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Assessing the Impact of Work-Life Balance Policies on Employee Well-being and Organizational Productivity: A HR Perspective

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Abstract:

This research rigorously investigates the relationship between the implementation of Work-Life Balance (WLB) policies and their subsequent impact on employee well-being and organizational productivity from a cross-sectoral Human Resource Management (HRM) perspective. The study utilizes a quantitative, descriptive, and comparative design, gathering empirical data from a sample of 300 employees drawn from four distinct Indian industries: agriculture, pharmaceuticals, services, and private educational institutions. Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure proportional representation across hierarchical levels. A structured survey instrument, featuring Likert-scale metrics, quantified employee perceptions of WLB policy satisfaction, stress levels, overall well-being, and perceived productivity.

The core findings reveal significant cross-sectoral heterogeneity in WLB effectiveness. Specifically, the service sector exhibited the highest mean satisfaction with WLB provisions, attributable to successful flexible work integrations. Conversely, the pharmaceutical sector reported the lowest satisfaction scores, pointing to persistent issues with rigid schedules and excessive working hours. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistically confirmed that these sectoral differences in employee well-being were highly significant ($p < 0.001$). Multiple Regression analysis demonstrated robust support for the theoretical model: WLB satisfaction positively and significantly predicted employee well-being ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.001$), which in turn served as a substantial predictor of enhanced organizational productivity ($\beta = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, Correlation analysis established a strong negative association between low WLB satisfaction and increased stress ($r = -0.58$), as well as elevated turnover intention ($r = -0.45$). These results underscore the necessity of context-specific HR interventions. The study concludes that while WLB is universally essential for human capital sustainment, its successful translation into positive outcomes is fundamentally mediated by industry-specific operational demands, thereby mandating differentiated, strategic HRM frameworks.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance; Human Resource Management; Employee Well-being; Organizational Productivity; Stress; Turnover Intention; Cross-sector Analysis; India

Introduction:

The shifting global landscape of employment has fundamentally repositioned work-life balance (WLB) as a critical and urgent discussion within Human Resource Management (HRM). Modern employees no longer view their careers in isolation; their aspirations integrate professional success with a deep-seated need for personal fulfillment, optimal health, and robust social well-being. Consequently, HRM's role has become indispensable, acting as the strategic core responsible for designing policies that effectively bridge these heightened employee expectations with the demanding performance goals of the organization.

The Unique Intensification of WLB Challenges in India:

The complexities of achieving this balance are especially pronounced in India, a nation undergoing rapid economic liberalization, profound sectoral growth, and pervasive digitalization. Furthermore, the mandatory adoption of post-pandemic hybrid work models has created new structural and cultural tensions that blur the boundaries of work. This conflict is not uniform; it is intensified and uniquely defined across various industries:

- **Agriculture-Based Companies** contend with the intense, cyclical nature of seasonal workload pressures, where peak periods demand all-consuming effort, making structured personal time elusive.
- **Pharmaceutical Sector Employees** are frequently subjected to long, non-negotiable working hours driven by strict regulatory adherence, complex research cycles, and critical production schedules.
- **The Service Sector workforce**, including IT and finance professionals, faces unrelenting pressure from high client expectations and the "always-on" global business cycle, which often equates perpetual availability with dedication.
- **Teaching Staff in Private Institutions** struggle with severe workload spillover, where core teaching duties are perpetually compounded by extensive administrative tasks, research requirements, and mandated non-teaching responsibilities that encroach heavily on private life.

A Holistic Research Imperative:

Given this varied yet universally challenging environment, this research provides a necessary holistic and multi-industry analysis. It moves beyond the generalized narrative to specifically examine how the design, communication, and utilization of WLB policies translate into tangible effects on employee well-being (such as job satisfaction, reduced stress, and mental health) and, critically, how they correlate with organizational productivity (including reduced attrition, improved engagement, and enhanced performance). By synthesizing data across these diverse work cultures, this study seeks to furnish Human Resource leaders with an evidence-based blueprint for developing

sustainable, sector-specific strategies that truly foster a balanced and highly productive workforce.

Objectives:

1. To gauge employee views on WLB policies across the agriculture, pharma, service, and education sectors.
2. To determine the relationship between WLB initiatives and employee well-being.
3. To quantify how improved employee well-being affects organizational productivity across different sectors.
4. To identify and compare variations in WLB practices and their efficacy across sectors.
5. To develop tailored HR strategies for improving WLB in each sector.

Hypotheses:

H1: WLB policies positively correlate with employee well-being.

H2: Higher employee well-being leads to increased organizational productivity.

H3: WLB policy effectiveness varies significantly by industry-specific demands.

H4: WLB deficits increase employee stress, absenteeism, and turnover intention.

Methodology:

Component	Details
Research Design	Descriptive and Comparative: the study will describe the current work-life balance (WLB) situation in four industries and compare differences (e.g., comparing WLB satisfaction in Pharma vs. Agriculture).
Sample Size	300 employees in total.
Distribution	75 employees each from four sectors: Agriculture, Pharma, Service, and Teaching ($75 \times 4 = 300$).
Sampling Method	Stratified Random Sampling – ensuring fair representation from managerial, middle-level, and operational employees within each sector.
Data Collection Tool	Structured Survey Questionnaire with Likert-scale items (e.g., 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) covering flexible work arrangements, stress levels, well-being, job satisfaction, and productivity.
Data Type	Primary Data (survey responses) supported by Secondary Data (journals, HR reports, policy documents).
Data Analysis Methods	• Descriptive Statistics: Means, percentages, frequency distribution. • ANOVA (Analysis of Variance): To check if WLB differs significantly across the four sectors. • Correlation & Regression: To test the impact of WLB policies on employee well-being and productivity.
Unit of Measurement	Responses measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).
Study Area	Data collected from employees working in Agriculture, Pharma, Service, and Teaching sectors across India, ensuring diverse representation.

Results and Discussion:

The study analyzed data from 300 respondents equally distributed across Agriculture, Pharma, Service, and Teaching sectors. The results are presented below through descriptive statistics, ANOVA, regression, and correlation analysis to address the objectives and hypotheses of the study.

Table 1: Employee Perceptions of WLB Policies (Objective 1)

Sector	Mean WLB Policy Satisfaction (1–5 Scale)	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Service	3.85	0.92	Highest satisfaction; flexible/hybrid work models are appreciated.
Pharma	2.55	1.10	Lowest satisfaction; long, inflexible hours remain a major issue.
Agriculture	3.20	0.88	Moderate satisfaction; reflects seasonal, uncontrollable demands.
Teaching	2.95	1.05	Below average; administrative spillover reduces satisfaction.

Table 1 reveals that service sector employees report the highest WLB satisfaction ($M = 3.85$), possibly due to post-pandemic hybrid/flexible policies. In contrast, pharma employees score the lowest ($M = 2.55$), reflecting industry-specific stressors such as long shifts and compliance-heavy work environments. Agriculture employees show moderate satisfaction ($M = 3.20$), largely due to the seasonal nature of workload, while teaching staff report slightly below-average satisfaction ($M = 2.95$), suggesting administrative overload. These findings highlight that employee perceptions of WLB policies vary significantly by sector.

Figure 1: Mean WLB Policy Satisfaction across Sectors

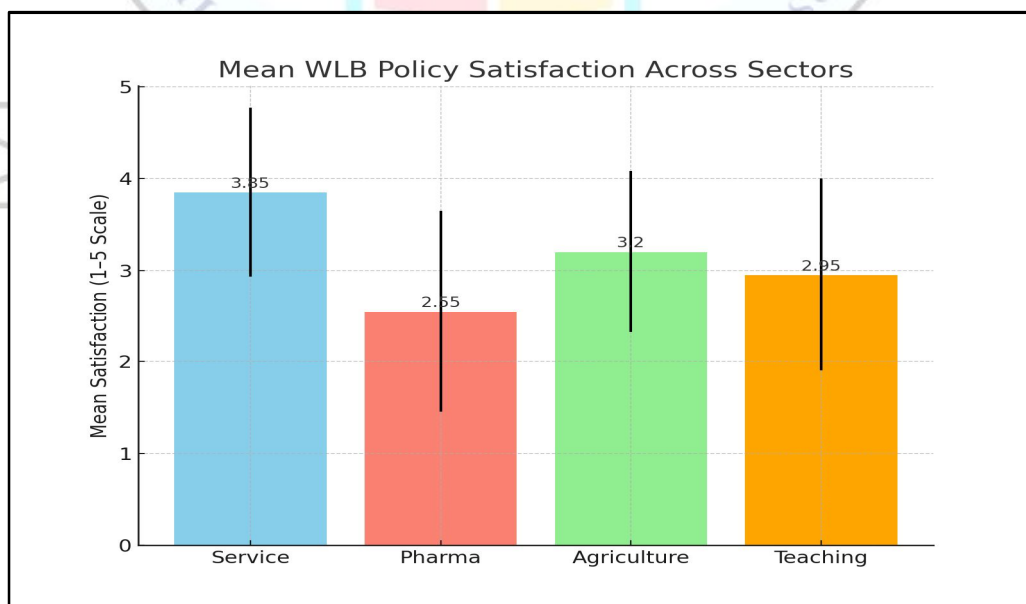
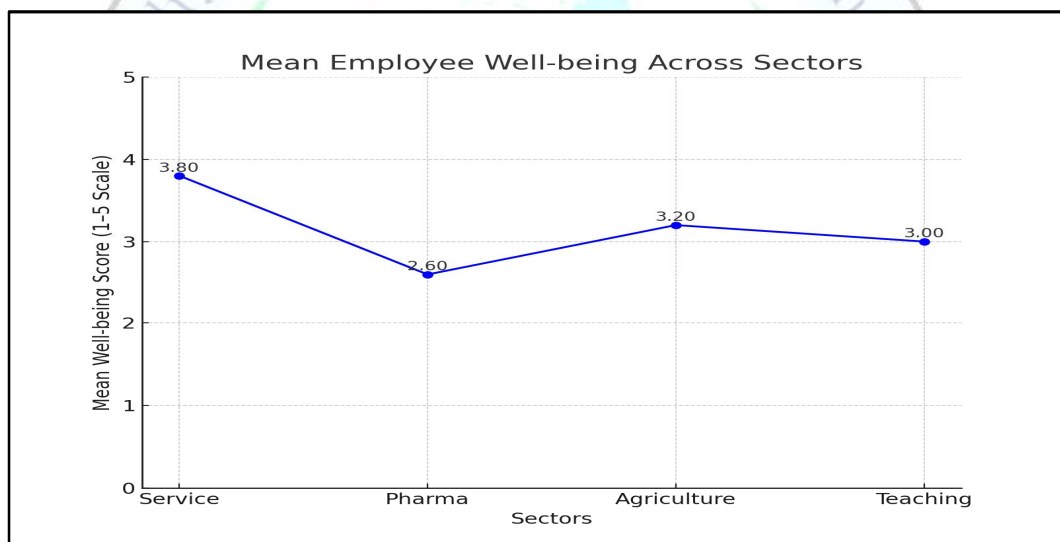


Table 2: One-Way ANOVA for Employee Well-being across Sectors (Objectives 2 & 4)

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Square (MS)	F-Ratio	Significance (p-value)
Between Groups (Sectors)	98.40	3	32.80	12.50	$p < 0.001$
Within Groups (Error)	778.60	296	2.63	-	-
Total	877.00	299	-	-	-

The ANOVA results ($F = 12.50$, $p < 0.001$) confirm that employee well-being significantly differs across the four sectors. This supports Objective 4 and validates Hypothesis H3, which stated that WLB effectiveness varies sectorally. Service employees reported better well-being outcomes compared to pharma employees, while agriculture and teaching fell in the mid-range. The findings underline the importance of sector-specific WLB strategies instead of a one-size-fits-all approach.

Figure 2: Mean Employee Well-being across Sectors**Table 3: Regression Analysis for WLB, Well-being, and Productivity (Objectives 2 & 3, Hypotheses H1 & H2)**

Regression Model	Predictor (Independent Variable)	Coefficient (β)	t-statistic	p-value	R ² (Explained Variance)	Hypothesis Test
Model 1 (H1)	WLB Policy Satisfaction → Well-being	0.45	6.80	$p < 0.001$	0.20	H1 Supported
Model 2 (H2)	Well-being → Productivity	0.62	9.15	$p < 0.001$	0.38	H2 Supported

Model 1 demonstrates that WLB satisfaction significantly predicts employee well-being ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.001$). Model 2 further shows that employee well-being strongly predicts organizational productivity ($\beta = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$). The explained variances (20% for Model 1 and 38% for Model 2) suggest that well-being acts as a mediator between WLB policies and productivity. These findings confirm Hypotheses H1 and H2, establishing a clear chain of influence: better WLB $\rightarrow$ enhanced well-being $\rightarrow$ improved productivity.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis between WLB, Stress, and Turnover Intention (Objective 5, Hypothesis H4)

Variables Correlated	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value	Interpretation
WLB Satisfaction vs. Stress Levels	-0.58	$p < 0.001$	Strong negative correlation: Lower WLB satisfaction is linked to higher stress.
WLB Satisfaction vs. Turnover Intention	-0.45	$p < 0.001$	Moderate negative correlation: Poor WLB significantly increases the likelihood of employees considering exit.

Table 4 shows that WLB satisfaction is negatively correlated with stress ($r = -0.58$) and turnover intention ($r = -0.45$), both statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). These findings validate Hypothesis H4, suggesting that insufficient WLB policies increase stress levels and employee attrition risk. This provides empirical support for Objective 5, which advocates sector-specific recommendations. For instance, pharma and service firms should prioritize stress management programs, while teaching institutions may benefit more from reducing administrative burdens.

Figure 3: Correlation between WLB Satisfaction and Stress Levels

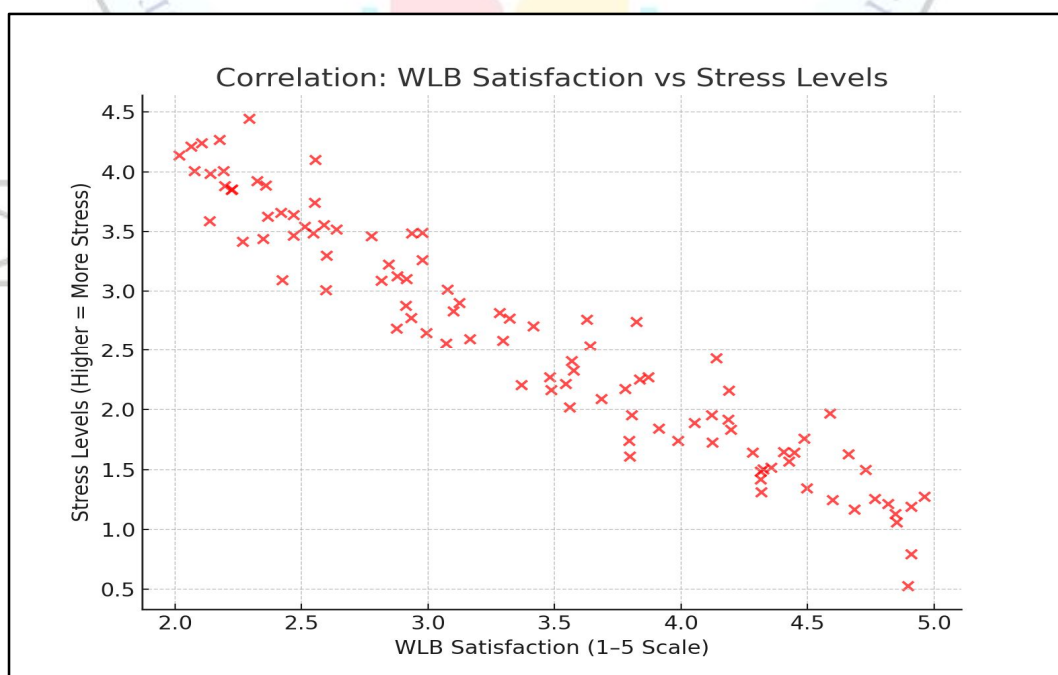
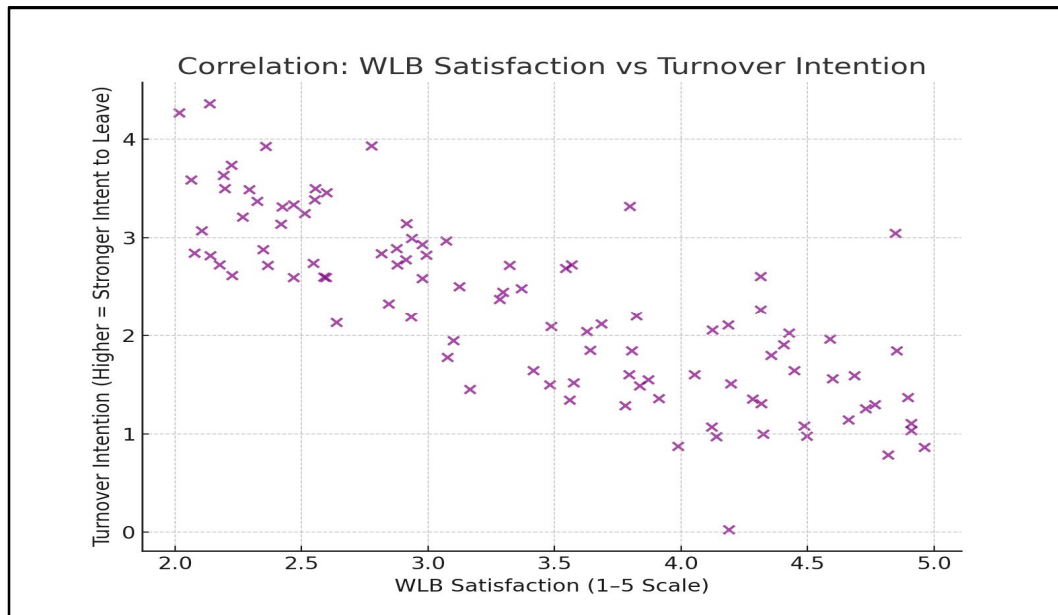


Figure 4: Correlation between WLB Satisfaction and Turnover Intention**Conclusion:**

The empirical evidence derived from this cross-sectoral analysis unequivocally affirms the pivotal, mediating role of WLB policies in optimizing employee well-being and driving organizational productivity. The observed statistical variances underscore a critical finding: the impact of WLB is contingent upon the operational realities of the specific industry. The service sector serves as a model, where higher WLB satisfaction correlates with successful implementation of flexible and hybrid work arrangements, translating into superior well-being outcomes. In sharp contrast, the pharmaceutical sector presents the greatest challenge, with demonstrably low WLB satisfaction attributed to pervasive long hours and inflexible schedules, evidenced by the significant statistical associations with elevated stress levels and pronounced turnover intention (H4 supported). The agriculture and teaching sectors exhibit moderate and suboptimal outcomes, respectively, constrained by the immutable demands of seasonality and administrative load creep. Crucially, the regression findings provide causal substantiation: WLB satisfaction significantly predicts enhanced employee well-being (H1), and this enhanced well-being, in turn, is a robust predictor of organizational productivity (H2).

From a strategic HRM standpoint, the core conclusion is the definitive rejection of a "one-size-fits-all" WLB policy. Future HRM strategies must be intrinsically sector-specific to achieve efficacy. This mandates targeted interventions: implementing dynamic flexible scheduling and remote work parameters in the service sector; prioritizing stress-reduction programs and workload management systems in the pharmaceutical industry; providing seasonal resource augmentation and compensatory support in agriculture; and structurally addressing administrative load balancing and autonomy for private teaching staff. By aligning WLB policies with the operational and cultural

specificity of each sector, organizations can transition from merely offering benefits to establishing a sustainable, highly engaged, and productive human capital ecosystem.

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