



EMPLOYEE WORK-LIFE BALANCE, SATISFACTION AND BURNOUT IN IRAN AND SPAIN

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: This research explores the effects of Work-Life Balance (WLB) on job and life satisfaction, and burnout in Iran and Spain. Besides, this research investigates the impact of WLB on organizational commitment and the mediating role of this factor on the studied outcomes.

Methodology: This study uses confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling in AMOS to analyze a sample of 263 full-time employees. The sample includes employees from various sectors and firms. The same measurement scales, factors, and structural models were used in both studied countries.

Main Findings: The results of this study confirm that there are positive relationships between WLB and job and life satisfaction and negative relationships between WLB and burnout in both countries. Furthermore, results confirm the partial mediating role of organizational commitment on WLB and the studied outcomes in a way that WLB has a positive impact on the organizational commitment which is, in turn, positively associated with job satisfaction and negatively related to cynicism in both country samples.

Applications of this study: These findings involve that WLB has a positive impact on employees' outcomes. Therefore, organizations should implement and promote WLB policies as a means to increase their employees' satisfaction while reducing job burnout. Employers' attention to WLB should be prominent.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This research is one of the first studies to investigate WLB outcomes in Middle-Eastern societies like Iran and compare them with western societies. The results show more similarities than differences between the two studied country samples, although few differences are found.

Keywords: *Work-life Balance, Life Satisfaction, Job Satisfaction, Emotional Exhaustion, Cynicism, Organizational Commitment.*

INTRODUCTION

In the first half of the 20th century there was no questioning about the interface between the work and non-work activities since there were two prevalent assumptions: a) full-time employees were mostly men b) women were unpaid workers who did caregiving and domestic work (Crompton, 1999). However, in the 1970s these assumptions were challenged in Western societies due to women's involvement in the workplace. Western society's shift towards equality policies increased the need for WLB policies (Sparks, Faragher, and Cooper, 2001). Therefore, within the EU, work-life balance became a new priority (Crompton & Lyonette, 2006). More recently, Swarnalatha and Rajalakshmi (2012) claimed that work-life balance became an important issue in developing countries as well. Nowadays, women enjoy a professional career, and men develop domestic tasks equally in most countries so that their traditional roles have been replaced. Consequently, firms need to support and promote their employee's balance between their multiple roles such as work and non-work (Cengiz & Er, 2018). Arun (2013) argued that working people have multiple roles to carry out: besides employee role, one has additional roles such as son/daughter, husband/wife, father/mother, etc. As a result, interactions between roles may lead to a lack of satisfaction, increased stress, or burnout. Backhaus (2015) stated that these multi-role tensions are part of everyone's life nowadays, as work demands are intensifying. Guest (2002) indicated that some work strain can be ascribed to elements like technological advancement, the necessity to quick response to clients, and improving the quality of customer service. Increasing work demands may require employees to stay longer hours at their workplace, cause exhaustion, or compel them to work from home. Perrons, Fagan, McDowell, Ray, and Ward (2005) found that role tensions expand in dual-earner couples or single parents, in a way that hinders balancing different responsibilities. In this context, balancing job and personal domains is a critical challenge for almost all individuals (Valcour, 2007). As a result, research attention to work and non-work interface has increased but, regardless of its generality, not enough research still exists on this topic (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011) as most of the studies are related to work-family conflict (Hall, Kossek, Briscoe, Pichler, & Lee, 2013). However, we focus on WLB based on Greenhaus and Allen (2011) and Haar (2013) perspective which conceives WLB from an individual's multiple roles in addition to work and family roles. Exploring the outcomes of WLB consists of investigating employees' viewpoints regarding their career, their fulfillment, and their wellness (Brough et al., 2014). Further research is still needed to explore the effects of work and life balance across countries (Kossek, Valcour, & Lirio, 2014). We aim to fill this gap by studying WLB in two different countries and examining its impact on organizational commitment, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, cynicism, and emotional exhaustion.

This study aims to provide evidence that WLB is a central factor that explains individuals' outcomes in organizations and to shed light on the complexity of the interface between work and life. Another contribution of this research is to show that WLB is a general topic across different cultures. [Lagerström et al. \(2010\)](#) stated that work-life topic is rarely investigated in Middle Eastern societies; therefore, we aimed to fill this gap and we chose Iran, particularly to compare a Middle Eastern country with a Western country. Current investigation measures WLB influence on individuals of both countries and finds that there are mostly similarities than differences among them. For example, in Eastern societies like Iran one's identity is strongly correlated to his/her family's identity ([O'Shea, 2003](#)). Men and women still play traditional roles in Iran; where women still hold primary responsibility for family tasks despite their higher-level education and their increased participation at the workplace ([Fu & Shaffer, 2001](#)). In the previous decades, men were expected to supply essential needs for their family while women were expected to dedicate their efforts to caregiving, cooking, and housekeeping ([Fu & Shaffer, 2001](#)). Recent studies show that Iran employed women have raised to 22% ([Schwab, 2016](#)) and traditional families are being changed to dual-earner families ([Karimi, 2009](#)). [Beigi et al. \(2012\)](#) suggest that Iran is going through a transition from a traditional to a modern society and it is worth being investigated. For these reasons, this study explores the relationships between WLB and the above-mentioned outcomes (life satisfaction, job satisfaction, and burnout) in Iran and Spain. We believe studying a Middle Eastern culture in contrast to a European culture might be of interest for cross-cultural research on the work-life interface.

The next section of this paper provides a solid theoretical background and reviews the existing literature on the field of work-non work research. The following section describes the research methodology and the measurement tools. The final section presents the research results and discusses the study findings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

[Garg and Dawra \(2017\)](#) suggested that WLB is a very relevant research topic and it is the main concern for employers and employees, as lack of balance may affect individuals' performance at work and their personal lives. [Eby et al. \(2005\)](#) suggested that exploring WLB should respond to this question: Are people expectations toward their job and life roles compatible or not? There are several definitions for WLB, [Clark \(2000\)](#) defines WLB as "satisfaction and good functioning at work and home, with a minimum of role conflict". [Kirchmeyer \(2000\)](#) described WLB as obtaining satisfactory sense in all life domains and allocating enough resources such as energy, time, and commitment across domains. [Greenhaus and Allen \(2011\)](#) defined WLB as the amount of an individual's satisfaction with work and life roles. [Kalliath and Brough \(2008\)](#) offered a broad definition of WLB as an individual's understanding of accordance between work and non-work activities and provide growth in line with their personal life. WLB is strongly determined by an individual's ability to manage multiple roles which include work, life, sport, community, etc. ([Haar, 2013](#); [Pasamar & Valle, 2015](#)). [Yuile, Chang, Gudmundsson, and Sawang \(2012\)](#) described WLB as a situation in which demands from work and non-work roles are met by allocating equal time to both responsibilities. We conceive WLB as a unique concept for each person and one that depends on his/her targets, priorities, and opinions ([Kossek et al., 2014](#)).

Some research studies have explored work-family balance, a concept theoretically close to WLB, and related to career satisfaction ([Saraih et al., 2019](#)), job satisfaction, and organizational commitment ([Carlson, Grzywacz, & Zivnuska, 2009](#)). [Greenhaus, Collins, and Shaw \(2003\)](#) suggested three forms of work-family balance: time balance (equal time between work and family), involvement balance (equal psychological involvement in work and family), and satisfaction balance (equal satisfaction with work and family). [Aryee, Srinivas, and Tan \(2005\)](#) confirmed that work-family balance is related to higher organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Similarly, [Clarke et al. \(2004\)](#) confirmed that work-family balance is related to greater marital satisfaction. Thus, we believe that higher WLB might be positively related to life and work outcomes.

We argue that achieving WLB is a challenge for all employees, since their sense of balance may be influenced by many factors such as social and technological changes or job and life demands ([Aryee et al., 2005](#)). Social changes include dual-career parents, working women with young children, dual-income families, and single parents ([Clark & Weismantle, 2003](#)). These changes may cause tensions between life roles ([Duxbury & Higgins, 2001](#); [Beauregard, 2011](#)). In order to decrease these tensions, some organizations implement family-friendly policies such as marital aid, emotional support, or flexible schedules ([Richardson, Burke, and Mikkelsen, 1999](#); [Thomas and Ganster, 1995](#)). These family support programs also contribute to increasing WLB ([Delecta, 2011](#)).

[Drago and Kashian \(2003\)](#) suggested that it is better to focus on work and life rather than work and family balance since it is likely that some employees do not have a traditional family. For instance, some employees are single or they do not have children. The focus on life is broader, as it extends to all life domains in addition to the family domain ([Lambert & Kossek, 2004](#)). Thus, WLB offers more opportunities to understand the interface between work and other life roles than the work-family balance concept ([Haar, 2013](#)). Some studies have examined the relationships between WLB and employee satisfaction, anxiety, and depression ([Haar et al., 2014](#)). However, existing research has not studied the potential relationships between WLB and burnout, nor has it studied the role of organizational commitment as a mediating factor. To fill this gap, this research examines the following: first, we analyze the relationships between WLB and the three potential effects regarding life and job satisfaction, and burnout; and, second, we investigate the mediating role that organizational commitment plays in these relationships. Overall, we underpin our hypotheses using the fit and

balance theory ([Voydanoff, 2005](#)) which states that individuals may experience balance when they perceive fit between the resources at their disposal and the demands of their social environment. From this perspective, balance is associated with lower tensions and strain reduction. We suggest that individuals perceiving a balance between their different life roles are more likely to experience satisfaction and to cope with tensions and strain.

HYPOTHESES

Work-life balance, satisfaction, and burnout

Prior studies have explored the relationships between WLB and employees' satisfaction (e.g. [Brough et al., 2014](#); [Haar et al., 2014](#)) showing that employees who enjoy balance are more satisfied with their jobs and lives. Consistent with these studies we posit that employees experiencing WLB may also experience high satisfaction. We base our rationale on the notion that balance is associated with lower tensions between work and life domains and with a general sense of harmony. We also believe that people participating in different activities that are relevant to them may be more satisfied with their jobs and lives.

In particular, this study aims to test the relationships between WLB and employees' satisfaction in two domains: their jobs and their lives. Regarding job satisfaction, it is the degree to which employees like or dislike their jobs ([Spector, 1997](#)). Previous studies found that WLB is positively related to career satisfaction ([Saraih et al., 2019](#)) and job satisfaction ([Haar, 2013](#); [Carlson et al., 2009](#)). Balanced individuals might experience lower tensions and high satisfaction with their jobs ([Bruck, Allen, & Spector, 2002](#); [Warner & Hausdorf, 2009](#)). Aligned with these findings, we hypothesize that:

H1: WLB is positively related to job satisfaction across cultures.

Regarding life satisfaction, [Guest \(2002\)](#) suggested that satisfaction and well-being at home and in one's personal life could be an outcome of WLB. Later studies supported that experiencing WLB may enhance perceptions of life satisfaction ([Balmforth & Gardner, 2006](#); [Frone, 2003](#)). People who perceive balance between their work and life domains may feel life satisfaction because they are equally participating in activities that are salient to them ([Greenhaus et al., 2003](#); [Brough et al., 2014](#), [Carlson, Grzywacz, & Zivnuska, 2009](#)). Thus, work-life balance can be highly important for all employees, regardless of their culture ([Kossek et al., 2014](#)), and it may have an impact on people's well-being ([Lyness & Judiesch, 2014](#)). Accordingly, we introduce the following hypothesis:

H2: WLB is positively related to life satisfaction across cultures.

Job burnout is a kind of psychological strain that describes how much employees feel overwhelmed ([Kyei-Poku, 2014](#), [Maslach et al., 1996](#)). According to [Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter \(2001\)](#) job burnout is a response to prolonged stress in the work environment and is composed of two dimensions: cynicism and emotional exhaustion. On the one hand, emotional exhaustion occurs when a person feels his/her energy drains and realizes that his/her organization consumes all of one's energy ([Maslach et al., 1996](#)). On the other hand, employee cynicism is characterized by negative viewpoints arising out of disappointment, disillusionment, and humiliation in relation to the organization and its managers in the workplace ([Dean, Brandes, & Dharwadkar, 1998](#)). [Leiter and Maslach \(2009\)](#) suggested that job burnout is a sort of behavioral disorder that causes psychological pressure on people and consequently leads to a lower level of efficiency and a lack of psychological health. Other scholars have defined it as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, loss of meaning at work, feelings of ineffectualness, and considering people as objects rather than human beings ([Shanafelt et al., 2015](#)). [Demerouti et al. \(2001\)](#) defined two stages for burnout; the first stage occurs when high job demands create overload and lead to extreme fatigue, and the second stage occurs when lack of job support such as supervisor support leads to intention to leave the organization. Some studies suggested that high demands from job or family domains may contribute to increasing work and family conflict and this conflict may increase burnout ([Anderson et al., 2002](#); [Bryson, Warner-Smith, Brown, & Fray, 2007](#)). We base on this rationale to argue that it is likely that employees enjoying WLB may experience lower job burnout regardless of their cultural context. Consequently, we introduce the following hypothesis:

H3: There is a negative relationship between WLB and job burnout across cultures.

Organizational commitment, satisfaction, and burnout

Some studies have explored the relationships between organizational commitment and employees' satisfaction with their personal lives ([Judge & Watanabe, 1993](#); [Vanaki & Vagharseyyedin, 2009](#)). Previous research has found that higher emotional attachment to the company is related to higher satisfaction in one's personal life ([Hammonds, 1997](#)). Similarly, other scholars have indicated that positive employee attitudes towards their organizations may influence their life satisfaction ([Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002](#)). Based on the notion that emotions on one domain (work) may transfer back and forth to another domain (life) ([Wayne, Grzywacz, Carlson, & Kacmar, 2007](#)), we hypothesize that:

H4: There is a positive relationship between organizational commitment and life satisfaction across cultures.

Support from the organization, existing justice, and appreciation may create positive feelings among employees and eventually lead to a higher level of confidence and commitment ([Devece, Palacios-Marqués, & Pilar Alguacil, 2016](#)). Organizational commitment is an important factor that may influence work behaviors such as job satisfaction, high productivity, and low turnover ([Cohen, 2003](#)). Individuals who feel aligned with their organization values are more committed and performing ([Tayebiniya & Khorasgani, 2018](#); [Rusu, 2019](#)). Some scholars suggested that committed employees are more satisfied with their jobs ([Appelbaum et al. 2000](#); [Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright, & Neuman, 1999](#); [Eslami & Garakhani, 2012](#)). Aligned with existing research, we hypothesize that:

H5: There is a positive relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction across cultures.

A study by [King and Sethi \(1997\)](#) explored the relationships between organizational commitment and burnout. Other researchers found that committed employees are less likely to experience burnout ([Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004](#); [Wright & Hobfoll, 2004](#)). In contrast, more recent studies have shown evidence pointing in the opposite direction, namely finding that employees who devote more time and commitment to their organizations are more likely to experience burnout ([Korunka, Tement, Zdrehus, & Borza, 2010](#)). These contradictory results have motivated us to explore whether the negative relationships between organizational commitment and burnout hold in the studied countries. Therefore, we introduce the following hypothesis:

H6: There is a negative relationship between organizational commitment and burnout across cultures.

The mediating role of organizational commitment

Work-life balance may assist individuals to handle their job and life roles and increase their commitment to the organization ([Lambert, 2000](#)). [Thomas and Ganster \(1995\)](#) found that organizational policies can reduce tensions between life and work responsibilities, and it can improve one's commitment to the company and consequently their life satisfaction. [Allen \(2001\)](#) suggested that organizations that provide support for families may increase WLB as well as the commitment to the company because employees are more attracted to workplaces that have flextime and work-life benefits. Examples of work-life benefits would be family leave, flextime, and economic aid for child care ([Eaton, 2003](#); [Grover & Crocker, 1995](#)). When individuals can balance their work and personal life roles, commitment with their organizations may increase and it may lead, in turn, to the higher job and life satisfaction and lower burnout ([Beauregard & Henry, 2009](#)). Therefore, our expectation is:

H7: Organizational commitment mediates the relationships between WLB and the studied outcomes a) Life satisfaction, b) Job satisfaction, and c) Burnout.

METHODOLOGY

Samples and procedures

The authors personally collected data from two countries (Iran and Spain), where the participants were full-time employees from various companies. Questionnaires were used for data collection since they are a popular method for gathering data in management research, the reason being that questionnaires are convenient to use, inexpensive, and they are a prevalent method for measuring variables like perspectives, ideas, and personalities ([Moorman & Podsakoff, 1992](#)). The authors used their personal networks and home university support to collect data from a broad range of employees. Participants were asked to encourage their own contact participation following the snowball sampling method. 410 full-time employees were invited to participate in this study and, in the end, 136 completed questionnaires were received from Iran and 127 completed questionnaires were received from Spain. For the Iranian sample, the response rate was 66%. The average age was 39.7 years; the gender was 25% female and 75%, male. For the Spanish sample, the response rate was 60% and the average age was 39.7 years. The gender was 50% female and 50%, male. A 5-point Likert scale was used ranging from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree in all the questionnaire items.

Measurement

The questionnaire items are listed in Table 1. WLB was measured by [Haar's \(2013\)](#) three items scale. The Cronbach alpha is 0.75 for the Iranian sample and 0.79 for the Spanish sample. Job satisfaction was measured using the three-item measure of [Judge, Bono, Erez, and Locke \(2005\)](#). The Cronbach alpha is 0.73 for the Iranian sample and 0.86 for the Spanish sample. Life satisfaction was measured using the three-item scale of [Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin \(1985\)](#). The Cronbach alpha is 0.80 for the Iranian sample and 0.78 for the Spanish sample. Burnout was measured using six items from the Maslach Burnout Inventory ([Maslach et al., 1996](#)). The Cronbach alpha is 0.86 for the Iranian sample and 0.92 for the Spanish sample. Organizational commitment was measured using the five-item scale of [Meyer and Allen \(1997\)](#). The Cronbach alpha is 0.85 for the Iranian sample and 0.82 for the Spanish sample.

In this study, we have introduced three control variables: Sector (1=public and 0=private), Gender (1=female, 0=male), and Married (1=yes, 0=no). The Sector, Gender, and Married variables were chosen because they have potential relationships with the dependent variables. We selected gender because the number of full-time employed women has increased in both of the studied countries ([Pasamar & Valle, 2015](#); [O'Shea, 2003](#)).

Table 1: Questionnaire items

Observed Variables	Questionnaire items
Life.S1	I am satisfied with my life
Life.S2	So far I have gotten the important things I want in life
Life.S3	If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing
Job.S1	Each day at work seems like it will never end (reversed)
Job.S2	I find real enjoyment in my work
Job.S3	I consider my job rather unpleasant (reversed)
WLB1	I am satisfied with my work-life balance, enjoying both roles
WLB2	Nowadays, I seem to enjoy every part of my life equally well
WLB3	I manage to balance the demands of my work and personal life well
Em.Ex1	I feel used up at the end of the workday
Em.Ex2	Working all day is a strain for me
Em.Ex3	I feel burned out from my work
Cyn1	I have become less interested in my work since I started this job
Cyn2	I have become less enthusiastic about my work
Cyn3	I have become more cynical about whether my work contributes anything
Org.C1	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization
Org.C2	I feel as if this organization's problems are my own
Org.C3	I do not feel a strong sense of "belonging" to my organization (reversed)
Org.C4	I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organization (reversed)
Org.C5	I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization (reversed)

The sector may influence WLB, as private companies may have tight schedules or higher pressure to achieve their performance goals. Finally, we chose married because work and family demands may have a greater effect on married individuals as married employees may care more about their family and work demands.

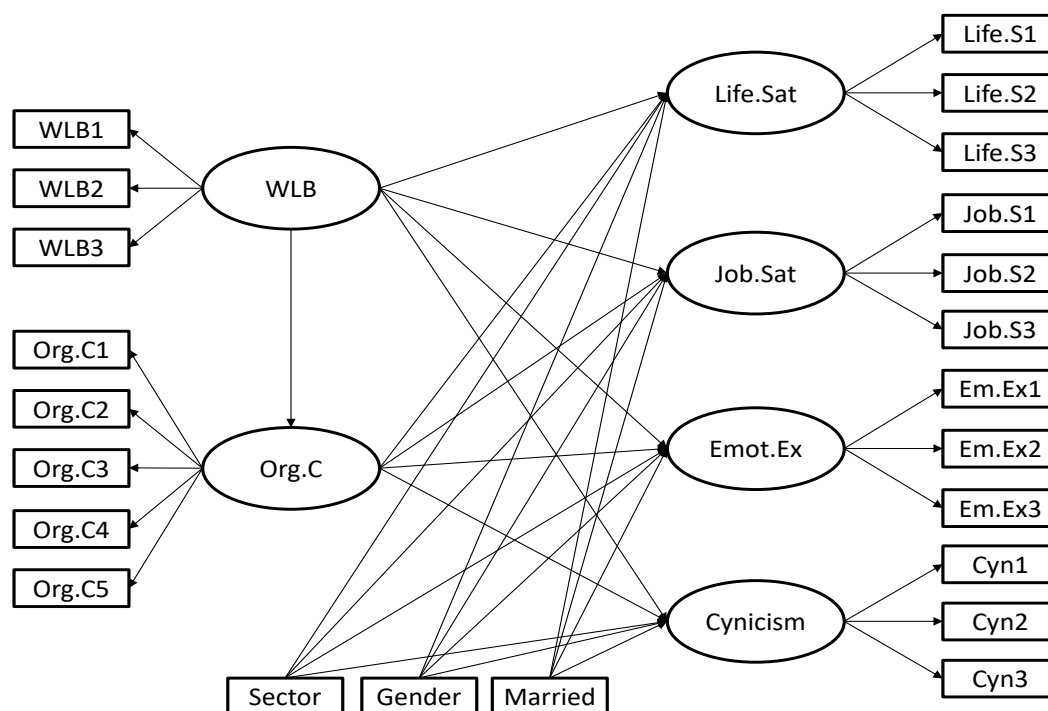


Figure 1: Hypothesized Structural Model

RESULTS

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics of the observed variables. Multi-group CFA was performed in AMOS to confirm that the measurement model fits the sample data. The threshold values for the goodness-of-fit indices were selected according to Williams, Vandenberg, and Edwards (2009). CFA was performed to the measurement model which included all the study factors: WLB, organizational commitment, life satisfaction, job satisfaction, and, emotional exhaustion. Overall, the measurement model could fit the data well. Regarding the Iranian sample, results show a good fit to the data, thus meeting all the minimum requirements: $\chi^2 = 494.633$, $df = 208$ (p -value = 0.000), CFI = 0.78,

RMSEA = 0.101, and PCLOSE = 0.000. Regarding the Spanish sample, the results also show a good fit to the data: $\chi^2 = 494.389$, $df = 213$ (p-value = 0.000), CFI = 0.77, RMSEA = 0.102, and PCLOSE = 0.000.

We performed measurement invariance tests to validate the factor structure and to confirm that the studied factors are sufficiently equivalent across country groups. Measurement invariance tests were performed by Multi-group Confirmatory Factor Analysis, which investigates the goodness-of-fit index (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002). The degree of invariance is estimated by the Likelihood Ratio Test, which measures differences in χ^2 between two models (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002). It is important to test measurement invariance, particularly in cross-cultural research (Chen, 2008; Fontaine, 2005). This test should be applied before starting composite variables for a path analysis, as this allows checking whether variables of different groups (i.e. Iran and Spain) describe the same meanings of scale items (Milfont, Duckitt, & Wagner, 2010). Firstly, we implemented a configural test, created two sample groups (Iran and Spain), and obtained a model fit for the unconstrained and fully constrained models of both samples. Then we performed a chi-square difference test for two groups and found that both groups are invariant. Table 3 shows the results of the invariance test, showing that both groups are not different at the model level. Thus, we could perform path analysis using SEM.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of observed variables, Iran and Spain

Descriptive Statistics								
Var.	Iran				Spain			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Life.S1	3.264	0.862	-0.683	0.076	3.850	0.797	-0.677	0.355
Life.S2	2.830	1.022	0.135	-0.674	4.118	0.685	-0.455	0.265
Life.S3	2.051	0.929	0.908	0.658	3.047	1.053	-0.054	-0.584
Job.S1	3.389	1.048	-0.564	-0.698	4.007	0.946	-0.813	0.360
Job.S2	2.948	0.960	-0.150	-0.348	3.661	0.944	-0.534	0.150
Job.S3	3.639	0.899	-0.892	0.319	4.433	0.822	-1.828	4.120
WLB1	3.102	0.845	-0.422	-0.194	3.566	0.913	-0.614	0.244
WLB2	2.933	0.853	-0.380	-0.560	3.393	0.837	0.054	-0.555
WLB3	3.367	0.925	-0.743	0.193	3.448	0.948	-0.502	-0.522
Em.Ex1	2.963	0.946	0.127	-1.075	2.165	1.484	2.538	8.908
Em.Ex2	2.779	0.9482	0.457	-0.827	2.559	1.504	1.993	6.093
Em.Ex3	2.323	0.859	1.166	1.616	2.086	1.291	2.714	11.587
Cyn1	2.433	1.052	0.991	0.265	1.787	1.445	3.295	13.216
Cyn2	2.441	0.956	0.866	-0.047	2.307	1.400	1.903	6.530
Cyn3	2.492	0.981	1.167	0.847	2.118	1.546	2.365	7.491
Org.C1	3.102	1.063	-0.358	-0.740	3.378	1.140	-0.395	-0.450
Org.C2	3.294	0.989	-0.389	-0.926	3.346	1.157	-0.493	-0.568
Org.C3	3.323	1.002	-0.510	-0.803	3.952	1.146	-0.035	2.329
Org.C4	3.448	0.972	-0.663	-0.497	3.850	1.069	-0.684	-0.291
Org.C5	3.272	1.131	-0.461	-0.811	2.992	1.306	0.123	-1.117

Valid N (Iran): 136, Valid N (Spain): 127

Table 4 shows SEM results for both samples. Regarding the Iranian sample, the structural model had a good fit to the data, meeting all minimum requirements: $\chi^2 = 494.633$, $df = 208$, (p-value = .000), CFI = 0.78, and RMR = 0.080. The Iranian data in Table 4 show that WLB is significantly related to job satisfaction (estimate = 0.261, p-value = 0.014) and life satisfaction (estimate = 0.351, p-value = 0.004), supporting Hypotheses 1 and 2. Thus, WLB is positively related to job and life satisfaction. Work-life balance also significantly impacts emotional exhaustion (estimate = -0.547, p-value < 0.001) and cynicism (estimate = -0.334, p-value = 0.011). This finding confirms that WLB is negatively related to burnout, thus confirming Hypothesis 3. Overall, employees experiencing work-life balance report higher life and job satisfaction and lower burnout. Regarding the relationships between organizational commitment and life satisfaction, we

found that there are no significant relationships (estimate = 0.074, p-value = 0.115), so Hypothesis 4 cannot be confirmed for the Iranian sample. We found significant relationships between organizational commitment and job satisfaction (estimate = 0.423, p-value < 0.001), emotional exhaustion (estimate = -0.273, p-value < 0.001) and cynicism (estimate = -0.465, p-value < 0.001). Thus, organizational commitment is positively related to job satisfaction and negatively related to job burnout. Accordingly, we can confirm Hypotheses 5 and 6. Finally, WLB is significantly related to organizational commitment (estimate = 0.833, p-value < 0.001), and this confirms that organizational commitment partially mediates the relationships between WLB and the studied outcomes, as stated by Hypothesis 7.

Table 3: Invariance test, Iran and Spain

Overall Model	Iran				Spain			
	Chi-square	df	p-val	Invariant?	Chi-square	df	p-val	Invariant?
Unconstrained	478.75	159			244.7	159		
Fully constrained	474.03	156			244.6	158		
Number of groups		2				2		
Difference	4.72	3	0.193	Yes	0.1	1	0.752	Yes

Table 4 also shows SEM analysis results for the Spanish sample. Results show that work-life balance is significantly related to life satisfaction (estimate = 0.236, p-value = 0.004) and to job satisfaction (estimate = 0.258, p-value = 0.002). Thus, we can confirm Hypotheses 1 and 2. The relationships between WLB and emotional exhaustion and cynicism are not significant. Similarly, the relationships between organizational commitment and life satisfaction are not significant (estimate = 0.087, p-value = 0.153); thus, we cannot confirm Hypotheses 3 or 4 for Spain. Regarding the relationships between organizational commitment and job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and cynicism: organizational commitment is positively related to job satisfaction (estimate = 0.367, p-value < 0.001) and negatively related to cynicism (estimate = -0.484, p-value = 0.014), but it is not significant for emotional exhaustion (estimate = -0.264, p-value = 0.134). Thus, employees committed to the organization reported higher job satisfaction and lower cynicism. As a result, we can confirm Hypotheses 5 and 6. Results also show that work-life balance is significantly related to organizational commitment (estimate = 0.218, p-value = 0.043), such that organizational commitment also partially mediates the relationships between WLB and the studied outcomes in Spain, which therefore confirms Hypothesis 7. The structural model also had a good fit to the Spanish data, meeting all minimum requirements: $\chi^2 = 494.389$, $df = 213$, (p-value = .000), CFI = 0.77, and RMR = 0.233.

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the impact of WLB and organizational commitment on job and life satisfaction and employee burnout across two different countries. Particularly, the study focused first on the relationships between WLB and life satisfaction, job satisfaction, and job burnout in Iran and Spain, and, if so, whether or not this impact is similar in both countries. Results confirm that employees who experience WLB are more satisfied with their jobs and lives in both countries; however, WLB is associated with lower burnout only in Iran. These results align with prior research that has found the positive outcomes of WLB; for example, [Lyness and Judiesch \(2014\)](#) and [Kossek et al. \(2014\)](#). These results involve individuals who are living a balanced life are more satisfied regardless of their cultural background and can cope with different tensions from work and non-work domains. Accordingly, individuals are more satisfied when they experience WLB because it is consistent with their personal preferences and societal values, regardless of their country ([Haar et al., 2014](#)).

Regarding the outcomes of organizational commitment, we found that organizational commitment is strongly related to higher job satisfaction and lower burnout across the studied countries; but it is not associated with life satisfaction. These results confirm that those employees who are more identified with the goals and values of their organizations are more satisfied with their jobs and resilient, thus they have better ways to cope with job strains. These results extend existing research on the relationships between organizational commitment and burnout to a wider variety of workers which was previously focused on professional collectives like IS professionals ([King and Sethi, 1997](#)) or female nurses ([Peng et al., 2016](#)).

Additionally, results confirm the partial mediation role of organizational commitment between WLB and the studied outcomes both in Iran and Spain. The mediation role of organizational commitment involves that employees who enjoy greater WLB are also more committed to their organizations and, in turn, experience higher satisfaction and lower burnout. This mediated relationship is justified as organizations implementing WLB practices are signaling they care about their employees' professional and personal lives and thus contribute to align the organization's goals and values with their employees' goals and values, which in turn positively influence employees' satisfaction and reduce burnout regardless of the studied country.

Table 4: Final structural model results for both study samples

Iran Path	Iran				Spain			
	Estimates	S.E	C.R	P Label	Estimates	S.E	C.R	P Label
Org.C <- WLB	0.833***	0.188	4.430	***	0.218*	0.107	2.028	0.043
Life.Sat <- WLB	0.351**	0.121	2.899	0.004	0.236**	0.081	2.903	0.004
Job.Sat <- WLB	0.261*	0.107	2.451	0.014	0.258**	0.083	3.101	0.002
Em.Ex <- WLB	-0.547***	0.148	-3.684	***	-0.232	0.171	-1.363	0.173
Cynicism <- WLB	-0.334*	0.132	-2.534	0.011	-0.090	0.178	-0.507	0.612
Life.Sat <- Org.C	0.074	0.047	1.578	0.115	0.087	0.061	1.429	0.153
Job.Sat <- Org.C	0.423***	0.067	6.313	***	0.367***	0.101	3.618	***
Em.Ex <-Org.C	-0.273***	0.074	-3.705	***	-0.264	0.176	-1.497	0.134
Cynicism <- Org.C	-0.465***	0.082	-5.637	***	-0.484*	0.197	-2.460	0.014
Life.Sat <- Sector	-0.056	0.073	-0.769	0.442	0.012	0.067	0.177	0.859
Job.Sat <- Sector	0.011	0.090	0.128	0.898	0.176	0.094	1.873	0.061
Em.Ex <- Sector	0.108	0.115	0.938	0.348	-0.169	0.207	-0.816	0.414
Cynicism <- Sector	0.022	0.110	0.202	0.840	0.008	0.217	0.038	0.970
Life.Sat <- Married	-0.151	0.091	-1.669	0.095	0.236*	0.101	2.338	0.019
Job.Sat <- Married	0.356**	0.109	3.265	0.001	0.182	0.117	1.554	0.120
Em.Ex <- Married	0.069	0.136	0.511	0.609	0.043	0.260	0.167	0.867
Cynicism <- Married	0.124	0.130	0.954	0.340	0.263	0.273	0.962	0.336
Life.Sat <- Gender	0.014	0.070	0.198	0.843	-0.057	0.041	-1.392	0.164
Job.sat <- Gender	0.183*	0.088	2.068	0.039	0.007	0.053	0.137	0.891
Em.Ex <- Gender	0.120	0.112	1.071	0.284	0.128	0.119	1.069	0.285
Cynicism <- Gender	-0.084	0.107	-0.788	0.430	0.052	0.125	0.412	0.680

*** P Label <0.001, ** P Label <0.010, * P Label <0.050

Regarding country differences, despite the number of working women in Iran has been growing in the last decade; women keep carrying out domestic tasks at home (Beigi et al., 2012). Consequently, married women workers in Iran experience higher family pressures in contrast to Spain due to their mixed (modern and traditional) societal values (Fu & Shaffer, 2001). On the contrary, working time in Spain is longer than in Iran, which is a limiting factor to balance work and other life roles in Spain and contributes to increased job strain (Pasamar & Valle, 2015). Therefore, although balancing work and life roles is positive for both studied countries, their social and cultural contexts may involve different reasons leading to these different outcomes which should be studied in more detail.

Overall, this study contributes to the emerging WLB research in different ways. First, the study findings strengthen the research on WLB by introducing organizational commitment and considering its impact on work and life outcomes for employees in two different countries. This study highlights the importance of focusing on WLB instead of on work-family conflict since WLB more broadly reflects individual life roles and related decisions that are part of contemporary society (Hall et al., 2013). Second, this is one of the first studies that investigate the outcomes of WLB and organizational commitment in a Middle East country and compares it with a European country. This is important since we compare two cultural systems that have different values and beliefs about work, family, and life in general. Third, this study reveals that WLB alleviates emotional exhaustion and cynicism but only in Iran. Fourth, this study contributes to the generalizability of work-life concepts, usually developed in Western countries, to other regions less explored by management research (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013). In conclusion, the current research emphasizes the critical role of WLB and organizational commitment to improving job and life satisfaction and reducing burnout across nations.

CONCLUSION

The current study extends WLB and organizational commitment research by showing their relationships with selected outcomes across cultures. We build upon prior studies on WLB by analyzing the relationships between WLB and job

satisfaction, life satisfaction, and burnout among full-time employees. The study results confirm that WLB is associated with a higher job and life satisfaction in both studied countries as well as with lower burnout in Iran. Besides, organizational commitment partially mediates these relationships. These results provide a deep understanding of the impact of organizational commitment on cynical attitude and emotional exhaustion among employees. Therefore, developing WLB programs would assist employees to better manage life and job domains and would help companies to achieve more committed as well as more satisfied employees. Moreover, this study reveals that organizational commitment has a significant influence on job satisfaction, thereby; employers should build appropriate working environments fostering emotional attachment of employees to their organizations.

LIMITATIONS AND STUDY FORWARD

The current study has several limitations. First, respondents from the Iranian sample were mostly men (75%) which might bias some answers about family contexts since traditional roles still exist in Iranian culture. We believe gender egalitarianism would be a relevant topic for future research in this country. Second, this study focuses on two particular countries, we believe future studies could benefit from replicating this research to other cultural contexts like Eastern countries. Finally, this study did not consider the impact of cultural variables on the studied relationships; further research might include cultural dimensions to provide a more nuanced picture of differences and similarities in the effects of WLB across countries. We hope that this study will encourage future research in the field of cross-cultural work-life research.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

Both co-authors have developed this research in a collaborative way. The first author has reviewed the literature and has built the hypotheses under the supervision of the second author. The first author has also collected and analyzed data from Iran. The second author has designed the methods and has collected and analyzed data from Spain. Both authors have interpreted and discussed the findings and have written the manuscript.

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