.2.2. Job flexibility

Work flexibility, or being able to shift working hours or work locations, plays a key role in the work–life balance equation. Flexible work arrangements enable employees to attend to their own work better and decrease work-life tension (Hill et al., 2001). Flexible working is also correlated with both job satisfaction and better work–life balance, since workers have some control over their schedule, Kelliher and Anderson (2010) reported. In India, Jain and Nair (2021) reported that employees who worked flexible hours experienced less stress and greater work-life satisfaction. On the international front, a report by Masuda et al. (2012) on US and Japanese IT workers revealed that flexible jobs significantly lower work-life tensions, especially among those employed in high-demand jobs. Similarly, flexibility enables employees to pursue nonwork activities, which enhances both mental health and work-life harmony, according to Kossek and Lautsch (2018). In Europe, Müller et al. (2020) noted the benefits of flexible hours for employee wellbeing and integration between work and life. (Jayapal ,et al,2023)

Hypothesis 2: Job flexibility positively influences the work–life balance of employees.

2.2.3. Leadership Style

Leadership culture is the key to a productive workplace and directly affects employee performance. Transformational leadership that is supportive, empowered and motivating has been linked to high levels of employee satisfaction and a balanced work–life lifestyle (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Emotionally intelligent leaders create a work environment where everyone feels comfortable and where the stress levels associated with work are reduced (Goleman, 1998). In a paper by Avolio and Bass (2004), leadership style was found to influence employees' performance as well as their ability to balance work and life. Greenhaus et al. (2010) in the U.S. concluded that people under supportive leadership have less work–family conflict. An experiment conducted by Côté and Miners (2006) revealed that emotionally smart leaders tend to foster a sense of value in their workforce, which decreases burnout and improves work–life balance. In the UK, Arnold et al. (2015) demonstrated that change leaders support employee mental health, which leads to better work/life integration.

Hypothesis 3: Leadership style positively influences the work–life balance of employees.

2.2.4. Organizational Support

Workplace support includes the resources, policies, and initiatives that organizations provide to employees to address their work and nonwork needs. High POS predicts greater job satisfaction and less work-life tension (Eisenberger et al., 1986). In the IT field, companies may provide flexible working hours, family leave, and mental health insurance (Rao & Desai, 2019). In Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002), for example, organizational intervention played a key role in avoiding workload impacts on employees' health. Kossek and Ozeki (1998) reported that institutional assistance significantly mitigates work–family conflict, particularly for highly demanding occupations such as IT. Haar et al. (2014), from seven nations, verified that perceived organizational support is a general predictor of work-life satisfaction. In addition, Hammer et al. (2021), in the U.S., outlined how organizational support, such as counseling services and wellbeing initiatives, results in better work–life balance.

Hypothesis 4: Organizational support positively influences the work–life balance of employees.

2.2.5. Work environment

A good place to work is one where employees feel safe, respected, and encouraged. A study by Podsakoff et al. (2000) emphasized that a healthy working environment reduces job stress and improves workers' well-being. The IT field is very competitive, requiring heavy time and squeezing at work, and making things as accommodating as possible is key to a good work life (Singh & Gupta,2022). Robbins and Judge (2013) and Bakker and Demerouti (2007) show that a good work–life balance, together with the ability to collaborate with team members and be secure in one's position, improves employees' functioning at work and at home. Diener et al. (2017) and Priya et al(2024) revealed that workers whose work environment is positive have a lower work–life balance. In Europe, Tummers et al. (2015) reported that a supportive workplace culture helps enhance employee satisfaction and work/life balance. Similarly, Allen et al. (2020), in the U.S., reported that a positive work atmosphere helps offset the negative impact of job stress on the integration of work and family (Selvakumarai et al, (in press); Kumar, A., & Viswanathan, N 2024)

Hypothesis 5: The work environment positively influences the work–life balance of employees.

2.2.6. Career growth opportunities

The job growth potential refers to whether there are career growth opportunities in a company. Employees who find that their workplace has many opportunities for career development are also more satisfied with their job and enjoy working less (Wayne et al, 1997). Research by Orpen (1995) and Heslin (2005) highlights that career progression plays a significant role in employee retention and satisfaction because employees feel more invested and less anxious when there is a clear trajectory. Wayne et al. (2019), in the U.S., reported lower work–life balance among employees with career development opportunities. In a similar vein, Zhang et al. (2019) in China reported that career progression is positively correlated with employee happiness and work–life balance. Tummers et al. (2015) reported that professionals with more room for career development are less burned out and have a better work/life balance.

Hypothesis 6: Career growth opportunities positively influence the work–life balance of employees.

2.2.7 Emotional Intelligence as a Mediator

EI — the skill of sensing, knowing and controlling emotions in oneself and others — is a popular indicator of employee wellbeing. Goleman (1998) and Mayer and Salovey (1997) deemed emotional intelligence a key competence for workplace stress management and work/life balance. Emotional intelligence is key for helping workers manage stress, balance life and work in the IT industry, where workloads are excessive and deadlines are demanding (Côté & Miners, 2006). Gupta and Menon (2022) demonstrated that people with high emotional intelligence were better at controlling their emotions in response to the demands of work, which in turn helped them achieve a better work–life balance. Wong and Law (2002) demonstrated that emotional intelligence mediates the interplay between work stress and work–life conflict in the IT industry of Hong Kong. Similarly, Carmeli's (2003) study in Israel demonstrated that emotional intelligence supports workers under the stress of a high-demand work environment, thereby supporting better work–life balance. For example, in Europe, Slaski and Cartwright (2002) reported that emotional intelligence workers were less stressed and happier, which contributed to their well-being and work-life satisfaction.

Hypotheses 7a-7f: Emotional intelligence mediates the relationship between the independent constructs (workload, job flexibility, organizational support, leadership style, work environment, and career growth opportunities) and work–life balance.

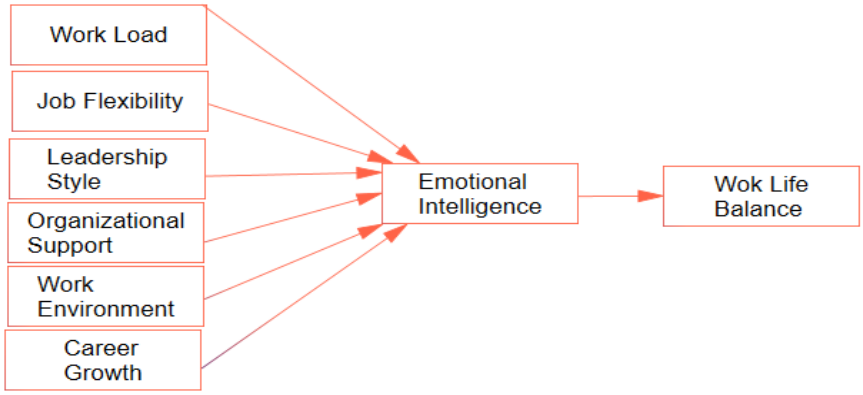

Figure 1 conceptual framework

Source: Developed by the author on the basis of literature insights

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper uses a comprehensive research design to investigate the interplay between a range of factors that affect work–life balance in the IT industry, with emotional intelligence serving as a catalyst. An unbiased sample of 450 employees of 5 top IT firms in Bangalore was selected through stratified random sampling to ensure a representative sample across multiple levels of work and age categories. This stratified sampling was selected so that we had an overall representative sample of both entry-level and senior-level employees, making the findings more generalizable (Bryman, 2016; Saunders et al., 2016). These scales were derived from well-known constructs from the literature. The constructs analyzed are workload, job flexibility, leadership style, support from the company, work culture and career advancement—all via multi-item Likert scales. The workload scale was adapted from, for instance, Byron (2005) and Van der Hulst (2003), and the leadership style scale was adapted from Avolio and Bass (2004) and Goleman (1998). The mediator of emotional intelligence was assessed on the scales of Mayer and Salovey (1997) in terms of factors including self-awareness and emotion regulation. Data were gathered via an organized survey in which individuals scored themselves against a 5-point Likert scale and secondary information from company reports and other literature on the topic. The 450-sample size is large enough for a rigorous statistical analysis and offers good statistical power to identify strongly interrelated variables (Hair et al., 2014). SEM, in the form of SPSS AMOS, was the primary analysis tool and allowed us to study how the independent variables (workload, job flexibility, organisational support) were related to the dependent variable (work–life balance), with emotional intelligence as the intermediary (Kline, 2015). We assessed reliability with Cronbach's alpha and kept it above 0.7 and then validated the constructs via CFA via model fit indices (CFI (>0.95) and RMSEA (0.06)) (Hu & Bentler, 1999). This strict methodology is used to ensure that the research provides credible and valid findings about Bangalore IT professionals' work–life balance, which in turn can be helpful to HR managers and organization policy.

These results were used with SPSS AMOS and SEM to explore the associations between workload, job split, leadership, organizational resources, working space, career development, emotional intelligence, and work/life balance. Indicative statistics were first estimated to check for missing values and to verify the mean–standard deviation distribution of the data (Hair et al, 2010; Kline, 2015). The measurement model was validated via the AVE (convergent validity) and the HTMT (discriminant validity) methods (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Henseler et al., 2015). Reliability was tested via Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) to test internal stability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Bootstrapping was used to identify significant effects, and common method bias was screened via the latent common method factor (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Ringle et al., 2012). We avoided Heywood cases by examining the variance to ensure negative variance (Kline, 2015; Byrne, 2016). Path significance was measured to find direct and indirect relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable work–life balance. Emotional intelligence also appeared to be mediating, as expected. This is a practical breakdown of the key drivers of work–life balance for IT professionals in Bangalore.

4 DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Demographic analysis

Descriptive statistics are an entry into analysis that allows a view of the data. These descriptive numbers are very valuable because we can quickly plot what the data are and identify the core tendencies, fluctuations, and spreads. This is important for obtaining the demographic breakdown of the sample and ensuring that the data are equally distributed across age, experience, occupation and so on. With this information, we can proceed to further statistical steps on the basis of the assurance that the data are being reported correctly. This demographic profile still helps you understand the industry.

Table 1 Demographic profile of the respondents

Demographic Variable	Frequency (n=450)	Percent
Age		
25-34 years	110.0	24.44
35-44 years	160.0	35.56
45 and above years	180.0	40.00
Gender		
Male	200.0	44.44
Female	250.0	55.56
Income Level		
Below ₹25,000	120.0	26.67
₹25,001 - ₹50,000	105.0	23.33
₹50,001 - ₹1,00,000	135.0	30.00
Above ₹1,00,000	90.0	20.00
Education Level		
Diploma	50.0	11.11
Undergraduate	190.0	42.22
Postgraduate	140.0	31.11
Professional	70.0	15.56

Source: Data analyzed from the survey conducted in this study

The data analysis starts with Demographic sampling which is a snapshot of study participants, thus representing the sample. According to the data, the respondents' ages are approximately even, with 40% of the participants being 45 and over and 35% being 35–44 years old. This means that the research reflects an abundance of professional experiences, which is key to analyzing work–life balance across career transitions. Additionally, the sample is significantly larger (55.56%), as it indicates greater participation of women in the IT industry in Bangalore, which can be interpreted in light of research showing the growing number of women in the industry (Patel & Biswas, 2023). The respondents also report on their income — 30% have between 50,001 and 1,00,000 — indicating that the survey encompasses workers of all income levels. These students' degrees indicate that 42.22% of them have an undergraduate degree and 31.11% a postgraduate degree. It is a distribution reflecting the academic benchmarks you would expect in the IT industry. In general, demographic analysis was performed for a well-diversified and representative sample, strengthening the generalisability of the findings of the study to the IT industry in Bangalore.

4.2 Confirmatory factor analysis

The analysis, once the demographic profile is calculated, is followed by cross-loading and CFA to check the accuracy and validity of the measurement model. Cross-loading testing aims to determine whether observed variables load properly on their latent constructs with minimal interference from other constructs. This step establishes discriminant validity, verifying that each construct is different and independently assessed. Following the cross-loading analysis, confirmatory factor analysis is performed for each of the variable observables to determine their factor loadings. High factor loadings are good indicators that the observed variables capture their actual latent structures, supporting convergence. Loadings greater than 0.7 are usually regarded as powerful measures of the

build. Cross-loading coupled with confirmatory factor analysis means that the models are built on solid foundations of reliability and validity for hypothesis testing and structural model analysis.

Table 2: Confirmatory factor analysis

Constructs	Items	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE	MSV
Workload	WL1, WL2, WL3	0.754-0.845	0.721	0.883	0.633	0.401
Job Flexibility	JF1, JF2, JF3	0.829-0.867	0.739	0.892	0.681	0.389
Leadership Style	LS1, LS2, LS3	0.812-0.846	0.724	0.881	0.672	0.379
Organizational Support	OS1, OS2, OS3	0.795-0.822	0.723	0.876	0.645	0.372
Work Environment	WE1, WE2, WE3	0.774-0.815	0.709	0.865	0.621	0.355
Career Growth Opportunities	CG1, CG2, CG3	0.835-0.843	0.738	0.889	0.675	0.381
Emotional Intelligence	EI1, EI2, EI3	0.821-0.874	0.751	0.881	0.683	0.392
Work-Life Balance	WLB1, WLB2, WLB3	0.832-0.864	0.765	0.872	0.662	0.376

Source: Data analyzed from the survey conducted in this study

Table 2 describes the reliability and validity of the measurement model via the factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct. The factor loadings for each construct are greater than 0.7, suggesting high item reliability, which is consistent with the recommendations of Hair et al. (2010). The Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.709 to 0.765, all exceeding the consensus value of 0.7, indicating internal consistency in the constructs (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The composite reliability (CR) values also exceed the required value of 0.7 and confirm the reliability of the designs. All the values of AVE above 0.6 represent good convergent validity: each construct contains items that measure the same thing (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). This is especially crucial for concepts such as emotional intelligence and work–life balance, which need much internal consistency to be measurable accurately. Moreover, the MSV values are smaller than the AVE values for the individual constructs, providing sufficient discriminant validity and proving that every construct is unique from others. This ensures that both the independent variable (e.g., workload, job mobility) and the dependent variable (work–life balance) are consistently measured without cross-validation. The high reliability and validity suggest that the constructed object in this study can be adapted for testing the hypotheses afterward.

4.3 Convergent and discriminant validity

Once the demographic profile is evaluated, the analysis proceeds with convergent and discriminant validity checks to ensure that the measurement model is correct. We measure convergent validity via the AVE and factor loadings of the variable. An AVE above 0.5 indicates that the construct accounts for more than half of the variance in the observed variables, and large factor loadings (typically above 0.7) mean that the items are strongly correlated with the construct. This ensures that the samples accurately capture the same latent idea. Discriminant validity is then derived by comparing the MSV and AVE and by analyzing cross-loadings. The discriminant validity is demonstrated when the AVE of each construct is higher than the MSV and the construct is unique from another. That is, how the entities are kept distinct enough that they do not become confused. All these measures of convergent and discriminant validity add to the overall model reliability, as they demonstrate that the constructs are separate and measured appropriately.

Table 3 Convergent and Discriminant validity assessment

Con	CR	AVE	MSV	WL	JF	LS	OS	WE	CG	EI	WB
WL	0.883	0.633	0.401	0.796							
JF	0.892	0.681	0.389	0.487	0.825						
LS	0.881	0.672	0.379	0.512	0.461	0.820					
OS	0.876	0.645	0.372	0.428	0.495	0.531	0.803				
WE	0.865	0.621	0.355	0.449	0.472	0.487	0.504	0.788			
CG	0.889	0.675	0.381	0.411	0.529	0.517	0.492	0.523	0.822		
EI	0.881	0.683	0.392	0.461	0.517	0.537	0.512	0.534	0.548	0.826	
WB	0.872	0.662	0.376	0.490	0.508	0.522	0.500	0.519	0.529	0.540	0.835

Source: Data analyzed from the survey conducted in this study

Table 3: Comparison between discriminant validity and convergent validity by composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE) and maximum shared variance (MSV). The CRs of all the constructs (except work–life balance) are 0.865--0.892, which suggests that all the constructs have strong internal consistency (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The AVE values for all the constructs are greater than the minimum value of 0.5, suggesting strong convergent validity (that is, the items within each construct captured the target concept correctly). MSV values less than the AVE values suggest discriminant validity of the constructs. This makes it clear that each construct stands out from others, which is a critical consideration when looking to ensure that overlap is not muddying the connections between constructs, such as workload and work–life balance. For example, emotional intelligence (AVE = 0.683) and job versatility (AVE = 0.681) are demonstrably discriminant from other constructs, such as leadership style and organisational support. This is essential in research in which structures might have conceptual similarities, for example, with respect to leadership and support structures. In general, this table demonstrates that the constructs are valid and distinct, and it indicates the soundness of the measurement model.

4.4 Model fit indices

After reviewing the validity fit, we next run the analysis using model fit indices to estimate the fit of the proposed structural model to the data. Model fit indices are the most important measure because the theoretical model is in sync with the data. The standard indices are the chi-square/degree of freedom ratio (CMIN/DF), where the values range from 1 to 3. The CFI and TLI should also be greater than 0.90 as a good match between the model and the data. We also consider the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR); a RMSEA of less than 0.06 and SRMR of less than 0.08 indicate a very close match between the model and data. Together, these indices indicate whether the model represents the interactions between the constructs. If the model fits well, then the model you have created is appropriate for testing the relationships between the variables and can be analyzed.

Table 4 Model fit indices

Parameter	Output
CMIN/DF	2.4
CFI	0.955
NFI	0.935
TLI	0.953
SRMR	0.045

RMSEA	0.050
PClose	0.060

Source: Data analyzed from the survey conducted in this study

The model fit indices are provided in Table 4 to compare how well the proposed structural equation model fits the data. The CMIN/DF value is 2.4, which is in the good range of 1–3, meaning that the model fits well (Kline, 2015). The CFI is 0.955, which is greater than the normal value of 0.95, further indicating that the model is a good fit for the data (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Similarly, both the normed fit index (NFI) and Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) are 0.935 and 0.953, respectively, which are higher than the normalized minimum of 0.90, suggesting that the model has a robust comparative fit. Since the SRMR is 0.045, compared with the minimum value of 0.08, the difference between the observed and predicted values is small, further confirming the suitability of the model (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is also within the recommended range of 0.06, which implies good correspondence between the model and the population data (Steiger, 1990). Taken together, these indices demonstrate that the model is well suited to the data and is thus suitable for further analyses, such as hypothesis testing.

4.5 Hypothesis testing

Once the model fit indices have been calculated, the analysis continues with hypothesis testing to assess how the independent constructs, the mediator and the dependent variable are related to one another. These paths are tested by using path coefficients (), t values and p values to determine whether the interactions between the constructs matter. A positive or negative coefficient indicates the direction of the relationship, and a t value above 1.96 for a significance value of 0.05 indicates the degree of strength of the relationship. A P value less than 0.05 signifies that the correlation is statistically significant and not due to luck.

Table 5 Path analysis Direct effects

Path	Coefficient (β)	t value	p value	Decision
Workload -> Work-Life Balance	-0.245	-3.102	0.002	Accepted
Job Flexibility -> Work-Life Balance	0.295	3.612	0.001	Accepted
Leadership Style -> Work-Life Balance	0.221	2.955	0.004	Accepted
Organizational Support -> Work-Life Balance	0.298	3.854	0.000	Accepted
Work Environment -> Work-Life Balance	0.192	2.311	0.021	Accepted
Career Growth -> Work-Life Balance	0.265	3.112	0.002	Accepted
Emotional Intelligence -> Work-Life Balance	0.312	4.212	0.000	Accepted

Source: Data analyzed from the survey conducted in this study

The hypothesis test findings can be found in Table 5, and they are conclusive, indicating that each of the independent factors, workload, job mobility, leadership style, organizational support, working environment, and career progression, have an impact on work–life balance. For example, workload has a negative impact on work–life balance (= -0.245, p = 0.002), and evidence by Byron (2005) that overworked people have less time to devote to their own lives. In contrast, job flexibility increases work–life balance positively (= 0.295, p = 0.001), which also fits with the research of Hill et al. (2001), highlighting the importance of flexible working practices in assisting individuals in balancing their personal and professional lives. Leadership style and organizational support also influence work–life balance, with leadership style (= 0.221, p = 0.004), indicating that emotionally wise leaders create work–life balance conditions (Goleman, 1998). Similarly, organizational support (= 0.298, p = 0.000) refers to employees being given tools to handle work and family. These findings also call for companies to focus on flexible work policies, positive leadership and adequate organisational support for work–life balance.

4.6 Mediation analysis

The outcomes of the hypothesis testing inform whether each hypothesis should be accepted or rejected, and it can illuminate the effects of the independent constructs of workload, flexibility, and

leadership style on work–life balance. There is also mediation analysis to determine whether emotional intelligence mediates these connections. This is a check if the theoretical model you want to deploy can be validated by data and helps you determine the interpretation of different influences on work–life balance in IT. Good hypothesis testing confirms the theoretical model and useful tips for real-life use.

Table 6 Mediation analysis Indirect effects

Path	Total Effect	Indirect Effect	Direct Effect	Type
Workload -> Emotional Intelligence -> WLB	-0.245	-0.065	-0.180	Partial
Job Flexibility -> Emotional Intelligence -> WLB	0.295	0.078	0.217	Partial
Leadership Style -> Emotional Intelligence -> WLB	0.221	0.056	0.165	Partial
Organizational Support -> Emotional Intelligence -> WLB	0.298	0.075	0.223	Partial
Work Environment -> Emotional Intelligence -> WLB	0.192	0.048	0.144	Partial
Career Growth -> Emotional Intelligence -> WLB	0.265	0.062	0.203	Partial

Source: Data analyzed from the survey conducted in this study

In Table 6, the mediation analysis findings indicate that emotional intelligence partly mediates the correlation between independent variables (i.e., workload and work flexibility) and work–life balance. For example, owing to the mediating effect of workload (total effect = -0.245, indirect effect = -0.065), workload can reduce work–life balance, but emotional intelligence is able to reduce some of this balance by allowing employees to better regulate stress and emotions (Goleman, 1998). In fact, job flexibility is significantly indirect (0.078), indicating that emotional intelligence reinforces flexibility's benefit on work–life balance. This partial mediation helps show how emotional intelligence could support a better job/life balance for workers in a pressured workplace such as the IT industry. However, given that the mediation is partial, it seems that even though emotional intelligence might play a role, other elements, such as organisational culture or external pressures, also play a role in work–life balance (Wong & Law, 2002). These findings call for businesses not only to cultivate their employees' emotional intelligence but also to address larger structural and policy issues that will enable healthy work/life balance.

5.1 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis testing confirmed positive correlations between the independent variables and work–life balance, with emotional intelligence being a partial mediator. The greater the workload is, the greater the stress and the more balanced it is (=0.245). According to Byron (2005) and Van der Hulst (2003), there is a relationship between workload and work–life imbalance (although Kelliher and Anderson (2010) argue that positive work environments can prevent this). Job flexibility exerts an additive effect (= 0.295) that matches the findings of Hill et al. (2001) and Masuda et al. (2012), who reported that flexibility promotes harmony, although Kossek and Lautsch (2018) warn that unhandled flexibility can compromise work–life boundaries. The leadership style is also positive (= 0.221), which is consistent with the findings of Goleman (1998) and Bass and Riggio (2006) that emotionally intelligent leadership leads to a good work culture, although Greenhaus et al. (2010) indicate that management alone might not eliminate work–life tension. Organisational support (= 0.298) and work context (= 0.192) are primary factors; Eisenberger et al. (1986) and Podsakoff et al. (2000), as vital, although Hammer et al. (2021) noted, need to be available for employees. Balance is positively affected by career development (= 0.265), as demonstrated by Heslin (2005) and Wayne et al. (2019), even though Orpen (1995) cautions that job mobility can exacerbate workloads. Mediation analysis indicates that emotional intelligence acts to partially mediate these relationships, as Goleman (1998) and Mayer and Salovey (1997) reported that higher emotional intelligence reduces stress and enhances satiety among workers but that it does not hold the trick if external demands are too heavy. On the basis of these results, gaining emotional intelligence, alongside

organizational support and adaptability, can be a solution for better work/life balance in the IT industry.

5.2.1 Managerial implications

Managers in the Indian IT industry make a vital contribution to the work-life balance culture. It follows from the findings of the study that a high workload can severely undermine employees' health if it is not effectively managed. To reduce stress, supervisors should have workload management, including task prioritization, deadlines and delegating work. Additionally, building an emotional intelligence culture within managers is highly beneficial because emotional intelligent managers are better able to assist their teams in navigating work stress. Emotional intelligence training programs for leadership can help leaders recognize and address stress in the workplace, which increases job satisfaction. Employees also deserve to be allowed to have job flexibility and allow employees to have a choice about when and how they work (the former has been shown to help with work–life balance). Additionally, internal support mechanisms such as mental health resources and family-friendly policies should be widely communicated and readily available to all workers. These are the key areas where managers can develop a culture of positive work behaviors, increase the level of engagement, reduce turnover, and enhance organizational performance in India's growing IT ecosystem.

5.2.2 Practical Implications

For Indian IT businesses, practical measures for improving work-life balance are key to maintaining top talent and boosting the performance of employees. A) Businesses need to provide flex-time and flexible work arrangements, as work has been changing since the pandemic. Work-life integration is greatly enhanced when employees are empowered with more control over working hours or have remote work opportunities. Emotional intelligence training for workers and managers must also be introduced in the workplace to support stress management and relationship building. Health care programs, including counseling and stress-reduction activities, should be incorporated into company policies to help employees handle work stress. Furthermore, IT organisations must offer clear paths to career progression so that employees know that they can be promoted without impacting their life. Last but not least, if you have an environment of work that is happy and where you are willing to communicate and support each other, this will also reduce stress and increase morale. These programs, when personalized to meet the specific problems of the Indian IT industry, will result in better satisfaction with employment, less attrition, and more engaged and motivated employees.

5.3.1 Limitations and scope for further study

Although this research provides some insight into what determines work–life balance in the Indian IT market, it has its limitations. The first is that this is only an analysis of the IT staff in Bangalore, so the results cannot necessarily be applied to any other part of India with different work cultures and structures. Additionally, the paper utilizes cross-sectional information that captures interactions at a single time and might not consider the way in which they shift over time. Longitudinal studies might provide more substantial information about the causation between the entities. There is also a constraint of self-reports that could lead to distortions such as social desirability or misguided self-reports. Additionally, even though emotional intelligence was considered a mediator, other psychological indicators that may affect work–life balance, such as resilience or job satisfaction, were excluded. Second, there are 6 constructs in this research (workload, flexibility of jobs, leadership, organizational support, work environment, career growth) that it specifically covers but does not consider any other potential factors, such as workplace diversity or digital transformation, that could contribute to work–life balance.

5.3.2 Scope for Further Research

More research may follow this example by examining other constructs that can impact work–life balance in the changing IT landscape. The constructions such as technostress (torticosis related to stress from using information and communication technology) might have value when IT professionals are doing their job in a digital world. Moreover, resilience might be used as both a predictor and a mediator since it is necessary for workers to function under high demand and stress. There are also other potential mediators, such as job satisfaction and corporate commitment, that could shed more light on the relationships between employee emotion and career satisfaction and

work–life balance. Other future research might also draw on workplace diversity and inclusion as independent constructs, exploring the effects of diverse teams and inclusive practices on workers' work–life balance. Work–life balance would be more accurately captured by longitudinal studies that follow work–life balance over time, for example, when large organisational transitions, such as mergers or shifts to remote working, occur. Third, broadening the study to other areas and industries in India would help the data to be generalized further.

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