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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Examining the Relationship Between Work-Life Balance, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover Intention Among University Lecturers in Afghanistan

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of work-life balance on job satisfaction and turnover intention among university lecturers in Afghanistan. A quantitative research approach was employed, and data were collected from 450 lecturers working at five public and private universities in Afghanistan using convenience sampling. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire using established measures of work-life balance, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and General Linear Model (GLM) multivariate analysis. The findings revealed a statistically significant overall multivariate association between work-life balance, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. Work-life balance had a significant positive association with job satisfaction, whereas its association with turnover intention was also positive and statistically significant but considerably weaker, contrary to the hypothesized negative relationship. The findings indicate that work-life balance is substantially more strongly associated with lecturers' job satisfaction than with their turnover intention. The study highlights the importance of supporting lecturers in balancing their professional and personal responsibilities while recognizing that turnover intention may be influenced by factors beyond work-life balance.

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Introduction

Work-life balance (hereafter, WLB) has become an important concern in contemporary organizations as employees attempt to meet increasing professional responsibilities while maintaining their personal and family lives. Work-life balance generally reflects an individual's ability to manage work responsibilities alongside personal and family demands in a way that minimizes conflict between these domains. WLB means that an employee achieves a balance between work, home, and other life roles (Karthik, 2013; Soomro et al., 2018). According to Nguyen et al. (2022), work-life balance is defined as the amount of time individuals spend doing their jobs compared with the amount of time they spend with their families and doing things they enjoy. Research has consistently demonstrated that employees often

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experience conflict between their working and personal lives. WLB is rooted in an employee's need to strike a healthy balance between the desire to participate fully in the labor market and the responsibility to give their best to loved ones, essentially maintaining a balance between professional and personal responsibilities (Bhalerao, 2013; Lavoie, 2014). Poor WLB can have negative consequences for employees' health and well-being, as well as organizational performance. An imbalance between work and personal life may increase stress and contribute to greater turnover intention among employees (Jaharuddin & Zainol, 2019).

This issue is particularly important in higher education because university lecturers are expected to perform multiple roles involving teaching, research, student supervision, administrative responsibilities, professional development, and community service. Such responsibilities may extend beyond normal working hours and create difficulties in maintaining an appropriate balance between professional and personal life. Maintaining an appropriate work-life balance is therefore important not only for lecturers' personal well-being but also for their attitudes toward their jobs and institutions. Organizations must also compete for talented employees who expect to manage both their work and nonwork roles successfully. Consequently, work-life balance and turnover intention are important considerations for employers and human resource managers. Supporting employees in balancing their professional and personal responsibilities may contribute to improved job satisfaction, reduced work-family conflict, and greater employee retention.

One important organizational outcome associated with work-life balance is job satisfaction. According to Sahibzada and Pandya (2022), job satisfaction refers to a pleasurable emotional state resulting from an individual's evaluation of how the work environment fulfills their needs. Job satisfaction is also defined as the degree of positive affective orientation toward the job (Sahibzada et al., 2025; Sahibzada & Pandya, 2023; Khawrin & Sahibzada, 2023a). It also reflects employees' beliefs and feelings about their current jobs (Khawrin et al., 2022; Khawrin & Sahibzada, 2023b). Previous empirical studies have demonstrated a relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction. Nadhiya and Sareena Umma (2022) found a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction among academic staff. In other words, higher work-life balance is associated with higher job satisfaction among academic staff. In addition, Kasbuntoro et al. (2020) found that work-life balance had a significant impact on job satisfaction. Fayyazi and Aslani (2015) reported a noteworthy positive relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction. Similarly, Arif and Farooqi (2014) found a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction among university teachers.

Employee turnover intention has been a serious and continuing concern in human resource management in many developing countries. Turnover intention is another important outcome in higher education and refers to employees' thoughts about leaving their organizations (Abdien, 2019). According to Khawrin and Sahibzada (2023b), turnover intention refers to an employee's intention to leave their organization within a particular period. Oloyede and Soyemi (2022) reported that high employee turnover intention has negative consequences for organizational performance and productivity. Therefore, examining turnover intention alongside job satisfaction provides an opportunity to understand how work-life balance is associated with both lecturers' attitudes toward their current jobs and their intentions to leave their institutions.

Despite growing attention to work-life balance, limited empirical evidence is available on its relationship with both job satisfaction and turnover intention among university lecturers in Afghanistan. Although previous studies have examined these relationships in different organizational and educational contexts, further research is needed to understand how work-life balance is associated with these two outcomes within Afghan higher education institutions. Examining both outcomes simultaneously provides an opportunity to understand whether work-life balance is associated differently with lecturers' job satisfaction and their intentions to leave their institutions. The findings may help university administrators and policymakers better understand these relationships and develop appropriate workplace practices. Based on the reviewed literature and the identified research gap, the following objectives were formulated:

1. To examine the influence of work-life balance on job satisfaction among university lecturers.
2. To examine the influence of work-life balance on turnover intention among university lecturers.
3. To examine the overall multivariate influence of work-life balance on job satisfaction and turnover intention among university lecturers.

Hypotheses

H1: Work-life balance has a significant positive influence on job satisfaction among university lecturers.

H2: Work-life balance has a significant negative influence on turnover intention among university lecturers.

H3: Work-life balance has a significant multivariate influence on job satisfaction and turnover intention among university lecturers.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework of the Study

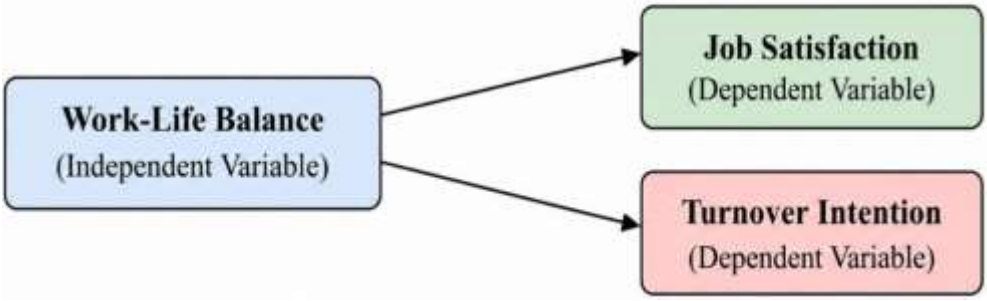


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Note. Developed by the authors based on the research objectives and reviewed literature.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research approach to examine the influence of work-life balance on job satisfaction and turnover intention among university lecturers. Data were collected from 450 lecturers working at five public and private universities in Afghanistan: Nangarhar University, Khurasan University, Amir Ali Shir Navoyi University, Aryana University, and Tabesh University. A convenience sampling technique was employed, whereby lecturers who were accessible and willing to participate during the data collection period were included in the study.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire adopted from previously established instruments. Work-life balance was measured using four items adopted from Brough et al. (2014), job satisfaction using six items from Özpehlivan and Acar (2016), and turnover intention using four items from Bothma and Roodt (2013). All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The internal consistency of the measurement scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha.

The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize the respondents and study variables. GLM multivariate analysis was employed to examine the overall association of work-life balance with job satisfaction and turnover intention jointly. Tests of between-subjects effects and parameter estimates were subsequently examined to determine the individual associations, direction, and magnitude of the relationships. Statistical significance was assessed at $p < .05$.

Research Model

The study employed a multivariate general linear model to examine the relationships between work-life balance and two dependent variables: job satisfaction and turnover intention. Work-life balance was treated as the independent variable, while job satisfaction and turnover intention were treated as the dependent variables. The relationships were represented by the following equations:

Model 1: Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction

$$JS_i = \beta_{o1} + \beta_1 WLB_i + \varepsilon_{1i}$$

Model 2: Work-Life Balance and Turnover Intention

$$TI_i = \beta_{o2} + \beta_2 WLB_i + \varepsilon_{2i}$$

Where:

- JS = Job Satisfaction
- TI = Turnover Intention
- WLB = Work-Life Balance
- β_{o1} and β_{o2} = Intercept terms

- β_1 and β_2 = Regression coefficients representing the associations of work-life balance with the respective dependent variables
- ε_{1i} and ε_{2i} = Error terms for the two dependent variables
- i = Individual respondent

Both dependent variables were analyzed jointly using the GLM multivariate procedure to assess the overall multivariate association, followed by separate univariate tests to examine the relationship between work-life balance and each dependent variable.

Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the academic purpose of the study. Their information was kept confidential, and the collected data were used solely for research purposes. No personally identifying information was included in the analysis or reporting.

Results and Findings

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	435	96.7
	Female	15	3.3
Total		450	100
Age	Below 30 years	82	18.2
	30–40 years	196	43.6
	41–50 years	141	31.3
	Above 50 years	31	6.9
Marital Status	Single	100	22.2
	Married	350	77.8
Academic Qualification	Bachelor	85	18.9
	Master	339	75.3
	PhD	26	5.8
Academic Rank/Position	Professor	27	6.0
	Senior Lecturer/Assistant Professor	245	54.4
	Associate Professor	87	19.3
	Teaching Assistant	91	20.2
Teaching Experience	Less than 5 years	130	28.9
	5–10 years	150	33.3
	11–15 years	105	23.3
	More than 15 years	65	14.4
University	Nangarhar University	352	78.2
	Khurasan University	28	6.2
	Amir Ali Shir Navoyi University	15	3.3
	Aryana University	34	7.6
	Tabesh University	21	4.7
Employment Status	Full-time	413	91.8
	Contract-based	37	8.2
Average Weekly Working Hours	Less than 30 hours	44	9.8
	30–40 hours	118	26.2
	41–50 hours	173	38.4
	More than 50 hours	115	25.6

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the 450 respondents. The majority were male (96.7%) and married (77.8%). Regarding education, 75.3% held a master's degree, while the largest age group was 30–40 years (43.6%). More than half were Senior Lecturers/Assistant Professors (54.4%), and the largest group had 5–10 years of teaching experience (33.3%). Most respondents were from Nangarhar University (78.2%) and were full-time employees (91.8%), while 38.4% worked 41–50 hours per week.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Work Life Balance	450	4.00	17.00	8.8400	2.62949
Job Satisfaction	450	6.00	30.00	15.6044	4.20139
Job Turnover Intention	450	4.00	20.00	9.1511	2.93573

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the study variables. Work-life balance recorded a mean score of 8.84 (SD = 2.63), indicating a relatively low level of work-life balance, with some variation among respondents. Job satisfaction had a mean score of 15.60 (SD = 4.20), suggesting satisfaction slightly below the scale midpoint, with noticeable variation in individual responses. Turnover intention recorded a mean score of 9.15 (SD = 2.94), indicating a relatively low intention to leave the organization, although responses varied among lecturers. Overall, the standard deviations indicate differences in respondents' experiences and perceptions across the three variables.

Table 3

Multivariate Effect of Work-Life Balance on Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention

Multivariate Tests[a]						
Effect	*Value*	*F*	*Hypothesis df*	*Error df*	*Sig.*	*Partial Eta Squared*
Wilks' Lambda	*.691*	*99.948*	*2*	*447*	*.000*	*.309*
a. Design: Intercept + WLB						

Table 3 presents the multivariate relationship between work-life balance and the combined dependent variables of job satisfaction and turnover intention. The results revealed a statistically significant overall multivariate association, Wilks' $\Lambda = .691$, $F(2, 447) = 99.948$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .309$. Therefore, H3, which proposed a significant multivariate relationship between work-life balance, job satisfaction, and turnover intention among university lecturers, was supported.

Table 4

Univariate Effects and Parameter Estimates of Work-Life Balance on Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention

Dependent Variable	B	SE	t	F(1, 448)	p	95% CI	Partial η^2	R^2	Adj. R^2
Job Satisfaction	.887	.063	14.133	199.745	< .001	[.764, 1.011]	.308	.308	.307
Turnover Intention	.129	.052	2.471	6.105	.014	[.026, .232]	.013	.013	.011

Note. Independent variable: Work-Life Balance (WLB). B = unstandardized regression coefficient; **SE = standard error; CI = confidence interval; partial η^2 = effect size; R^2 = coefficient of** determination; Adj. R^2 = adjusted coefficient of determination. Sample size = 450.

Table 4 presents the univariate effects and parameter estimates of work-life balance on job satisfaction and turnover intention. Work-life balance showed a statistically significant positive association with job satisfaction ($B = .887$, $F(1, 448) = 199.745$, $p < .001$), explaining 30.8% of its variance ($R^2 = .308$). The regression coefficient indicates that a one-unit increase in work-life balance was associated with a .887-unit increase in job satisfaction. Therefore, H1 was supported. Work-life balance also showed a statistically significant but weak positive association with turnover intention ($B = .129$, $F(1, 448) = 6.105$, $p = .014$), explaining only 1.3% of its variance ($R^2 = .013$). The regression coefficient indicates that a one-unit increase in work-life balance was associated with a .129-unit increase in turnover intention. Since this relationship was positive rather than negative, H2 was not supported.

Discussion

The findings revealed a statistically significant overall multivariate association between work-life balance, job satisfaction, and turnover intention among university lecturers. This indicates that work-life balance is significantly associated with the two dependent variables when considered jointly. Therefore, the findings supported H3.

Regarding job satisfaction, work-life balance showed a significant positive association, explaining 30.8% of the variance in job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with previous studies. Nadhiya and Sareena Umma (2022) reported a strong positive relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction among academic staff. Similarly, Kasbuntoro et al. (2020) found a significant influence of work-life balance on job satisfaction, while Fayyazi and Aslani (2015) reported a positive relationship between the two variables. Arif and Farooqi (2014) also found a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction among university teachers. These findings suggest that lecturers who are better able to balance their professional and personal responsibilities tend to experience greater satisfaction with their jobs. Therefore, H1 was supported.

Regarding turnover intention, work-life balance showed a statistically significant but weak positive association, explaining only 1.3% of its variance. This finding was contrary to H2, which proposed a negative relationship between work-life balance and turnover intention. Therefore, H2 was not supported. The finding also differs from previous research suggesting that poor work-life balance may contribute to greater turnover intention. For example, Jaharuddin and Zainol (2019) associated work-life imbalance with increased stress and turnover intention. The unexpected positive relationship in the present study suggests that turnover intention may be associated with factors beyond work-life balance, such as organizational or employment-related conditions that were not examined in this study. Given the limited explanatory power of work-life balance, this finding should be interpreted cautiously and should not be taken as evidence of a causal relationship. Furthermore, the unexpected direction of this relationship suggests that future studies should carefully examine the measurement and coding of work-life balance and turnover intention to determine whether these factors influence the observed association.

Conclusion

Maintaining an appropriate work-life balance is an important concern among university lecturers, as their professional responsibilities may influence job satisfaction and turnover intention. This study examined the relationship between work-life balance, job satisfaction, and turnover intention among 450 lecturers from five universities in Afghanistan. The findings revealed a statistically significant but weak positive association between work-life balance and turnover intention, contrary to the hypothesized negative relationship. In contrast, work-life balance demonstrated a considerably stronger positive association with job satisfaction. The overall multivariate findings also confirmed a significant association between work-life balance and the two outcomes when considered jointly. The study concludes that work-life balance is more strongly associated with lecturers' job satisfaction than with their intention to leave their institutions, suggesting that turnover intention may be influenced by additional organizational and employment-related factors beyond work-life balance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, universities should give greater attention to policies and practices that support lecturers in maintaining a healthy balance between their professional and personal responsibilities, as work-life balance was positively associated with job satisfaction. University management may consider flexible work arrangements, reasonable workloads, supportive working conditions, and effective workload distribution to promote lecturers' job satisfaction.

Given the weak association between work-life balance and turnover intention, universities should recognize that lecturers' intentions to leave may be associated with factors beyond work-life balance. Future research should therefore examine other potential determinants of turnover intention, including compensation, promotion opportunities, job security, recognition, leadership, and organizational support, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of turnover intention among university lecturers.

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