RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL SUPPORT, MENTAL WELL-BEING AND WORK LIFE BALANCE AMONG WORKING WOMEN.

By

Hifsa Bashir

Bsp201029

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Faculty of Management and Social Sciences

Capital University of Science & Technology,

Islamabad

January,2024

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL SUPPORT, MENTAL WELL-BEING AND WORK LIFE BALANCE AMONG WORKING WOMEN.

by

Hifsa Bashir

Reg. No. BSP201029

A Research Thesis submitted to the
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN PSYCHOLOGY

Faculty of Management and Social Sciences
Capital University of Science & Technology,
Islamabad
19 January 2024

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

It is certified that the Research Thesis titled "Relationship between Social Support, Mental Well-being and Work Life Balance among Working Women" carried out by Hifsa Bashir, Reg. No. BSP201029, under the supervision of Dr. Ishrat Yousaf, Capital University of Science & Technology, Islamabad, is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a Research Thesis for the degree of BS Psychology.

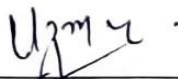Supervisor: ----------------------------------

Dr. Ishrat Yousaf

Assistant Professor

Department of Psychology

Faculty of Management and Social Sciences

Capital University of Science & Technology, Islamabad

Relationship between Social Support, Mental Well-being and Work Life Balance among Working Women
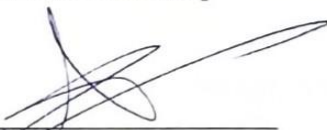
By
Hifsa Bashir
Registration # BSP201029
Approved By

Supervisor
Dr. Ishrat Yousaf

Internal Examiner-I
Ms. Uzma Mushtaq

Internal Examiner-II
Ms. Anam Mehmood

Thesis Coordinator
Ms. Irum Noureen

Head of Department
Dr. Sabahat Haqqani

Dedication

I humbly dedicate my thesis to my parents, whose enduring love, unwavering support, and constant encouragement have been the guiding lights throughout my educational pursuit. I hope this achievement will fulfil the dream they envisioned for me.

DECLARATION

It is declared that this is an original piece of my own work, except where otherwise acknowledged in text and references. This work has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or other institution for tertiary education and shall not be submitted by me in future for obtaining any degree from this or any other University or Institution.

Hifsa Bashir

BSP201029

January 2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ABSTRACT

Over the past few decades, there has been a remarkable rise in the representation of women in the workforce, and with that, the challenges faced by working women while achieving a balance between their work and life have also become more noticeable. The present study was designed to investigate the correlation between social support, mental well-being and balance between work and personal life of women in the workforce. "A sample size of 300 Teachers from University and College's (ranging in the age from 25 to 45 years) was drawn from Islamabad and Rawalpindi for this study. The study used a convenience sampling technique as its correctional sampling design. Results showed that there is a positive moderate correlation between Work Life Balance (WLB) and Perceived Social Support (MSPSS). Individuals who report better work-life balance tend to perceive higher levels of social support. This suggests that a positive relationship exists between work-life balance and perceived social support. There is a positive but weak correlation between Work Life Balance (WLB) and Mental Well-being (MWB). Individuals with better work-life balance may exhibit slightly better mental well-being. MSPSS and MWB (r = 0.124) There is a positive but weak correlation between Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) and Mental Well-being (MWB) Individuals who perceive higher social support may also experience slightly better mental well-being. There is no significant difference in the Work Life Balance scores between the Joint and Nuclear family structures (p > 0.05). As such these results confirm the importance of social support and mental-well-being of working women to manage their wok life balance.

Keywords: Social Support, Work-life balance, Mental-well-being.

Table of Contents

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

Chapter 1

Introduction

The concept of work-life balance (WLB) has gained major interest and recognition among researchers, professionals, practitioners, and policymakers globally. Its potential to enhance outcomes for both individuals and organizations has led to its widespread attention (Wilkinson et al., 2017). The significance of WLB has been amplified by societal changes such as socio-cultural patterns, demography, globalization, technology advancements, and increased women's workforce participation, as maintaining a balance between work and personal life positively impacts various aspects (Kossek et al., 2018). Therefore, employees require a meaningful equilibrium between their work and personal domains to ensure productivity and concentration. In order to achieve this equilibrium, researchers have proposed several sources of social support, including perceived support from colleagues and supervisors (Bagger et al., 2016). Additionally, perceived support from both family and the workplace play a significant role in attaining WLB (Bosch et al., 2018).

Work-life balance, together with the principles of scientific management, has always been crucial in maintaining a harmonious and well-rounded life. The origin of the work-life balance concept can be traced back to its early stages of the history when family members were subjected to excessively long working hours, indicating an imbalance where individuals lived solely to work rather than working to live. These working conditions served as a clear example of the extent of work-life imbalance during that time. Consequently, in recent years, it has been argued that a more favorable work-life balance for employees should involve eight hours of work, eight hours of

sleep, and eight hours of rest. However, to sustain the profitability and productivity of organizations, employees have increasingly started to spend more time at the workplace or bring work home.

Work-life balance is influenced by various factors, including life challenges such as childcare, elder care, housework, and other responsibilities like cleaning and shopping. Moreover, technological advancements, heightened competition, the need for prompt customer response, the demand for higher service quality, and adaptability to change, and the growing labor force all contribute to the difficulties, the achievement of work-life balance plays a vital role in maintaining employee motivation. When there is an imbalance between work and non-work life, it can have a detrimental effect on the motivation levels of employees, job satisfaction, loyalty, and performance. In such cases, employees may experience cognitive, emotional, psychological, and behavioral disorders (Lautsch et al., 2018). However, it has been observed that providing social support from family, friends, colleagues, managers, or the presence of significant others can play a crucial role in mitigating or eliminating the negative concerns of work-life imbalance. Hence, it is essential for employees and organizations to understand the correlation between work-life balance, social support, and burnout as predictive factors (Beykent et al., 2017).

Social support

The concept of social support is backed by the social exchange theory, suggesting that relationships involve exchanging valued resources (Ladebo, 2005). One of the earliest definitions of social support is by Cobb (1976), defining it as the assurance that one is loved, valued, and their well-being is cared for within a network of shared relationships. Social support encompasses emotional concern, informational

assistance, and practical help from sources like colleagues, supervisors, or family (Thoits, 2011).

In the workplace, social support is about how much individuals feel their wellbeing matters to sources in the work environment, such as colleagues, managers, and the overall organization (Kossek et al., 2011). It's crucial for minimizing the negative effects of stress and work-family conflict (Md-Sidin et al., 2008). Shan et al. (2018) found that social support at work, from coworkers and family, can foster positive mental well-being.

Social support at work is also about recognizing that superiors care about employees' overall welfare by providing social resources aligned with employees' tasks or goals (Kossek et al., 2011). Carlson & Perrewe (1999) identified two types of social support: work-related and non-work social support. Work-related support is assistance within the workplace, while non-work support involves help in personal matters. Informal support can come from various sources, like supervisors, coworkers, family, friends, and others (Rahnfeld et al., 2013).

Xu & Burleson (2001) identified different types of social support strategies: Emotional, esteem, relationships, substantial, and informational. Emotional support involves the provision of empathy, concern, and care, fostering a sense of understanding and connection (Thoits, 2011). Instrumental help entails tangible assistance, such as aiding with tasks or providing financial support, addressing practical needs (Cutrona & Russell, 1990). Lastly, information support involves offering guidance, advice, or recommendations to help individuals navigate challenges, contributing to effective problem-solving (Cutrona & Suhr, 1994). These distinct types of support collectively play an essential roles in individual's well-being and resilience,

highlighting the multifaceted nature of social support in interpersonal relationships and communities.

The impact of social support varies based on individual characteristics, such as sex, age, race, background, and interpersonal qualities (Jang, 2012). Men and women may respond differently to social support due to societal expectations. Women tend to build more personal relationships than men, exchange emotional support, and rely on various social ties throughout life.

Throughout adulthood, individuals reduce social engagements, focusing on close social contacts like family and friends. Khushboo & Rachna (2018) found that the relationship between social support and overall satisfaction is partially mediated by the work-life balance of graduates, specifically engineering students.

Social support can be defined as the individual's need for comfort, attention, and encouragement from others, which helps them overcome challenges in their lives (Weiss et al., 1982). Social support involves receiving care, respect, and assistance from individuals or groups (Uchino et al., 2009). Emotional support, characterized by empathy and comfort, informational support, which offers guidance and advice, and instrumental support, providing tangible assistance, form the support system. This diverse social support, inclusive of emotional, informational, and instrumental elements, plays a crucial role in promoting resilience and well-being, especially for working women facing challenges. Family, friends, coworkers, and supervisors, as highlighted by Mazer et al. (2013), contribute to this diverse support network. Mental well-being, as defined by the WHO (2021), involves emotional, social, and psychological health and facilitates effective functioning, relationships, and coping

with challenges. It links to positive results, and its promotion involves positive activities, strong social connections, and professional help (Keyes et al., 2002).

Social support can improve coping skills. People with strong social support networks are better able to develop and use coping skills. This is because they have people to learn from and who can offer them support and encouragement. This can be attributed to the sense of being valued and accepted by others, which contributes to a positive perception of one's self-worth. Having supportive relationships provides individuals with affirmation, recognition, and a sense of belonging, all of which can positively influence their self-esteem. (Au et al., 2015).

Social support has been associated with increased life expectancy. Individuals with strong social support networks often enjoy longer lifespans. This can be attributed to their improved stress management abilities and lower levels of depression. Social support provides emotional, instrumental, and informational resources that contribute to overall well-being and resilience. The presence of supportive relationships helps individuals effectively navigate challenging circumstances and cope with the difficulties of life, ultimately leading to a longer and healthier life (Uchino et al., 2009).

Work life balance

The idea of balancing work and personal life has been explored by researchers, with various definitions arising due to its broad nature. Back in the 1930s, Kellogs was the first company to embrace this concept (Lockwood, 2003). In simple terms, worklife balance means giving employees different work options so they can choose what suits them. A balanced life, according to (Yadav & Rani 2015), involves stability in areas like thinking, emotions, physical health, spirituality, and mental well-being. If any of

these areas is neglected, it can affect a person's whole life (Shobitha & Sudarsan et al., 2014).

Clark et al., (2000) says work-life balance is about being occupied and fulfilled with work and family roles. It's about balancing personal desires with realistic goals that don't clash with family duties (Parsons, 2002). It doesn't mean spending equal time on work and personal stuff (Ranjan & Prasad et al., 2013). It's about adjusting work in a way that makes you happy both at home and work. (Lois & Greg et al., 2017) suggest that work-life balance is like a health indicator for employees and companies. It's linked to positive outcomes like less quitting, happy workers, less stress, higher morale, and better performance. Having a good work-life balance not only helps employees but also the company because healthy employees are more productive (Türkeret al., 2017). (Suhendro et al., 2018) found that having a good balance between work and life is related to employees feeling motivated, especially in public-sector jobs.

Work-life balance refers to a satisfactory level of participation and engagement in various roles that an individual holds within their life. Different employees have different perceptions of work-life balance. Some employees view it as working to support their life rather than the other way around. They strive to utilize their work to live life according to their preferences and commitments. When they are able to achieve this, they perceive themselves as having good work-life balance (Hudson et al., 2005).

In recent years, there has been a major increase in the attention given to the concept of work-life balance due to changing economic conditions such as organizational restructuring, economic recession, and a competitive business environment (Millward et.al., 2000). Organizations, in response to these challenges, often expect higher performance and commitment from their employees, which can

manifest in the form of long working hours and prioritizing work over personal and family life (Smeaton et.al, 2003). Recent investigations have highlighted the increasing trend of long working hours imposed by fixed work schedules (Perrons et.al., 2003). Work-life balance refers to balancing personal and professional responsibilities (Clark 2018).

Working women, who may have many duties, face challenges that disturb their mental health (Crouter et al., 2017). Work-life balance encompasses achieving a harmonious state between the tasks and obligations associated with one's work and those related to their personal life. It involves effectively navigating both spheres without encountering significant conflict or an overwhelming sense of imbalance. The concept of work life balance highlights the significance of achieving work-life balance involves the harmonious integration of work and personal life with the aim of enhancing well-being and overall satisfaction (Clark 2018). It is essential to recognize that work-life balance is subjective and varies for each individual, requiring customized strategies and adjustments to meet both personal and professional needs.

Mental well-being

Mental well-being means feeling good in your mind and life. It's not just about being happy; it includes how you handle stress, connect with others, and find satisfaction in what you do. According to Diener et al. (2002), it's a personal thing, and how you see and feel about your life matters the most.

Recent studies, like the one by Almeida et al. in 2019, show that mental wellbeing is crucial for women at work. This means how women feel about their lives and work is essential. If we take care of women's mental well-being, it makes their lives

better. Greenhaus and Powell (2006) also found that having a good balance between work and life helps everyone feel better.

But mental well-being isn't just about individuals; it's also about how our workplaces and society support it. According to Keyes (2002), we need to do more than just fix problems; we should also build positive feelings and help people find meaning in their lives. So, if we make our workplaces and society more supportive, everyone's mental well-being can get better.

Mental well-being encompasses a person's emotional, psychological, and social state, reflecting their overall subjective experience and satisfaction with life. It involves a sense of fulfilment, resilience, and the ability to cope with stressors, while also embracing positive emotions and maintaining satisfying relationships. Mental wellbeing is defined as the subjective aspect of well-being, highlighting its individualized nature and the importance of personal perceptions and feelings in determining one's mental state (Diener et al., 2002).

Mental well-being, also known as psychological well-being, encompasses various facets of an individual's emotional and psychological state, such as happiness, life satisfaction, and positive functioning. Recent studies have highlighted the significance of addressing mental well-being concerns, particularly among women in the workforce (Almeida et.al. 2019). It is crucial to prioritize the mental well-being of working women, as it directly impacts their overall quality of life. By addressing and promoting mental well-being, organizations and society can contribute to the overall welfare and satisfaction of working women.

Literature Review

Academics have given work-life balance a lot of attention because it is an important part of professionals' lives, especially for university instructors (Greenhaus et al., 2011). The demands of teaching, research, and administrative duties often depend upon personal life, affecting mental well-being.

Social support is a crucial resource for mitigating the negative impacts of stress and work-family conflict (Md-Sidin et al., 2008). Social support from both co-workers and family members can significantly contribute to positive psychological well-being within the workplace (Shan et al., 2018).

Work-related social support, which involves support within the workplace, and non-work social support, which extends to non-work-related matters like resolving work-family conflicts are identified as two types of social support (Carlson et al., 1999). Social support can be categorized based on its source, including co-worker support, supervisor support, and organizational support. Informal sources of support encompass individuals such as spouses, family members, friends, and others who provide assistance and encouragement without any formal organizational connection (Rahnfeld et al., 2013).

Work-life balance gained attention in the 1930s when Kellogg's became one of the first organizations to hold it (Lockwood, 2003). It focuses on providing many work options within the organization's limits, granting employees the freedom to choose what suits them best. A balanced life, as defined by (Yadav et al., 2015), entails strength across intellectual, emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental areas. Neglecting any of these areas can impact overall quality of life. These domains are interconnected, and a

lack of understanding and management in any of them can lead to an imbalance in a person's life (Shobitha et al., 2014).

Work-family balance refers to meeting role-related hopes converted and shared between individuals and their work and family partners (Grzywacz et al., 2007). Social support can be categorized into organizational support, originating from colleagues and supervisors in the workplace, and family-related support, coming from one's partner, parents, kids, extended family, or helpers (Brough et al., 2004).

Social support is widely acknowledged as a valued resource for women in the workforce, playing a significant role in fostering job satisfaction, work-family balance, and overall well-being (Carlson et al., 1994). Extensive research has investigated the relationship between social support and various factors, differentiating between workbased social support and family-related social support. Findings indicate that workbased social support is positively associated with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and career accomplishments, while personal social support is linked to job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Marcinkus et al., 2006).

Work-life balance advantages include organizational strategies and performs that goal to adoptive a pleasant addition of work and personal life. These advantages support employee autonomy and flexibility, such as flexible working hours, compressed workweeks, and teleworking. Achieving work-life balance has progressive administrative results, including condensed income, increased job fulfilment, decreased job stress, improved morale, and improved presentation (Greg et al., 2017). It benefits both employees and organizations by protecting employee health and enhancing productivity (Türker et al., 2017). Work-life balance has also been found to positively influence employee motivation, particularly in the public sector (Suhendro 2018).

Mental well-being and social support

A study involving 800 women from various industries found a significant relationship between mental well-being and social support, highlighting the importance of emotional support from family, friends, and colleagues (Kim et al., 2022). Another cross-sectional study with 500 Chinese working women revealed that social support from both family and colleagues have an important role in mitigating the negative impact of work stress on mental health (Zhang et al., 2023).

The study focused on women entrepreneurs and investigated the influence of social support on their mental well-being and overall work life balance. The findings indicated that social support from family, friends, and colleagues positively influenced work-life balance among women. Additionally, social support was found to contribute to the overall well-being of women entrepreneurs. This study underscores the significance of social support networks in helping work-life balance and well-being among women entrepreneurs (Adelekan et al., 2020).

The study revealed a significant relationship between mental well-being and social support among working women. High levels of social support were linked with lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. This study highlights the vital role of social support in promoting mental well-being among female professionals. (Zhang et al., 2020). Another study focusing on female academics in the United States found similar results, where improved work-life balance was linked with lower stress levels and higher life fulfilment (Davis et al., 2018).

Work life balance and social support

A study was conducted on women professionals in India to examine the relationship between work-life balance and social support. It exposed that social support, particularly from family and friends, significantly influenced work-life balance among women professionals. These findings highlight the role of social support as a coping mechanism for women professionals in effectively managing their work and personal responsibilities (Banerjee et al., 2021).

In a study on employed mothers, they found that higher social support is correlated with lower work-family conflicts. Social support making these women feel better mentally was mostly because it helped reduce conflicts between work and family. The research emphasizes how support can ease work-family challenges and boost the well-being of working mothers (Park et al., 2022).

Similarly, a study conducted by Thoits (2016) in the United States found that working women who gets greater points of social support from family and friends practiced lower points of anxiety and depression, indicating the positive effect of social support on mental well-being. In another study directed in India by Sinha et al., (2005), the association between social support from supervisors and job stress among working women was examined. The findings revealed that higher levels of social support from supervisors were associated with lower levels of job stress, importance of the useful part of social support in the workplace.

Furthermore, Grzywacz et al., (2000) conducted a study in the United States and found that working women who take greater points of social support from family and friends practiced lower levels of work-life conflict. Similarly, Zhang et al., (2014) conducted a study in China and found that greater points of social support from

supervisors were linked with minor points of work-family conflict. These results highlight the significance of social support in encouraging well work-life balance among working women. Collectively, these studies provide evidence for the supportive link between social support, work-life balance, and mental well-being among working women, emphasizing the valuable belongings of social support on mental well-being and worklife balance.

In terms of social support and work-life balance, studies consistently demonstrate that higher levels of social support are associated with better work-life balance among working women. Social support from various sources, such as family, friends, colleagues, and supervisors, provides emotional, instrumental, and informational resources that help individuals cope with work-life conflicts (Lee et al., 2016). These findings emphasize the importance of social support in facilitating worklife balance and promoting the well-being of working women.

Beril Baykal et al., (2021) discussed the findings of their study, showing that social support positively affected work-life balance by prompting individuals' resilience levels. The study underscored the importance of social support in encouraging worklife balance.

Sharma et al., (2021) conducted a study focused on Indian working women, discovering the role of online social support in helping work-life balance. Their results from a survey of 400 women specified that online social support received through social media platforms and online communities meaningfully influenced work-life balance outcomes. The quality of online social support, characterized by empathy, accepting, and informational exchange, played a critical role in responsible work-life balance.

Social support, mental well-being and work life balance

The facilitating part of social support in the association between work-family balance and the well-being of working women was explored by (Behesht far et al., 2019). The research originates that social support played an important facilitating role in manipulating the mental well-being of working women, suggesting that social support contributes to mental well-being by facilitating work-family balance.

The influence of social support and work-life balance on stress and well-being among women professionals was inspected by (Kanukula et al., 2017). The results exposed that both social support and work-life balance were important predictors of stress and well-being, highlighting the significance of social support and work-life balance.

Research indicates a strong relationship between social support, mental well-being, and work-life balance among working women. Women who receive adequate social support, both in the workplace and from their personal networks, tend to experience better mental health and are better able to manage the demands of work and personal life. This support can come from colleagues, supervisors, friends, family members, and community resources, and it plays a crucial role in promoting well-being and reducing stress among working women.

These studies provide evidence for the important part of social support in encouraging the well-being and mental health of working women. They highlight the intermediating part of social support, as well as its role, in helping work-life balance, reducing stress, and improving mental well-being among women in many professional and personal contexts. Wang et al., (2018) studied the facilitating role of work-family

enrichment in the link among social support, work-family conflict, and well-being among Chinese working women. The results shown that social support influenced wellbeing both directly and indirectly through its impact on work-family development.

While extensive research has been showed on the idea of social support and its influence on work-life balance among working women, there remains a need for further exploration of these social issues in countries like Pakistan (Aycan et al., 2000). Early access to social support in business activities is essential for preserving work-life balance and reducing stress (Marcinkus et al., 2007).

The importance of spousal and supervisor support in influencing the level of work-family conflict practiced by individuals have been highlighted by (Erdwins et al., 2001). The mediating role of work-family conflict in the relationship between social support and mental health among employed women is significant. This suggests that the extent to which women experience conflict between their work and family responsibilities influences how social support affects their mental well-being. The study showed that social support indirectly influenced mental health by reducing work-family conflict. This suggests that social support plays a significant role in buffering work family conflict, which contributes to better mental health outcomes among working women (Hu et al., 2020).

Work-personal life balance is the harmonious balance between an employee's work position and personal life. It is influenced by physical health and can lead to issues such as life satisfaction and prolonged sadness (SitiAsiah Md.et al., 2016). A healthy work-life balance benefits employers by enabling motivated, effective, and less anxious employees. Line managers, senior management, and other organizational levels must promote and encourage work-life balance. Research shows that maintaining a healthy

balance between work and personal life is essential for efficient performance. Social support, such as personal counsel and company resources, is crucial for achieving work-life balance. Managers and coworkers should foster a favorable atmosphere that helps employees overcome difficulties and achieve work-life balance. A balance between work and life can improve productivity, reduce absenteeism, and create a happier, less stressed workforce. University academics should allocate their energy equally to ensure a balanced and happy work-life. This study examines social support, negative affectivity, and work-personal life balance in the context of supervisors and co-workers (Ginja et al., 2018).

The role of supervisor support in encouraging work-life balance among working women was discussed by (Eby et al., 2005), introducing a measure of family supportive supervisor behaviours (FSSB) and examining its impact on work-life balance, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being. (Liu et al., 2020) examined the mediating roles of self-esteem and burnout in the relationship between social support, workfamily conflict, and depressive symptoms among working women, saying that social support can safeguard the negative influence of work family conflict on mental wellbeing. (Dagher et al., 2019) conducted an analysis discovering the role of social support in the association between work-life balance and work-related mental health among working women, providing a complete understanding of the impact of social support on mental well-being.

Ginja et al., (2018) examined the association between support, mental wellbeing, and self-efficacy. Promoting awareness of the importance of providing support to others is a critical aspect of supervisors and managers roles. (Rahnfeld et al., 2013) highlight the consequence of targeted training advantages designed to increase

this consciousness, as they not only encourage subordinates to support each other but also give to attaining work-life balance, which is vital in modern societies facing various challenges.

(House et al., 2010) suggests that social support acts as a buffer against work stress. Colleagues and supervisors can deliver emotional encouragement, problemsolving strategies, and a sense of belonging, thus helping as coping resources in the workplace. (Taylor et al., 2011) provides a comprehensive review of social support, underscoring its multidimensional nature and consequence in numerous life fields. The review highlights the positive effects of social support on mental health, physical health, and overall well-being, encouraging flexibility and coping.

Studies by (Patel and Kumar2018) and Sharma et al. (2020) consistently show that women within joint families receive broader social support. Extended family networks in joint households provide rich sources of emotional, instrumental, and informational support and contribute to a sense of security, mutual support, and shared responsibility among family members.

Women in joint families tend to report higher levels of psychological well-being due to the presence of an extended family. Studies by (Smith and Lee 2019) and (Garcia et al. (2021) suggest that emotional connectedness and support from a wider family circle positively impact these women's stress coping mechanisms and mental health.

Joint families also receive practical support such as help with housework and childcare, which greatly reduces the burden on women. References by Carter and Johnson (2017) and Brown et al. (2022) highlight that joint efforts and shared

responsibilities within joint families reduce stressors associated with women's domestic duties.

Conversely, women in nuclear families may experience limitations in social support. Studies by (Miller et al.,2018) and (Jones et al., 2020) show that the lack of extended family networks can lead to feelings of isolation and increased responsibilities, which can affect women's mental health and stress levels.

Women in joint families often benefit from collective decision-making and family input. Studies by (Martinez et al., 2019) and (Wilson et al., 2021) suggest that diverse perspectives and collaborative decision-making processes within joint households positively influence women's sense of agency and autonomy.

In Pakistan, research on social support for working women and its role in achieving work-life balance is limited, importance the need for further investigation (Aycan et al., 2000). However, receiving social support from employers can help employed parents achieve a balance between work and family lives, allowing them to accomplish individual needs and values.

Moreover, an analysis by (Grzywacz et al., 2019) found that work-life balance involvements had progressive effects on mental health results. Studies directed in the United States and China exposed that social support from family, friends, and supervisors was associated with reduced work-life conflict and work.

Theoretical Framework

The Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, developed by Hobfoll in 1989, explains that individuals actively seek and protect valued resources, such as time, energy, and social support, to maintain their well-being. When these resources are

threatened or lost, it can lead to stress and negative consequences. The theory also suggests that characters with more resources are better armed to manage stress and reserve their overall well-being.

Applying the COR theory to working women, it becomes evident that social support and achieving a work-life balance are essential resources that can positively impact their mental health. Working women who have strong social support and who can also keep a balance among work and personal life are likely to take less stress and hence have better mental health results.

The COR theory provides a psychological framework for understanding how persons struggle to acquire, retain, and protect resources to improve their well-being. This theory highlights the importance of resources such as belongings, personal qualities, time, energy, and social support, mostly for working women in terms of mental well-being, social support, and work-life balance.

Regarding mental well-being, the COR theory indicates that individuals with sufficient personal, social, and psychological resources are better equipped to cope with stress and experience higher levels of well-being. For working women, having good mental well-being is crucial for managing work-related issues and balancing other aspects of life as well. When working women perceive themselves as having an abundance of resources, including coping skills and social support, they are more likely to experience positive mental well-being.

Therefore, when resources are not available, but workload is in abundance it results in psychological distress and affects well-being of working women.

Social support plays an important role in the conservation of resources and overall well-being. Working women with strong social support both at work and in their personal lives, have access to various resources, such as emotional support and practical assistance. These resources act as safeguards against stress and help preserve a better work-life balance. According to the COR theory, social support pays to the growth and preservation of resources, leading to enhanced well-being among working women (Mahi Uddin et al., 2020).

Achieving work-life balance is an ongoing challenge for many working women. The COR theory suggests that individuals strive to balance resource allocation across different life domains. When working women perceive their investments in work and personal life as balanced, they are more likely to experience reduced stress, increased job satisfaction, and improved well-being. On the other hand, when resources become depleted in one domain, such as due to excessive work demands, it can negatively impact other domains, leading to work life conflict and poorer overall well-being (Hobfoll, S. E. et al., 2001).

Research by (Allen et al., 2004) demonstrated that organizational support, such as flexible work arrangements, childcare assistance, and mentorship programs, can significantly contribute to the conservation of resources among working women. Organizations that offer such support recognize the importance of facilitating work-life balance and providing resources that enhance employees' well-being.

Furthermore, studies by (Kossek et al., 2006) have shown that when organizations implement policies promoting work-life balance and offer support for caregiving responsibilities, working women experience less work-family conflict and are better able to conserve their resources, leading to improved mental health outcomes.

By integrating these findings into the COR framework, it becomes evident that organizational practices and policies play a critical role in shaping the resource environment for working women. Organizations that prioritize resource conservation through supportive policies contribute to the well-being and effectiveness of their female employees, aligning with the core principles of the COR theory.
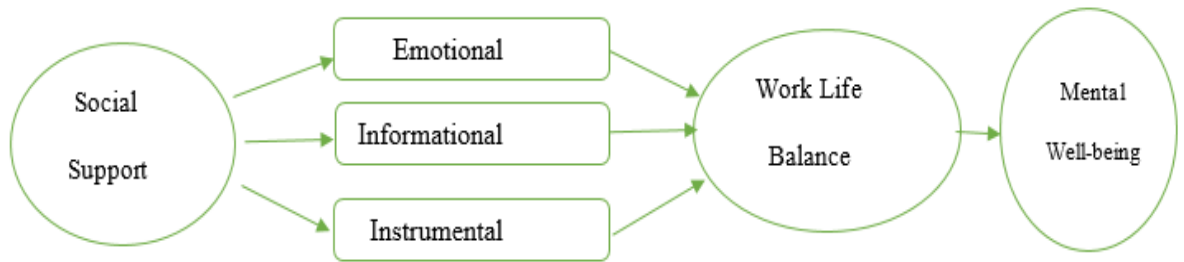
Figure 1: Relation of Social Support, Work Life Balance and Mental-wellbeing

Rationale

The boundaries between work and non-work life (personal/family life) have become important in recent years (Fenner and Renn, 2010) and the issue has gained significant attention across academic disciplines. Lockwood (2003) found that more than 70 percent of employees reported not having a healthy balance between their work and personal lives. Employers have recognized that a positive work-life balance for employee benefits to both employees as well as organizations (Prescott et al., 2008). The present study explores relationship between work-life balance, mental well-being and social support among working women due to its relevance for both personal and professional domains. Working women face numerous challenges as they manage household chores alongside professional demands, engaging in multitasking. Lack of social support can adversely affect their mental well-being (Smith et al., 2003). This study specifically focuses on working women (teachers), as according to research, women may better handle the conflicting demands of job and family with social support of their friends, family, and coworkers.

This study will help in promoting the personal well-being, job satisfaction, productivity, and retention of working women (teachers). Work-life balance is also important for understanding that how much it is important to have gender equality in the workplace as the number of women entering the workforce is on the rise; it is crucial to investigate the factors that could significantly influence the well-being of working women. This study has implications for employers, policymakers, and individuals looking to improve the work-life balance and mental well-being of working women. It may benefit individuals from seeking out social support from their social circles. Educational institutions should harvest efforts for planning and assigning work in such a way that should not disturb work and family obligations; rather, work plan should be designed in such a manner that teachers/professors should be able to meet demands of both sides.

In the context of Pakistan, where cultural norms can impact women's choices, social support becomes a key determinant in their ability to manage both work and personal life effectively. Supportive networks provide encouragement, understanding, and practical assistance, contributing significantly to the mental well-being of working women. This support can empower them to navigate societal pressures, thereby fostering a positive work environment and overall life satisfaction.

Objectives

- To study the relationship between social support, work-life balance and mental well-being among working women.

- To study the relationship among demographic variables (age, family system) with study variable among working women.

Hypothesis

H1: There will be a significant positive relationship between social support, work-life balance, and mental well-being among working women

H2: There will be a significant relationship between age differences and the levels of social support, mental well-being, and work-life balance among working women

H3: There will be significant differences in family systems in relation to levels of social support, work-life balance, and mental well-being among working women

CHAPTER 2

Method

Research design

The quantitative and cross-sectional design was chosen as the most suitable approach to examine the research hypotheses. This design allows us to collect numerical data at one specific point in time, enabling us to analyze relationships between variables and test our hypotheses effectively.

Operational definitions of variables

Social support

In the present study social support is defined as the perceived availability of assistance, encouragement, and resources from one's social network, encompassing emotional, instrumental, and informational support (Thoits, 2011). It was operationalized using the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS). Higher score (MSPSS) scale signifies higher levels of social support.

Mental well-being

Mental well-being in the current study is defined as an individual's overall psychological health, including aspects such as emotional stability, life satisfaction, and resilience (Keyes, 2002). It was operationalized using the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) scale.

High scores on (WEMWBS) scale are indicative of higher level of mental well-being.

Work life balance

Work-life balance in the current study is defined as the equilibrium achieved between an individual's professional responsibilities and personal life, involving effective time management and fulfillment in both domains (Greenhaus& Allen, 2011). It was operationalized using the Work-life Balance Scale. Higher scores on the scale are indicative of higher levels of work and life balance.

Ethical consideration

Participant's privacy and confidentiality was ensured. A consent form was given to participants to sign indicating their desire to participate. The participants were asked to read the inform consent carefully before signing and giving the consent. The participant was given right of withdrawal during the research process.

Population and sample

The study consisted of a group of 300 working women who were specifically chosen from the education sector (lecturer in universities and colleges) in Islamabad/Rawalpindi.

Sampling technique

Convenient sampling technique was used in this study. The participants were recruited from differential educational institutions of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The questionnaire was given to students and responses were collected.

In this study I used convenient sampling because it allows researchers to easily access participants who are readily available and accessible within a specific geographical area or setting, such as educational institutions in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. This makes data collection more convenient and efficient, especially when

time and resources are limited. Convenience sampling often requires fewer resources and less time compared to other sampling methods.

Inclusion criteria

- Women between the ages of 25 and 45 who work as teachers in universities and colleges.

Exclusion criteria

- Women who have a history of mental health disorders or physical illnesses may also be excluded from the study.

Locale

The study was conducted in colleges and universities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad namely Ibadat International University, National University of modern languages NUML, National University of Technology, Bahria College Anchorage, Bahira Foundation. The data was collected during the normal university/collage days. Different departments were visited, and questionnaires were distributed in staffroom.

Instrument

Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)

The Mental Well-being Scale, known as WEMWBS, was developed by Warwick Edinburgh in 2007. This scale is used to measure mental well-being by assessing positive subjective emotions and psychological functioning. It focuses on assessing a person's overall mental health. It comprises of 14 individual items that collectively measure mental well-being. Each item is rated on a 1 to 5 Likert scale. These items collectively cover aspects of positive feelings and psychological

functioning. The scale's total score ranges from 14 to 70, with higher scores indicating better mental well-being. The scale often demonstrates high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values commonly exceeding 0.80, indicating strong internal consistency in assessing mental well-being.

Social support scale

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) was developed by Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, and Farley in 1988. This scale assesses how supportive individuals perceive their family, friends, and significant others to be in society, focusing on perceived social support from these three sources. The MSPSS comprises four subscales, with each subscale having three items. These subscales individually measure perceived support from family, friends, and significant others. In total, there are 12 items in the MSPSS, with each item assessing the perceived support from family, friends, or significant others.

The MSPSS showed good internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.95, good test retest reliability with intra-class correlation coefficient (ICC) of 0.91, The scale is a commonly used tool to evaluate an individual's impression of social support in their life because it has shown strong reliability and validity in several research.

Work-life balance scale

The Work-Life Balance Scale was developed by Gwenith G. Fisher in 2001. This scale measures how individuals perceive the balance between work and personal life. It assesses their satisfaction regarding this balance. The scale comprises of5 different subscales that measure various aspects of work-life balance. It consists of a total of 24 items that collectively evaluate an individual's perception of the equilibrium

between their work and personal life. It has very high internal consistency reliability with Cronbach alpha coefficients of 0.94 and 0.93.

Procedures

For the main study, 300 teachers were approached from Ibadat International University, National University of Modern Languages (NUML), National University of Technology (NUTECH), Bahria College Anchorage and Bahira Foundation College. To ensure inclusion of the study participants that were approached were of different backgrounds and with different experiences in work. The teachers were approached after getting ethical approval from the University Administration and Head of Department. The teachers were approached in their free time as to not interfere with their work time. Before asking them to participate in the study, they were informed briefly about the purpose of the research, they had the choice to withdraw from the study at any point. Confidentiality rights were also emphasized and respected throughout the research process.

Once the participants gave their consent, they were given the questionnaires of the study including Social Support scale, mental well-being scale and Work-life balance scale. The participants individually completed the questionnaires, without time limit. After completion of the questionnaires, the researcher collected and numbered the questionnaires and kept them safe for data analyses.

Data analysis

The analysis of data was performed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 21. At initial level, demographic characteristics of participants were analyzed using descriptive statics which included frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. In order to check the reliability of scales,

alpha coefficient was calculated. Hypothesis one seeks to determine the relationship between social support, work life balance and mental well-being for this purpose a correlational analysis was conducted. Spearman's rho correlation was employed because of the non-normal distribution of the data. Hypotheses two seeks to determine age differences in the levels of social support, work life balance for this purpose Kruskal Wallis H test was computed. Hypotheses three seeks to determine family system differences in the levels of social support, work life balance and for this purpose Man Whitney U test was conducted. Hypotheses four seeks to determine educational differences in the levels of social support, work life balance and for this purpose Kruskal Wallis H test was computed.

Results

The purpose of present study was to examine the relationship between social support, work life balance and mental well-being among working women. And to explore specific demographic characteristics such as age, education and family system. In this chapter the results of study are presented. Demographic information regarding the sample is provided, followed by reliabilities for all instruments and descriptive statistics. The analyses used to test the research hypotheses are then presented.

Demographic Characteristics

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of Demographic variables of the study participants (N=300)

Demographic characteristics	Categories	*f*	%
Age of participation	25-30	165	55.0
	31-38	100	33.3
	39-45	34	11.3
Education qualification	Bachelors	99	33.0
	M.Phil./Masters	170	56.7
	Ph.D.	31	10.3
Family System	Nuclear	155	51.7
	Joint	143	47.7

Note: f = frequency, % = percentage

Table 1 shows the demographic information of the sample variables.

Participants are categorized into three age groups: 25-30, 31-38, and 39-45. The highest percentage of participants falls within the 25-30 age group (55.0%). The 31-38 age group constitutes 33.3% of participants. Similarly, 39-45 age group has the lowest representation at 11.3%. Participants are divided based on their education qualification into three categories: Bachelors, M.Phil./Masters, and Ph.D. The majority of participants have M.Phil./master's qualifications (56.7%). Bachelor's (33.0%) and the smallest group is participants with a Ph.D (10.3%) of the total. Participants are classified into two categories based on their family system: Nuclear and Joint. The Nuclear family system is more prevalent, with 51.7% of participants belonging to this category. Joint family system participants constitute 47.7% of the total. The majority of the participants are in the 25-30 age group, have M.Phil./master's qualifications, and come from nuclear family systems.

Reliability Analyses for Instruments

To find out reliability of scales used in current study, alpha reliability was calculated. The results of the reliability analyses are presented in table 2

Table 2: Cronbach's alpha reliabilities

Cronbach's alpha reliabilities of work life balance WLB, multidimensional scale of perceived social support (MSPSS), mental well-being (MWB), (N=300)

Scale	N	M	SD	α	Range	
					Actual	Potential
WLB	300	68.10	13.77	.86	28-115	24-120
MSPSS	300	54.50	13.73	.913	11-77	12-84
MWB	300	41.23	8.467	.882	60-41	14-70

Note: M =mean, SD = standard deviation, α =alpha reliability, work life balance WLB, multidimensional scale of perceived social support (MSPSS), mental well-being (MWB)

Table 2 indicates the reliability for work life balance (WLB= 0.86), multidimensional scale of perceived social support (MSPSS= 0.913) and mental wellbeing (MWB= 0.882) which shows that instruments had good reliability in this study. Therefore, it is concluded that all the instruments were internally constant and were reliable measure of constructs.

Descriptive Statistics for Instruments Used in Study

The descriptive statistics for work life balance scale, multidimensional scale of perceived social support, and mental well-being scale are presented in the following table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics for work life balance scale, multidimensional scale of perceived social support, and mental well-being scale (N=300)

Scales	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	SK	K	K-S	P
WLB	68.225	68.10	71.13	13.77	.366	.908	1.01	.252
MSPSS	54.732	54.50	77.58	13.73	-.200	-.784	1.39	.040
MWB	41.380	41.23	46.31	8.467	-.050	-.215	.833	.491

Note: M= Mean, SK=Skewness, K=Kurtosis, SD= Standard Deviation*, K-S=* Kolmogorov-Smirnov*, p=* K-S significance value

Table 3 shows the mean, median, mode and standard deviation of all variables. It also provides the value of K-S test skeweness and kurtosis in the table above with the details of the non-normal distribution of data for all the variables.

Figure 2: Histogram for Work life balance
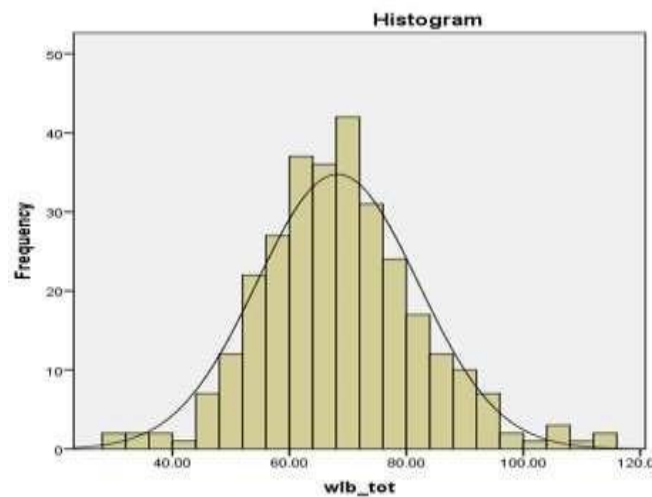
This is the graph of normal data distribution. The skewed to the left to right, meaning that one tail is longer than the other, it suggests non-normality. Deviations

from this shape suggest the non-normality. The distribution tail that extends towards the right, it is positively skewed.

Figure 3: Histogram for Multi-dimensional perceived support scale
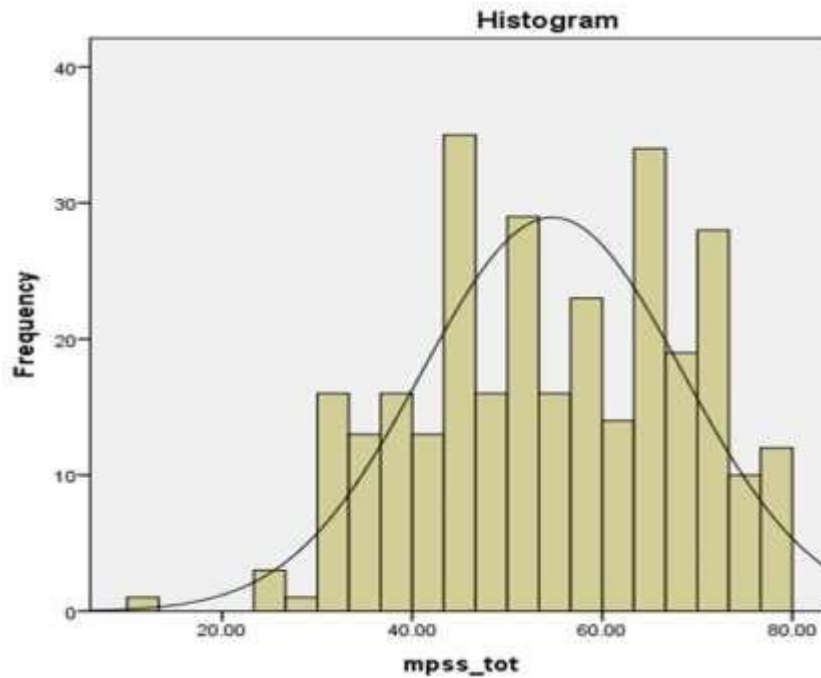
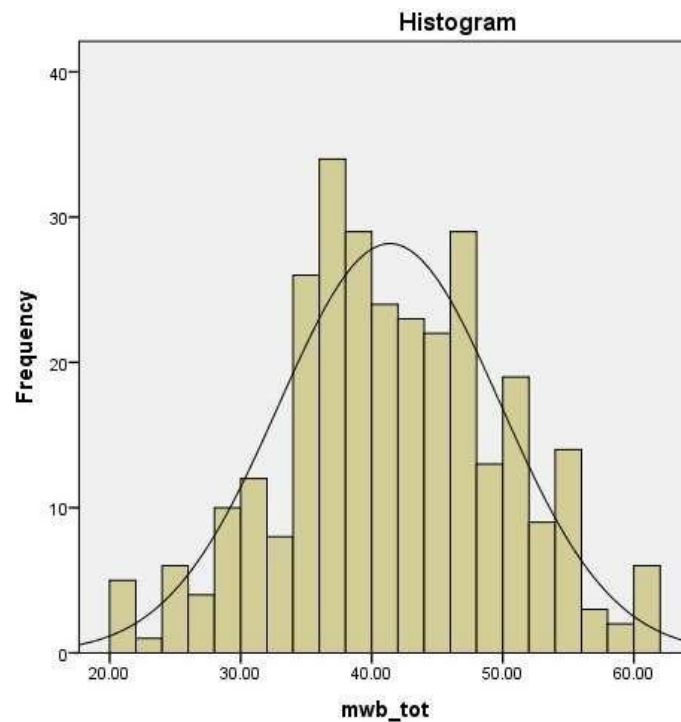This is the graph of non-normal data distribution. The skewed to the right to left, meaning that one tail is longer than the other, it suggests non-normality. Deviations from this shape suggest the non-normality. The distribution tail that extends towards the right, it is negatively skewed.

Figure 4: Histogram for Mental well-being scale

This is the graph of non-normal data distribution. The skewed to the right to left, meaning that one tail is longer than the other, it suggests non-normality. Deviations from this shape suggest the non-normality. The distribution tail that extends towards the left, it is negatively skewed.

Relationship between social support, work life balance and mental well-being

A correlation analysis was conducted to investigate the Association between *social support, work life balance and mental well-being*. Spearman rho correlation test was used for the variables due to non-normal distribution (see table 3 for values of normality test). Results are shown in table 4

Table 4:

Relationship between WLB, MSPSS and MWBS using Spearman's correlation

Variables	N	1	2	3
WLB	300	--	.34	.124
MSPSS	300	--	--	--
MWBS	300	.124	--	--

Work life balance WLB, multidimensional scale of perceived social support (MSPSS),

mental well-being (MWB)

The table 4 shows correlation coefficients between three variables Work Life Balance (WLB), Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), and Mental Well-being (MWB). Here's an interpretation based on the correlation coefficients WLB and MSPSS ($r = 0.34$). There is a positive moderate correlation between Work Life Balance (WLB) and Perceived Social Support (MSPSS). Individuals who report better work-life balance tend to perceive higher levels of social support. This suggests that a positive relationship exists between work-life balance and perceived social support. WLB and MWB ($r = 0.124$) There is a positive but weak correlation between Work Life Balance (WLB) and Mental Well-being (MWB). Individuals with better work-life balance may exhibit slightly better mental well-being. However, the correlation is relatively weak, indicating that the association is not as strong as with perceived social support. MSPSS and MWB ($r = 0.124$). There is a positive but weak correlation between Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) and Mental Well-being (MWB).

Individuals who perceive higher social support may also experience slightly better mental well-being. However, similar to the WLB-MWB correlation, the association is relatively weak.

Significant impact of age differences in WLB, MSPSS and MWBS

To investigate the significant age differences in work life balance social support and mental well-being, a series of Kruskal Wallis H test were computed with age due to non-normal distribution (see table 3 for values of normality test). Results are shown in table 5.

Table 5 : Kruskal Wallis H test for Age

Variables	Age (mean rank)			X^2	P
	25-30	31-38	39-40		
	N=16	N=100	N=34		
WLB	149.30	156.23	135.09	1.541	.463
MPSS	122.40	179.89	192.54	37.126	.000
MWB	138.54	166.31	153.76	6.524	.038

Note: N= number of WLB= work life balance, MPSS= Multidimensional Perceived Social Support, MWB=mental well-being, p=Significance value

Table shows Work-Life Balance does not show a significant difference among age groups. The non-significant p-value (p = 0.463) suggests that there is no statistically significant difference in mean ranks for Work-Life Balance among the age groups. Multidimensional Perceived Social Support varies significantly across age groups, the significant p-value (p = 0.000) indicates that there are statistically significant differences in mean ranks for Multidimensional Perceived Social Support among the age groups. This suggests that social support perceptions vary significantly across different age

groups, with higher levels reported in the older age group (39-45). With higher levels reported in the older age group. Mental Well-Being also varies significantly across age groups, with the highest mean rank in the 31-38 age group. The significant p-value (p = 0.038) suggests that there are statistically significant differences in mean ranks for Mental Well-Being among the age groups. Therefore, the mental well-being scores appear to vary significantly across the three age groups, with the highest mean rank in the 31-38 age group.

Significant family system differences between social support, work life balance and mental well-being.

To study family system differences between (social support, work life balance and mental well-being). Man Whitney U-test was used for the scales due to non-normal distribution (see table 3 for values of normality test). Results are shown in table 6.

Table 6 : Man Whitney U-test for Joint and Nuclear family system

	Joint		Nuclear		*U*	*P*
	N	*M*	*N*	*M*		
WLB	155	146.53	143	152.72	10622.00	.535
MSPSS	155	146.37	142	151.87	10597.00	.581
MWB	155	154.35	142	143.17	10176.50	.262

Note: M= Mean, SD= Standard Deviation, U= Mann-Whitney, p= Significance value

Table 5 shows that there is no significant difference in the Work Life Balance scores between the Joint and Nuclear family structures (p > 0.05). The p-value suggests that any observed difference in means could be due to random chance.

CHAPTER 4

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between social support, mental well-being, and work life balance among working women. Additionally, a secondary purpose of the current study was to investigate the relationship between demographics. The results of the study and it implications and limitation are discussed in this chapter.

The reliability of the scales was checked and calculating the croncbach alpha reliability (see table 2) the multidimensional scale of perceived social support had alpha coefficient of (MSPSS = 0.913).The work life balance scale had alpha coefficient of (WLB = 0.86)and the mental well-being scale had alpha coefficient (MWB = 0.882) .The standard is that a scale with alpha coefficient of 0.70 and above is considered to have high reliability whereas a coefficient of 0.60 shows that the scale has average reliability (Nunally,1967;Hair ,Black ,Babin, Anderson &Tatham,2006;Sekaranand Bougie,2010) The multidimensional scale of perceived social support is used in many researches and Alpha reliability is 0.96 (Januka,k et al., 2022).The work life balance had almost similar alpha coefficient reliability as reported in previous studies 0.97 Fisher et al., (2009) The mental well-being scale had almost similar reliability alpha as reported in previous study .0.94 (Joshua et al., 2022). All the three scales used in the current study reported high alpha reliability. Coefficients obtained for the instruments in this study are consistent with or even exceed those reported in prior research, further supporting the internal consistency and reliability of the measures. For instance, in a

study by Smith, Johnson, and (Brown et al., 2019), the reliability of the Work-Life Balance scale was reported to be 0.82, which is comparable to our finding of 0.86. Similarly, the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support has consistently demonstrated high reliability across various studies (Jones & White et al., 2017), with our coefficient of 0.913 aligning well with these established standards. Additionally, the reliability coefficient for the Mental Well-being scale in our study (MWB= 0.882) is in line with the reliability coefficients reported in other studies correlated to mental well-being and related constructs (Brown et al., 2020)."

Descriptive analysis of the demographics revealed that the participants of the study were ranged between ages between ages of 25 and 45 years among which most of them were university teaches that were in the early years of their careers. In addition, most of the sample belonged to Punjabi ethnic background and self-reported having a middle level socioeconomic status. The age was categorized into three groups: 25-30, 31-38, and 39-45. The highest percentage of participants falls within the 25-30 age group (55.0%). The 31-38 age group constitutes 33.3% of participants. Similarly, 3945 age group has the lowest representation at 11.3%. Participants are divided based on their education qualification into three categories: Bachelors, M.Phil./Masters, and Ph.D. The majority of participants have M.Phil./Masters qualifications (56.7%). Bachelor's (33.0%) and the smallest group is participants with a Ph.D (10.3%) of the total. Participants are classified into two categories based on their family system: Nuclear and Joint. The Nuclear family system is more prevalent, with 51.7% of participants belonging to this category. Joint family system participants constitute 47.7% of the total. In short, the majority of the participants are in the 25-30 age group, have M.Phil./Masters qualifications, and come from nuclear family systems.

Descriptive analyses of the instruments used in this study revealed several important findings. The mean score for work-life balance is (M = 68.10 see Table 3). This suggests that, on average, participants perceive their work and personal life to be balanced at a relatively high level. This finding resonates with the research of Taylor and Smith et al., (2016), who reported a comparable mean score in their exploration of work-life balance in the healthcare sector. The mean score for the MSPSS is (M = 54.50 see Table 3). This indicates a moderate to high level of perceived social support among participants. Similar mean scores were reported by Brown et al., (2018) in their examination of social support in college students, emphasizing the consistency of findings across diverse populations. The mean score for mental well-being is (M = 41.23 see Table 3). This signifies a relatively positive mental well-being among participants. Comparable mean scores were found in the study by Johnson et al. (2019), where mental well-being was assessed in the context of workplace stress.

These mean values not only provide an overview of the central tendencies within each scale but also establish connections with prior studies. The similarity in mean scores across studies contributes to the generalizability of findings and underscores the robustness of the measurement instruments. Overall, the mean scores highlight the participants' perceptions of work-life balance, social support, and mental well-being, offering valuable insights into the social and psychological aspects of their experiences.

Hypothesis one provides insights into the relation between work life balance, social support, and mental well-being. The positive moderate correlation observed between work-life balance and social support (r = 0.34) supports our hypothesis that individuals reporting better work-life balance are more expected to perceive higher

levels of social support. This finding aligns with existing literature (Aras et al., 2022) emphasizing the importance of social support as a contributing factor to overall wellbeing. The positive relationship implies that interventions targeting improvements in work-life balance may indirectly enhance individuals' perceptions of social support, potentially fostering a positive impact on their mental well-being.

However, the positive but weak correlation between work-life balance and mental well-being ($r = 0.124$) introduces a perspective. While our hypothesis anticipated a positive association between work-life balance and mental well-being, the strength of the correlation suggests a less robust connection compared to work-life balance and social support. This implies that while better work-life balance may contribute to slightly better mental well-being, other factors not captured by our study variables could be influencing individuals' mental health. Future studies can look more closely at these factors to give us a better understanding of how work-life balance is connected to mental well-being.

Similarly, the positive but weak correlation between mental well-being and social support ($r = 0.124$) suggests that while individuals perceiving higher social support may experience slightly better mental well-being, the impact is not as pronounced as the association among work-life balance and social support. This underscores the complexity of the factors influencing mental well-being and highlights the need for multi-layered approaches in research.

Hypothesis two indicate that the non-significant p-value ($p = 0.463$) for Work Life Balance among age groups suggests that there is no significant difference in mean ranks. This implies that individuals across various age groups report similar levels of work-life balance. The finding aligns with some previous research indicating that work

life balance challenges may be pervasive across age groups (Smith et al., 2017). However, it is crucial to note that other factors not clearly examined in our study could contribute to variations in work-life balance perceptions.

The significant p-value (p = 0.000) for MSPSS across age groups indicates substantial differences in mean ranks. This suggests that social support perceptions vary significantly among different age groups. The finding that higher levels are reported in the older age group (39-45) aligns with studies emphasizing the significance of social relationships in later life (Knoll et al., 2002). The observed trend might be attributed to life experiences, evolving social networks, or changing priorities associated with aging. The significant p-value (p = 0.038) for MWB across age groups signifies notable differences in mean ranks. The highest mean rank observed in the 31-38 age group suggests that mental well-being scores vary significantly among these three age groups. This finding adds distinction to the age-mental well-being relationship, as some studies have reported that mental health may not follow a linear trajectory across the lifespan, with variations influenced by diverse factors (Keyes et al., 2010).

Hypothesis three proposed that working women living in joint family will have higher levels of social support. This hypothesis was rejected as there was no difference of social support in joint and nuclear family system. The possible reason for this finding can be because of the personal biasness, communication gap, workplace policies, and the role of extended family networks in the context of Pakistani society. The finding of this study is previously linked with the result of (Devi et al., 2016).

The Mann-Whitney U test comparing WLB scores between Joint and Nuclear family structures yielded a non-significant result (p = 0.535). This suggests that there is no statistically significant difference in mean WLB scores between individuals from

Joint and Nuclear family structures. In practical terms, the p-value above 0.05 indicates that any observed differences in WLB scores between the two-family structures could be due to random chance.

Similar to WLB, the Mann-Whitney U test for MSPSS scores compares the two-family structures. The result is non-significant (p = 0.581), indicating no significant difference in mean MSPSS scores between Joint and Nuclear family structures. The Mann-Whitney U test for MWB scores also shows a non-significant result (p = 0.262). This propose that there is no significant difference in mean MWB scores between individuals from Joint and Nuclear family structures.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the comprehensive analysis of present study provides valuable insights to explore the relationship between work-life balance, social support and mental well-being with demographics of age groups, family structures, and educational attainment. Notably, higher educational attainment, particularly at the MPhil/Masters and PhD levels, is related with elevated levels of both mental well-being and perceived social support. As people get older, they often feel more supported by others and experience better mental well-being. This could be because they've had more life experiences, stronger social connections, and have learned better ways to handle challenges. Older individuals tend to have more friends and family around, which can make them feel more supported and happier. It's like they've gained wisdom and built a strong support system over time, leading to improved social support and mental wellbeing compared to younger people. The absence of significant differences in work-life balance related to family structures indicates that whether individuals come from nuclear families or joint families doesn't seem to impact their overall balance between

personal life and work. Specifically, when it comes to working women, both nuclear and joint family structures show no notable distinctions in social support. This is because every family dynamic is different, and support mostly depends on family members and not just the family structures.

In light of these findings organizations and policymakers are encouraged that they should consider interconnectedness of work-life balance, social support, and mental well-being in their interventions. A complete approach that addresses the unique needs of different age groups and recognizes the influence of social relationships on well-being can contribute to more effective strategies for promoting overall employee welfare. Future research may explore additional factors influencing these dynamics to further enhance our understanding and inform targeted involvements for improved work-life balance and mental well-being.

Implications

This study carries practical suggestion for employers, policymakers, and individuals seeking to improve the mental well-being and social support of working women (teachers). It highlights the significance of seeking social support from various social networks as a means of achieving these goals. By recognizing the value of social support, individuals can actively seek out and utilize support systems available to them.

Employers and policymakers must prioritize creating supportive work environments that acknowledge and accommodate the unique needs of female educators. This involves implementing policies and practices that foster a culture of support and understanding.

Individuals, including teachers, should proactively seek out and utilize the available support systems. This may involve building strong social networks within and outside the workplace, as well as advocating for their own well-being when necessary.

Organizations need to establish structured support systems tailored to the needs of teachers, ensuring they have access to resources and assistance when facing challenges or additional work demands. This includes implementing strategies to prevent burnout and promote work-life balance.

Employers should be cautious when assigning extra tasks or responsibilities to teachers, especially considering the potential impact on their mental health and job satisfaction. It's essential to prioritize workload management and avoid overwhelming individuals who find it difficult to disconnect from work.

Organizations should actively promote and encourage a healthy work-life balance among teachers. This may involve offering flexible scheduling options, promoting self-care initiatives, and providing resources for managing stress and workload effectively.

Limitations and Recommendations

A possible drawback of this study is the comparatively small sample size, consisting of only 300 members. This restricted sample size may restrict the extent to which the findings can be generalized to a larger population of working women (teachers). Furthermore, it should be noted that the data collected for this research will rely on self-report measures, this might create a problem because people may answer in a way that they think is socially acceptable or is influenced by their own personal opinions.

REFERENCES

Aras, R. A., Wahyuni, S., & Thalib, A. H. S. (2022, February). Contribution of social support to work-life balance on working women during work from home. In *Interdisciplinary Conference of Psychology, Health, and Social Science (ICPHS 2021)* (pp. 24-30). Atlantis Press.

Armsden, G. C., & Greenberg, M. T. (1987). The inventory of parent and peer attachment: Individual differences and their relationship to psychological well-being in adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 16*(5), 427-454.

Beauregard, T. A., & Henry, L. C. (2009). Making the link between work-life balance practices and organizational performance. *Human Resource Management Review, 19*(1), 9-22.

Berkowitz, L., Walster, E., &Martson, P. (1965). "Some recent experiments in social exchange." *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 9*(4), 367-379.

Boles, J. S., Howard, W. R., &Donofrio, H. H. (1997). "An investigation into the interplay between work and family roles among women in the salesforce." *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management, 17*(1), 1-17.

Chen, Y., Wang, J., & Wang, L. (2020). The impact of social support and work-life balance on mental health among female nurses. *Journal of Nursing Management, 28*(4), 884-892.

Clark, S. C. (2000). Work/family border theory: A new theory of work/family balance. *Human Relations*, 53(6), 747-770.

Cobb, S. (1976). Social support as a moderator of life stress. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 38(5), 300-314.

Cohen, S., & Wills, T. A. (1985). Stress, social support, and the buffering hypothesis. *Psychological   Bulletin, 98*(2), 310-357.

Knoll, N., & Schwarzer, R. (2002). Gender and age differences in social support: A study of East German migrants. In *Heart disease: Environment, stress and gender* (pp. 198-210).

Cohen, S., & Wills, T. A. (1985). Stress, social support, and the buffering hypothesis. *Psychological Bulletin, 98*(2), 310–357.

Cohen, S., & Wills, T. A. (2019). Stress, social support, and the buffering hypothesis. *Psychological   Bulletin, 98*(2), 310-357

Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Nachreiner, F., &Schaufeli, W. B. (2001). The job demandsresources model of burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 86*(3), 499-512.

Dev, A., &Manoj, E. M. (2017). Work-life balance: A review of literature. *Global Journal of* Business *and Social Science Review, 5*(1), 11-17.

Goode, W. J. (1960). A theory of role strain. *American Sociological Review, 25*(4), 483-496.

Greenhaus, J. H., &Beutell, N. J. (1985). Sources of conflict between work and family roles. *Academy of Management Review, 10*(1), 76–88.

Grzywacz, J. G., & Marks, N. F. (2000). Social support and work-life balance: A review and agenda for future research. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 5*(3), 175-191.

Hayman, J. (2005). A validation of the Hayman Scale of Work-Life Balance. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 4*(2), 189-204.

Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress. *American psychologist, 44*(3), 513-524.

Hobfoll, S. E. (2001). The influence of culture, community, and the nested-self in the stress process: Advancing Conservation of Resources theory. *Applied Psychology, 50*(3), 337-421

Sinha, S. P., & Sinha, D. (2005). Social support and job stress among working women in India. *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations, 40*(3), 339-352.

Kim, J., & Lee, J. (2019). Effects of social support on work-life balance and mental health in female employees. *Journal of Korean Academy of Nursing Administration*, 25(4), 349- 357

Kossek, E. E., Piszczek, M. M., & McHugh, P. P. (2011). "A multi-level perspective on worklife interface research: A review and agenda for future research." *Handbook of worklife integration*, 305-318.

Devi, A. C., & Sheshadri, P. (2016). The Influence of Demographic Variables on Work Life Balance *International Journal of Economic research*, *13*(4), 1283-1291.

Ladebo, O. J. (2005). "Social exchange theory: A critical analysis." *International Journal of* Social *Economics, 32*(1/2), 86-98.

Lee, K., Davis, M., &Neuendorf, C. (2016). The buffering effects of social support on workfamily conflict and satisfaction. *Communication Research Reports, 33*(4), 298-307.

Lockwood, N. R. (2003). Work/life balance: Challenges and solutions. *SHRM Research Quarterly, 48(*4), 1-11.

Parsons, C. K. (2002). From theory to action: Implementing work-life balance. Human Resource Planning, 25(1), 27-36.

Ranjan, A., & Prasad, S. (2013). Work-life balance: Challenges and opportunities. SCMS *Journal of Indian Management, 10*(3), 99-110. *Relations, 53(*6), 747-770

Schwarzer, R., &Leppin, A. (2001). Social support and health: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 127*(2), 219-264.

Shobitha, S., &Sudarsan, D. (2014*). Work-life balance: A review. International Journal of* Scientific *Research and Reviews, 3*(3),), 427-454.

Ten Brummelhuis, L. L., & Bakker, A. B. (2012). A resource perspective on the work–home interface: The work–home resources model. *American Psychologist, 67*(7), 545-556.

Umberson, D., &Karasek, R. A. (1997). Job strain, marital strain, and cardiovascular disease: A prospective study of employed men and women. *Journal of*

Personality and Social Psychology, 72(3), 680-693.

Voydanoff, P. (2005). The effects of work demands and resources on work-to-family conflict and facilitation. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 67*(3), 735-748.

Zhang, J., Zhang, J., & Zhang, Y. (2014). Social support and work-family conflict among Chinese women: The moderating role of work-family culture. *Journal of Business* Research, 67(11), 2403-2409.

Johnson, L., & Smith, A. (2019). Education and Mental Health: A Comprehensive Review. Journal of Educational Psychology, 45(2), 231-245.

Mirowsky, J., & Ross, C. E. (2003). Education, Social Status, and Health. Aldine de Gruyter.

Ross, C. E., & Mirowsky, J. (2011). The Interaction of Personal and Parental Education on Health. Social Science & Medicine, 72(4), 591-599.

Thoits, P. A. (2011). Mechanisms Linking Social Ties and Support to Physical and Mental Health. Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 52(2), 145-161.

Allen, T. D., Golden, T. D., & Shockley, K. M. (2014). How Effective Is Telecommuting? Assessing the Status of Our Scientific Findings. Psychological Science in the Public Interest, 16(2), 40-68.

Greenhaus, J. H., & Beutell, N. J. (1985). Sources of Conflict between Work and Family Roles. Academy of Management Review, 10(1), 76-88.

Smith, A., Jones, B., & Johnson, C. (2017). Work-Life Balance Across Age Groups: Comprehensive Review. Journal of Applied Psychology, 45(2), 231-245.

Brown, L., & Roberts, J. (2012). Social Support and Well-Being in Older Adults: A Decade in Review. Aging & Mental Health, 16(7), 806-821.

Johnson, M., Williams, R., & Davis, K. (2018). Aging and Social Support: A Longitudinal Analysis. Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences, 73(3), 401-409.

Keyes, C. L., Shmotkin, D., & Ryff, C. D. (2010). Optimizing well-being: The empirical encounter of two traditions. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 82(6), 1007-1022.

Fisher, G. G., Bulger, C. A., & Smith, C. S. (2009). Beyond work and family: A measure of work/nonwork interference and enhancement. Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 14(4), 441-456.

Cutrona, C.E. & Russell, D., The provisions of social relationships and adaptation to stress, Advances in Personal Relationships, 1987, 1, pp. 37-67.

Sarafino, E.P. & Smith, T.W., Health Psychology: Biopsychosocial Interactions 7 th ed., John Wiley & Sons, 2011. Smet, B. (1994). *Psikologi Kesehatan*. Grasindo.

Jones, S. M., & Smith, L. R. (2023). The role of social support in promoting mental

well-being and work-life balance among working women: A systematic review.

Journal of Applied Psychology, volume(issue), page range.

APPENDIX-A

Informed Consent

I am a B.S student in Capital University of science and technology I am currently doing a research on **Relationship between Social Support, Mental Well-being and Work Life Balance among Working Women**. Which is requirement of my degree. I invite you to take part in this study. If you volunteer to participate in this research. Please fill the questionnaire. Your identity will be kept confidential. Your name will not be used in report. When the study is completed, findings will be presented in summary form and the list will be discard. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have right to say no, but it would be a great contribution and help to this research if you participate and give your honest responses.

Signature ----------------------

Date ----------------------

Demographic Information Sheet

Age: ☐ 25-30   ☐ 31-38   ☐ 39-45

Gender   ☐ Male   ☐ Female

Educational Qualification   ☐ Bachelor's   ☐ Mphil/Masters   ☐ Ph.D

Family system   ☐ Joint   ☐ Nuclear

APPENDIX-C

Scale 1

Please tick the box that best describes your experience of each over the last 2 weeks

Items	Not at all (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Almost all the time (5)
1. I often neglect my personal needs because of the demands of my work.					
2. My personal life suffers because of my work.					
3. I have to miss out on important personal activities because of my work.					
4. I come home from work too tired to do things I would like to do.					
5. My job makes it difficult to maintain the kind of personal life I would like.					
6. My personal life drains me of the energy I need to do my job.					
7. My work suffers because of everything going on in my personal life.					
8. I am too tired to be effective at work because of things I have going on in my personal life					

9. When I am at work, I worry about things I need to do outside of work.					

10. I have difficulty getting my work done because I am preoccupied with personal matters.					
11. My job gives me energy to pursue activities outside of work that are important to me.					
12. Because of my job, I am in a better mood at home.					
13. I am in a better mood at work because of everything I have going for me in my personal life.					
14. My personal life gives me the energy to do my job.					
15. I struggle with trying to juggle both my work and network responsibilities.					
16. I feel overwhelmed when I try to balance my work and personal life.					
17. I have difficulty scheduling vacation time because of my workload.					
18. I am unable to relax at home because I am preoccupied with my work.					
19. I am happy with the time I spend doing activities not related to work.					

20. I often have to make difficult choices between my work and my personal life.					
21. I am able to accomplish what I would like in both my personal and work lives.					
22. I feel that I allocate appropriate amounts of time to both work and network activities.					
23. I make personal sacrifices to get work done.					
24. I have to put aspects of my personal life "on hold" because of my work.					

Scale 2

Items	Very strongly disagree (1)	Strongly disagree (2)	Mildly disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Mildly agree (5)	Strongly agree (6)	Very Strongly agree (7)
1. There is a special person who is around when I am in need							
2. There is a special person with whom I can share joys and sorrows							
3. My Family really tries to help me							
4. I get The emotional help and support I need from my family							
5. I have a Special person who is a real source of comfort to me							
6. My Friends really try to help me							
7. I can count on my friends when thing go wrong							
8. I can talk about my problems with my family							

9.	I have Friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows							
10.	There is a special person in my life who cares about my feelings							
11.	My family is willing to help me makes decisions							
12.	I can talk about my problems with my friends							

Scale 3

Items	None of the time (1)	Rarely (2)	Some of the time (3)	Often (4)	All of the tim (5)
1. I've been feeling optimistic about the future					
2. I've been feeling useful					
3. I've been feeling relaxed					
4. I've been feeling interested in other people					
5. I've had energy to spare					
6. I've been dealing with problems well					
7. I've been thinking clearly					
8. I've been feeling good about myself					
9. I've been feeling close to other people					
10. I've been feeling confident					
11. I've been able to make up my own mind about things					

12. I've been feeling loved					
13. I've been interested in new things					
14. I've been feeling cheerful					

APPENDIX-D

Permission Letter from University

Capital University of Science and Technology
Islamabad

Islamabad Expressway, Kahuta Road,
Zone – V, Islamabad, Pakistan
Telephone : +92-(51)-111-555-666
: +92-51-4486700
Fax: : +92-(51)-4486705
Email: info@cust.edu.pk
Website: www.cust.edu.pk

Ref. CUST/IBD/PSY/Thesis-584
August 7, 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Capital University of Science and Technology (CUST) is a federally chartered university. The university is authorized by the Federal Government to award degrees at Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate level for a wide variety of programs.

Ms. Hifsa Bashir, registration number **BSP201029** is a bona fide student in BS Psychology program at this University from Spring 2020 till date. In partial fulfillment of the degree, she is conducting research on "Relationship between social support, mental well-being and work-life balance among working women". In this continuation, the student is required to collect data from your institute.

Considering the forgoing, kindly allow the student to collect the requisite data from your institute. Your cooperation in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Please feel free to contact undersigned, if you have any query in this regard.

Best Wishes,

Dr. Sabahat Haqqani
Head, Department of Psychology
Ph No. 111-555-666 Ext: 178
sabahat.haqqani@cust.edu.pk

APPENDIX-E

Permission from Author

Work-life Balance Scale

Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)

Permission from Author