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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Study on Work-life Balance and Emotional Intelligence among Employees Working in IT Sectors Chennai

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ABSTRACT

Work-life balance (WLB) refers to an individual's capacity to meet job and family responsibilities, as well as other duties and hobbies. Maintaining a healthy WLB is important not just for relationships and wellness, but also for enhancing productivity and performance in organizations. Along with relationships, leadership, harmony, and communication, emotional intelligence appears to be an important component of mental abilities connected to WLB and achievement in life. Emotional intelligence (EI) is all about understanding and managing emotions effectively to alleviate stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome obstacles, and settle conflicts. Both the WLB and EI play a vital role among individuals in controlling their emotions, navigating relationships, and creating supportive jobs. Organizations can benefit from increasing the employee's talents by educating them and promoting a positive thinking culture. In this context, the study aims to understand the relationship between WLB and EI among the employees who are working in IT Sectors. The study is conducted as quantitative research by choosing 100 respondents working in IT sectors between the age of 21 to 50 years by using a convenience sampling method to collect the data from the respondents. The study follows the theoretical framework applying the 'Boundary Theory' proposed by Nippert Eng (1996) on managing between the work and personal lives. The findings of the study revealed that there is a positive correlation between WLB and EI among the employees working in the IT sector. Additionally, the study found that 62% of employees reported a medium level of work-life balance, and 76% of employees had a medium level of emotional intelligence.

Keywords: Work-life balance, Employees, Emotional intelligence, IT sector

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1. Introduction

In today's fast-paced and dynamic workplace, employees constantly managing the delicate balance between professional obligations and personal well-being. This delicate balance is captured in the idea of Work-life balance (WLB) is the equilibrium that people seek between the demands of their work lives and the fulfillment of their personal and family needs. Achieving the right work-life balance is necessary for lifestyle wellness, efficiency, and achievement over the long run. The capacity to carry out duties at work while maintaining a strong commitment to one's family and other obligations outside of work is known as work-life balance (WLB definition⁷). Emotional Intelligence (EI) is defined as the capacity to recognize, evaluate, and manage one's own emotions while also effectively navigating and influencing the emotions of others¹⁵). It includes self-awareness, self-control, social awareness, and relationship management. Through EI, it influences one's capacity to manage the difficulties associated with work and life. EI appears to be an important aspect of mental capabilities associated with WLB and personal achievement. Along with relationships, leadership, harmony, and communication will serve as the foundation for professional relationships with others. Furthermore, those with greater intellectual ability have stronger interpersonal and communication abilities. This can benefit their connections with coworkers, bosses, and customers by fostering a friendly and collaborative work atmosphere. Employees with EI are also more creative and able to solve difficulties using their creativity²⁷).

According to previous research conducted by Powell highlights conflicting roles in work and family significantly impact individuals WLB. These roles represent areas where individuals often struggle to find equilibrium, which is a key aspect of achieving WLB. While work and family are central components, other factors such as personal interests and social activities may also contribute to WLB challenges²¹). Another study states that individuals with good EI will find it simpler to communicate with others, and in the workplace, they will find it easier to collaborate with others to finish tasks and reach objectives¹⁸).

As organizations see the value of employee well-being and its influence on performance, incorporating EI into workplace culture becomes increasingly important. This entails creating an atmosphere that promotes self-awareness, empathy, and effective communication, resulting in a more harmonious WLB. The Information technology sector has been constantly expanding as it creates more job opportunities for individuals. As technology changes the modern workplace, IT employees confront new difficulties involving flexibility, resilience, and interpersonal skills. Both WLB and EI play a vital role in sustaining long-term success in the organization as well as fostering a positive work environment. This paper investigates the link between WLB and EI among employees who are working in the IT sector.

2. Objectives

1. To understand the association between EI and WLB among employees working in IT sectors.
2. To identify the relationship between WLB and EI based on the gender of the respondents who are working in IT Sectors.
3. To identify the level of EI and WLB of the respondents who are working in IT Sectors.
4. To suggest recommendations based on the findings to improve their WLB and EI.

3. Rationale of the study

In the ever-changing environment of the information technology sector, WLB and EI are essential factors influencing employees' overall well-being and professional productivity. EI and WLB are vital elements in determining

organizational effectiveness, particularly in India's IT sector. Individuals must be socially and emotionally experienced as globalization and digitalization continue to accelerate. In the Indian IT business, social norms frequently govern how employees interact with one another and with customers²⁶). EI can be accelerated by having a healthy WLB which will lead to showing positive emotions towards their work and as well as improving their performance in their work. Employees who work in the IT sector are subjected to more stress, which has an impact on their mental health as well as their EI, which influences both their personal and professional lives. Hence for an individual working in an IT company, EI and WLB are important to lead personal and professional life¹⁸). So this study was done to understand the employees WLB and their emotions in fulfilling the tasks to achieve the overall work-life equilibrium.

4. Need of the study

The WLB and EI have a significant influence on employee well-being, work happiness, and overall performance in every aspect of their lives. It enables individuals to overcome the challenges in the workplace by having a healthy WLB which creates a sense of feeling towards their job by possessing EI which are likely to be more satisfied with their jobs²²). Both components play a vital role in the workplace to enhance productivity and performance, the effectiveness of leadership, work satisfaction, and commitment to their goals. By addressing these factors which are connected to the employees, it will be easy to understand how the workplace scenario has been set up in the organization by knowing the WLB and EI of the employees who are working in the IT sector field. Finally, this study can help us understand the link between WLB and EI, which can have a substantial impact on an individual's well-being and performance at work.

5. Review of Literature

WLB is all about balancing the individual personal as well as professional life. EI deals with the ability to manage the emotions of people in a positive way to relieve stress, empathize with others, and overcome challenges by reducing conflict. A study explained that individual factors do not favor the retention of female employees in the South Indian software business. The findings indicate that societal and surroundings influence WLB and the retention of female employees in the software firm¹⁶). Another study revealed the issues of WLB of women who are working in the IT sectors. The findings of the study show that working women who have been married and have kids are suffering from lifestyle diseases like anxiety, mood swings, and hypertension. It is observed that women IT professionals who are playing a dual role have to compromise either family or their professional life⁶). A similar study states that maintaining self-control, awareness, and motivation in their work allows them to regulate their emotions in both the workplace and their personal lives, allowing them to evenly balance work and life³⁰). Another study states that EI, job involvement, job satisfaction, and WLB have a direct influence on job performance. The results demonstrate that employee happiness and engagement boost productivity and employee loyalty, all of which contribute to the organization's overall success¹⁷). A study states that employees WLB is greatly influenced by their awareness of themselves and their ability to manage various situations. In this regard, EI plays a crucial role in handling emotions as well as balancing personal and professional lives³²). A similar study revealed that life experiences help people improve their EI, which in turn influences how well they manage their personal and professional lives. The results indicate that creating a person's life-work balance is seen to be mostly dependent on their EI and that it is more reasonable to see work as a part of overall life satisfaction considering the importance of one's personal life¹³). A study explores the connection between EI and occupational stress in the teaching fraternity by mediating workplace

spirituality. The study found that EI and spirituality at work influence occupational stress in the teaching profession. The effect of spirituality in the workplace on EI and occupational stress is zero or very little. Research suggests that those with high spirituality and intermediate emotional intelligence tend to have lower stress levels ¹⁹⁾. Another study states the role of EI in increasing the quality of work life of school principals. The results indicate that increasing emotional intelligence can provide a better work environment for principals, leading to improved performance in terms of professional as well as personal lives ⁸⁾. A similar study states that EI is basic eligibility where the health care providers must have an emotional understanding of their human resources and the ability to manage people, conditions, and infrastructure effectively. The findings of the study reveal that healthcare managers have strong emotional awareness and self-evaluation skills. It also shows that women had greater EI and management-evaluation of self-esteem compared to males ¹²⁾. A study explains the role of digital competence in WLB and job stress in service performance through moderating EI. The study's findings show that although digital competence improves WLB and stress, it has minimal influence on service performance. Furthermore, EI moderates the link between job stress and service performance, but not the relationship between digital competence and WLB ⁹⁾. Another study reveals on how work-family conflict, WLB, and emotional intelligence impact employee success in business. The study found that work-family conflict had no direct influence on WLB. The EI has a favorable impact on WLB. Furthermore, data analysis showed that WLB had a positive impact on employee performance ³³⁾. Another study explains whether EI is the mediator between workplace bullying and job performance. The results of the study show that workplace bullying had an unfavorable effect on work performance, with a smaller impact for those with high EI and a larger impact for those with low EI. The study underlines the necessity for organizations to eliminate workplace bullying and the relevance of (EI) for people who are mistreated at work ²⁾. Another study states that EI has a moderating effect on the stress generated by the pandemic which has influenced work performance in comparison with counterproductive work behaviors. The result shows that professionals with strong EI and low COVID stress demonstrated superior performance and lower counterproductive work behaviors compared to those with lower emotional capabilities and higher stress ²³⁾. A study explains the determinants of WLB of women employees working in information technology companies. The study found that personal factors such as regular exercise, yoga, meditation, a balanced diet, good sleep, and hobbies have the greatest impact on women's WLB. Working from home also plays a significant role in it ⁴⁾. Another study states that employee engagement, WLB has become a challenge for many leaders, managers, and organizations in maintaining a balance between their professional and personal lives. EI plays a vital role in having a good WLB which benefits both the employer and the employee ²⁹⁾. Another study states that in today's digital work environment, people are more concerned about techno-stress. To ascertain this, the study examines how techno stresses influence employees WLB and their intention through burnout, as well as the extent to which positive psychological capital may mitigate this link²⁸⁾. Another study explains the EI and WLB in information technology companies. The findings reveal that Emotional intelligence improves employee performance. An emotionally intelligent organization follows a planned strategy to enhance its business performance which can be done by having a healthy WLB in the organization ¹⁰⁾. A study reveals that Struggling to combine work with family obligations can negatively impact an individual's well-being and quality of life. Employees often struggle to balance work and personal life in today's fast-paced world. However, emotional stability, mindfulness, and health and wellness programs can assist in achieving the right balance ²⁴⁾. A similar study states the relationship between EI and employee well-being through perceived job fit. The result shows that the study found a favorable correlation between emotional intelligence EI and perceived work fit with employee well-being. nevertheless, the relationship between EI and

employee well-being was larger than that observed between perceived person-job fit and employee well-being¹⁾. The study on the impact of managers EI on WLB revealed that managers empathy and social skills had a substantial influence on workers' work-life balance. The study found gender variations in respondents' perceptions of work-life balance initiatives, but no differences in employee perceptions based on marital status and number of children¹⁴⁾. A study explains the role of EI and quality of work life in improving work attitudes among different industries. The study's findings show that employee fulfillment, involvement, and perceived organizational support mediated EI and work-life quality. Employee engagement and organizational commitment, on the other hand, did not serve as a bridge between emotional intelligence and work-life quality³¹⁾.

6. Theoretical Frame Work

Boundary theory was proposed by Christina Nippert Eng (1996) states that people manage the boundaries between their job and personal lives by dividing up and/or combining the two. The boundary work represents two forms known as placement and transcendence. The placement explains the establishment of distinct boundaries between various domains or positions in a person's life. It entails identifying and maintaining boundaries between work-related tasks, personal duties, and other social roles (e.g., family, community, hobbies). Transcendence, on the other hand, refers to the capacity to go beyond strict boundaries and combine many parts of one's life in meaningful ways. Individuals who practice transcendence seek to integrate elements from one domain into another, resulting in a more dynamic and connected experience. This can lead to a sense of harmony and fulfillment as people use their many responsibilities and experiences to improve their overall lives. This theory is connected to WLB and EI as it deals with emotional well-being as well as their personal lives in achieving the overall well-being of the individuals.

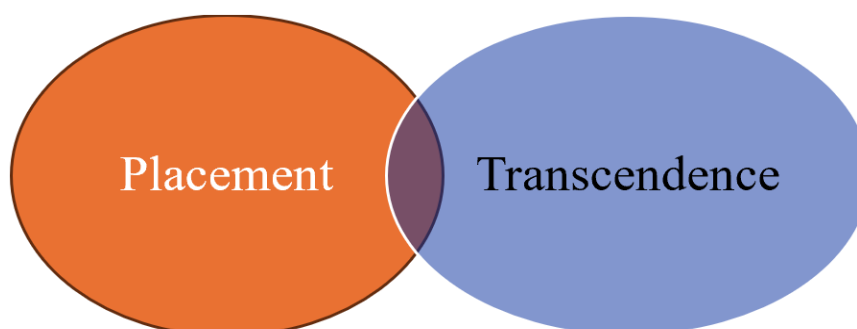


Figure 1

7. Research Methodology

7.1. Tools

The WLB was assessed using the work-life balance scale developed by Udai Pareek and Surabhi Purohit (2010)²⁰⁾. This scale consists of 36 items designed to measure an individual's perception of their balance between work and personal life. The respondents were asked to rate each item on a Likert scale ranging from (0 = If it is not true to 4 = If it is definitely true). A higher score indicates a better perceived WLB. The EI was measured using the emotional intelligence scale

developed by Nicola Schutte (1998)²⁵. This scale comprises 33 items aimed at assessing an individual's ability to recognize, understand, and manage their own emotions as well as the emotions of others. Respondents rated each item on a Likert scale ranging from (1= Strongly disagree to 5= Strongly agree). Higher scores indicate higher levels of EI.

7.2. Data Collection

The survey was done through Google Forms, including the aforementioned scales along with demographic questions to collect respondents' basic information such as age, gender, educational qualification, and marital status.

7.3. Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the sample and to examine the relationships between the variables, correlation analysis has been employed in this study.

7.4. Sampling

The quantitative study was carried out among the employees in IT sectors, Chennai between the ages of 21 and 50. This study employed a descriptive research approach. The sample size of the study consists of 100 respondents using the Convenience sampling method. The researcher was able to collect the data so that the interested employees could participate in the study through their convenience in giving their information within a limited time.

7.5. Data source

The primary data source was collected from the respondents through Google Forms and the secondary source of data was collected from research articles and newspapers related to WLB and EI.

8. Hypothesis

- 1) There is a strong correlation between the respondents EI and WLB.
- 2) There is a relationship between the Gender and WLB of the respondents.
- 3) There is a significant difference between the Gender and EI of the respondents

9. Analysis

9.1. Socio-demographic details

9.1.1. Age of the respondents

The previously provided information indicates that 67% of the respondents were between the ages of 21 and 30, 22% were between the ages of 31 and 40, and 11% were between the ages of 41 and 50.

Table 1. Respondents age-based distribution

S.NO	AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1	21-30	67	67
2	31-40	22	22
3	41-50	11	11

9.1.2. Gender of the respondents

It is found from the above figure that 52 % of participants were male while 48 % of the respondents were female.

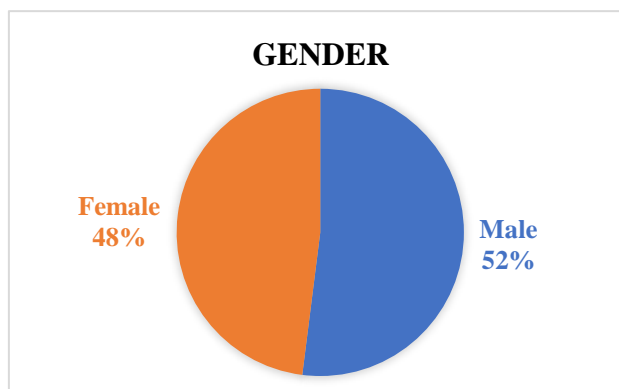


Figure 2. Distribution of Respondents by their Gender

9.1.3. Total years of work experience in the organization

Based on the information mentioned above, it can be observed that 29% of respondents have 1-2 years of work experience, 37% have 3-5 years, 21% have 6-9 years, and 13% have 10-14 years.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents by the years of work experience in the organization

S.NO	FREQUENCY	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1	1-2 year	29	29
2	3-5 year	37	37
3	6-9 year	21	21
4	10-14 year	13	13

9.1.4. Marital Status of the respondents

The following information shows that 71% of respondents were married and 29% were single.

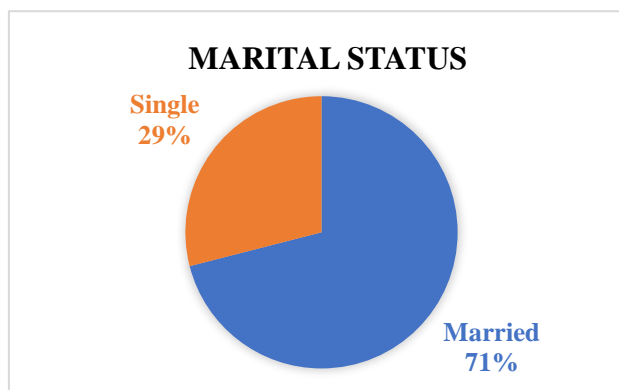


Figure 3. Respondents Distribution Based on Marital Status

9.1.5. Type of family of the respondents

It is found from the above figure that 87 % of respondents were from nuclear families, compared to 13 % from joint families.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents by their type of family

S.NO	TYPE OF FAMILY	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1	Joint family	13	13
2	Nuclear family	87	87

9.1.6. Domicile of the respondents

It is found from the above figure that 69 % of the respondents were from the urban, 9 % of respondents were from the rural sector, and 22 % were from the semi-urban sector.

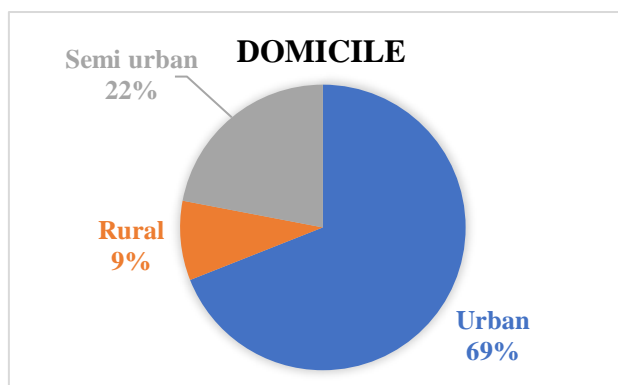


Figure 4. Domicile of the respondents

9.2. Hypothesis 1: WLB AND EI

The table 4 depicts the association between WLB and EI. The alternative hypothesis is accepted and proves a link between WLB and EI. Results show that there is a positive correlation between WLB and EI. If EI increases the WLB also increases.

Table 4. Correlations

		Individual Score of WLB	Individual Score of EI
Individual Score of WLB	Pearson Correlation	1	.411**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Individual Score of EI	Pearson Correlation	.411**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

9.3. Hypothesis 2: GENDER AND WLB

The table demonstrates that $P < 0.05$, hence the alternate hypothesis is accepted. As a result, there is a connection between Gender and WLB.

Table 5. Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.878 ^a	13	.032*
Likelihood Ratio	33.111	13	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.247	1	.004
N of Valid Cases	100		

9.4. Hypothesis 3: GENDER AND EI

The table demonstrates that $P < 0.05$, hence the alternate hypothesis is accepted. As a result, there is a connection between gender and EI.

Table 6. Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	36.168 ^a	17	.004*
Likelihood Ratio	47.896	17	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.474	1	.116
N of Valid Cases	100		

9.5. Levels of WLB

Table 7 demonstrates that 22 % of the respondents have a low degree of WLB, compared to 62 % who have a medium level and 16 % who have a high level of WLB.

Table 7

LEVEL	PERCENT
Low	22
Medium	62
High	16
Total	100

9.6. Levels of EI

Table 8 shows that 17 % of the respondents have low EI, compared to 76 % of the respondents who have a medium level and 7 % of the respondents who have a high level of EI.

Table 8

LEVEL	PERCENT
Low	17
Medium	76
High	7
Total	100

10. Findings

The study reveals that WLB and the EI of employees are closely related. Hypothesis 1 demonstrated that there is a link between WLB and EI by using correlation analysis. This suggests that individuals who perceive a better balance between their work and personal lives also tend to exhibit higher levels of emotional intelligence. This finding implies that as employees develop greater EI, they are more likely to effectively manage their work and personal responsibilities, leading to a healthier work-life balance. Hypothesis 2 is demonstrated by using the chi-square test which reveals a significant relationship between gender and WLB. This suggests that gender influences the perception of WLB among employees in the IT sector. Hypothesis 3 has been tested using the chi-square test which indicated a significant relationship between gender and EI. This implies that gender influences the level of emotional intelligence among employees in the IT sector. Under the levels of WLB, the findings reveals that 22% of the respondents reported a low level of work-life balance, indicating that a significant portion of employees in the IT sector struggle to balance their work and personal lives. 62% reported a medium level of work-life balance, suggesting that a majority of employees perceive their balance to be adequate but not optimal. Only 16% reported a high level of work-life balance, indicating that there is room for improvement in creating a supportive work environment that enables employees to achieve a better balance. Under the levels of EI, the findings shows that 17% of the respondents reported low emotional intelligence, indicating that a portion of employees may struggle with recognizing, understanding, and managing their emotions effectively. 76% reported a medium level of emotional intelligence, suggesting that most employees have a decent level of emotional awareness and management skills. Only 7% reported a high level of emotional intelligence, indicating that there is potential for further development in this area to enhance employees emotional capabilities. The socio-demographic findings show that 67% of respondents were between the ages of 21 and 30. 48% of participants were female, while 52% were male. 37% of the participants have 3-5 years of work experience with the organization. 71% of respondents are married, while 87% belong to a nuclear family. In accordance with the respondents' domicile, 69% come from urban families.

11. Discussion

The study was conducted to understand the relationship between the WLB and EI among the employees working in the IT sectors. The results show that 69% of the respondents have a medium level of WLB and 76% of the respondents have a

medium level of EI. This indicates that a significant portion of the respondents can balance their work as well as family where emotional intelligence plays an important role in managing emotions from both aspects. Previous study shows that EI has an impact on the WLB of employees working in the IT sector¹¹⁾. This study reveals that both the WLB and EI are connected as gender aspect plays a vital role in initiating the family as well as the profession in improving the well-being of the organization. Another study has shown that gender does not have a significant difference in EI among employees who are working in the IT sector⁵⁾. In this study, the finding indicates that gender does play a significant role in EI, as there may be unique challenges or experiences associated with gender that influence EI among IT professionals. Another study finding shows that WLB impacts employee performance and EI, contributing to the cause of attrition. Work-family conflict negatively impacts both employees and organizations. Recruiting individuals with strong emotional intelligence can help reduce conflict and attrition²⁹⁾. Another previous study revealed that the majority of IT employees, regardless of gender, have an optimistic perspective on EI and WLB. Female employees are more likely than males to report that their work and job roles interfere with their personal lives³⁰⁾. Previous study findings show that there is a positive association between EI, WLB, and employee well-being³⁾. The findings of this study align with these findings, as the results demonstrate a positive correlation between WLB and EI among employees in the IT sector. By connecting boundary theory in this study, it can be stated that employees in the IT sector may strive to integrate work and personal life responsibilities to create a more balanced and fulfilling lifestyle. This integration may include strategies such as flexible work arrangements, telecommuting, or creating boundaries to separate work and leisure time. Effective boundary management and high EI contribute to employee performance and organization retention. The employees who navigate WLB boundaries and manage their emotions will likely be more engaged, productive, and committed to their organizations. This will help to reduce attrition rates and create a more positive and supportive work culture.

12. Suggestions

The organizations should implement training programs that address both WLB and EI. These programs can provide employees with skills and strategies to manage both aspects effectively. Human resource management has to strengthen the existing employee assistance programs or introduce new ones. This can provide employees with resources for addressing personal and work-related challenges, including mental health and emotional well-being. The organization has to encourage healthy practices such as regular breaks, mindfulness activities, and stress management techniques. This can contribute to the employees WLB and emotional well-being. Human resource management has to conduct engagement activities by facilitating the creation of peer support networks where employees can share experiences, insights, and advice related to WLB and EI.

13. Limitations of the study

This study employs basic statistical analyses such as correlation analysis to identify the relationship between WLB and EI. Future research has to explore the causal relationships between the WLB and EI among employees working in the IT sector. This study focused on employees who are working in the IT sector, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other industries or geographic locations. Future research has to explore the WLB and EI among employees in different sectors and locations to provide a broader understanding of these constructs. This study did not explore the other factors that may influence the WLB and EI such as job satisfaction, organizational culture, and leadership qualities.

Future research could investigate the interaction between these factors through WLB and EI to provide an understanding of employee well-being in the workplace.

14. Conclusion

The study clarifies the complex interplay between WLB and EI among workers in the IT industry. Several important conclusions from quantitative research involving 100 respondents were drawn, emphasizing the role that WLB and EI play in impacting both individual well-being and organizational success. The findings of the study indicate that a significant proportion of employees in the information technology sector exhibit moderate levels of both EI and WLB. This suggests that they possess the ability to manage their emotions in an environment that fosters both WLB and EI in their workplace. The study highlights the need for efficient border management in attaining WLB and EI by integrating the boundary theory. More harmonious integration of work and personal life duties can be facilitated by strategies like telecommuting, flexible work schedules, and mindfulness exercises, which will ultimately improve employee well-being and corporate performance. In light of these findings, companies are urged to put in place training initiatives, such as mental health training sessions, to assist WLB and EI within their staff. Long-term success can be achieved by organizations through fostering a positive and productive work culture that prioritizes the complete well-being of their employees.

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