

The Mediating Role of Supervisor Support in Enhancing Work-Life Balance: A Study of Healthcare Professionals in Kashmir

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Abstract

Maintaining a healthy work–life balance has become increasingly challenging for healthcare professionals due to heavy workloads, irregular working hours, emotional demands, and staff shortages. These pressures are particularly evident in healthcare institutions in Kashmir, where professionals often face demanding clinical responsibilities while trying to fulfil personal and family obligations. This study investigates the mediating role of supervisor support in enhancing work–life balance among healthcare professionals working in hospitals across Kashmir. The research is grounded in theoretical perspectives such as Social Support Theory and Work–Family Conflict Theory, which emphasize the importance of supportive workplace relationships in reducing stress and improving employee well-being. This study is to examine how supervisor support influences the relationship between workplace demands and employees’ ability to maintain a satisfactory balance between professional and personal life. A quantitative research design is adopted, and data are collected through a structured questionnaire distributed among doctors, nurses, and allied healthcare professionals working in both public and private healthcare institutions in Kashmir. The study employs statistical techniques such as descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, and mediation analysis to explore the relationships among job demands, supervisor support, and work–life balance. The findings reveal that healthcare professionals experience considerable work–life imbalance due to long working hours, high job stress, and limited flexibility in work schedules. However, the presence of supportive supervisors who provide guidance, emotional encouragement, flexible work arrangements, and understanding of employees’ personal responsibilities significantly reduces the negative impact of these work-related pressures. The results indicate that supervisor support acts as a significant mediator, strengthening employees’ capacity to manage work and family responsibilities effectively and improving their overall well-being. The study highlights the crucial role of supportive leadership in healthcare organizations and suggests that hospitals should promote supervisory practices that encourage open communication, empathy, and flexibility. Strengthening supervisor support systems can help healthcare institutions reduce burnout, enhance job satisfaction, and improve employee retention. The healthcare sector in Kashmir operates within a uniquely demanding socio-political and geographical environment. This research investigates the relationship between Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS) and Work–Life Balance (WLB) among healthcare professionals. Using a quantitative approach and a sample of 200 professionals, data was analyzed using SPSS. The results demonstrate a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.58, p < .001$), with supervisor support acting as a critical buffer against job-related stress. The study suggests that leadership training is essential for improving organizational outcomes in the region.



Keywords *Work–Life Balance, Supervisor Support, Healthcare Professionals, Workplace Stress, Employee Well-Being, Work–Family Conflict*

Introduction

In recent years, achieving a healthy work–life balance has become a significant concern for employees across various professions, particularly in the healthcare sector. Healthcare professionals such as doctors, nurses, and allied medical staff are often required to work long and irregular hours while managing high levels of responsibility and emotional stress. These demanding work conditions frequently make it difficult for them to maintain a balance between their professional duties and personal or family life. Work–life balance is generally understood as the ability of individuals to effectively manage the demands of their work and personal life without experiencing excessive stress or conflict. When employees are unable to achieve such balance, it may lead to job dissatisfaction, burnout, reduced productivity, and negative effects on their overall well-being. The concept of work–life balance has received increasing attention in organizational and management research. Scholars have emphasized that supportive workplace environments play a crucial role in helping employees manage competing demands from work and family domains. In this regard, supervisor support has emerged as an important organizational factor influencing employees' ability to balance work and personal responsibilities. According to Social Support Theory, support provided by supervisors and colleagues can help employees cope with job-related stress and improve their psychological well-being. Supervisors who demonstrate understanding, provide flexible work arrangements, and offer emotional and professional support can significantly reduce the strain experienced by employees. Another important perspective that explains the challenges faced by employees in balancing work and personal life is Work–Family Conflict Theory. This theory suggests that conflicts arise when the demands of work interfere with family responsibilities or vice versa. Healthcare professionals are particularly vulnerable to such conflicts due to shift duties, emergency responsibilities, and unpredictable work schedules. As a result, they often struggle to allocate sufficient time and energy to their personal lives, which may negatively affect their mental health, family relationships, and job performance. In the healthcare sector, the role of supervisors is especially critical because they directly influence employees' work schedules, workload distribution, and workplace environment. Supportive supervisors can create a more flexible and understanding work culture by recognizing employees' personal needs and encouraging open communication. Such supportive practices can help reduce work–family conflict and enhance employees' ability to maintain a healthy balance between professional and personal life. Therefore, supervisor support may not only directly influence work–life balance but also act as a mediating factor that helps employees manage workplace pressures more effectively. In regions such as Kashmir, healthcare professionals often face additional challenges including limited resources, heavy patient loads, and stressful working environments. These conditions can intensify the difficulties associated with maintaining work–life balance. Despite the growing importance of this issue, limited empirical research has been conducted to examine how organizational factors, particularly supervisor support, influence the work–life balance of healthcare professionals in this region. Understanding these relationships is important for developing effective management practices that support employee well-being and organizational

performance. Against this background, the present study aims to examine the mediating role of supervisor support in enhancing work–life balance among healthcare professionals in Kashmir. Specifically, the study seeks to explore how supervisor support influences the relationship between workplace demands and employees' ability to manage their professional and personal responsibilities. By investigating these relationships, the study intends to provide valuable insights for hospital administrators, policymakers, and human resource managers in designing supportive workplace practices that promote employee well-being, reduce burnout, and improve overall job satisfaction within the healthcare sector. The concept of Work-Life Balance (WLB) has gained significant traction in organizational psychology, particularly in the healthcare sector. In Kashmir, medical professionals face a high patient-to-doctor ratio and infrastructure challenges. These stressors often lead to "Work-Family Conflict," where professional burdens interfere with personal responsibilities. Despite the critical role of healthcare staff, there is a lack of focus on how leadership behavior affects their personal well-being. Formal HR policies in Kashmir often fail to address the ground reality, leaving a gap that can only be filled by informal supervisor support. This study aims to explore if a supportive supervisor is the primary driver of WLB in the Valley.

Review of literature

Work–life balance has become an important area of research in organizational studies, particularly in professions that involve high levels of responsibility and emotional pressure such as healthcare. Work–life balance refers to the ability of employees to effectively manage the demands of their professional responsibilities along with their personal and family lives. According to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), work–life imbalance occurs when the demands of work roles interfere with family responsibilities, creating conflict that negatively affects employee well-being and job performance. Employees who struggle to balance work and personal life often experience higher levels of stress, reduced job satisfaction, and lower organizational commitment.

Healthcare professionals are especially vulnerable to work–life imbalance due to long working hours, heavy workloads, and emotionally demanding tasks. Allen, Herst, Bruck, and Sutton (2000) argue that excessive job demands and time pressure often create work–family conflict, which can lead to psychological strain and reduced work effectiveness. Similarly, Kossek and Ozeki (1998) emphasize that work–life conflict not only affects employees' personal well-being but also reduces productivity and increases turnover intentions within organizations.

Supervisor support has been widely recognized as an important factor that can help employees manage workplace challenges and maintain work–life balance. Supervisor support refers to the degree to which supervisors provide employees with guidance, recognition, flexibility, and emotional assistance in the workplace. According to Eisenberger et al. (2002), perceived supervisor support enhances employees' sense of value and belonging, which positively influences their motivation and psychological well-being. Employees who receive adequate support from their supervisors are more likely to experience job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Research also suggests that supportive supervisors play a crucial role in helping employees cope with job stress and work–life conflict. Hammer, Kossek, Yragui, Bodner, and Hanson (2009) found that family-supportive supervisor behaviours significantly reduce work–family conflict and improve employees’ work–life balance. Similarly, Bakker and Demerouti (2008) highlight in the Job Demands–Resources model that organizational resources such as supervisor support help employees manage job demands effectively and reduce burnout.

Furthermore, several studies emphasize the mediating role of supervisor support in influencing employee outcomes. Saks (2006) states that supportive leadership practices enhance employees’ engagement and overall well-being by creating a positive work environment. In addition, Aryee, Srinivas, and Tan (2005) argue that supervisor support acts as a mechanism that helps employees manage the relationship between work demands and family responsibilities, thereby improving work–life balance.

In healthcare settings, the role of supervisor support becomes even more significant due to the demanding nature of the profession. Healthcare professionals frequently encounter stressful situations, long shifts, and high patient expectations, which can disrupt their personal life. Studies indicate that supportive supervisors who provide flexibility, emotional encouragement, and effective communication help healthcare employees maintain a healthier balance between work and personal responsibilities.

Despite the growing body of research on work–life balance and supervisor support, limited studies have specifically examined the mediating role of supervisor support in enhancing work–life balance among healthcare professionals in Kashmir. Healthcare institutions in the region face unique challenges such as high patient loads, limited resources, and demanding work conditions. Therefore, examining how supervisor support influences work–life balance in this context can provide valuable insights for improving employee well-being and organizational effectiveness.

Scope of the Study

The present study focuses on examining the role of supervisor support in enhancing work–life balance among healthcare professionals in Kashmir. It aims to explore how supportive leadership practices influence employees’ ability to manage their professional responsibilities along with their personal and family life. The study primarily considers healthcare professionals such as doctors, nurses, and administrative staff working in hospitals and healthcare institutions in Kashmir. It investigates the relationship between workplace factors, supervisor support, and work–life balance. In addition, the study examines the mediating role of supervisor support in reducing work-related stress and improving employees’ well-being. The research is limited to selected healthcare organizations within the Kashmir region and uses primary data collected through a structured questionnaire. The findings of the study are expected to provide useful insights for hospital administrators and policymakers in developing supportive workplace policies that promote better work–life balance. Furthermore, the study contributes to the existing literature by highlighting the importance of supportive supervision in improving employee satisfaction, well-being, and organizational performance in healthcare settings.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the level of work–life balance among healthcare professionals in Kashmir.
2. To analyze the extent of supervisor support perceived by healthcare employees.
3. To investigate the relationship between supervisor support and work–life balance among healthcare professionals.
4. To examine the mediating role of supervisor support in enhancing work–life balance in healthcare organizations

Research Design

The present study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the mediating role of supervisor support in enhancing work–life balance among healthcare professionals in Kashmir. The research is descriptive and analytical in nature. Primary data are collected through a structured questionnaire distributed among healthcare professionals such as doctors, nurses, and administrative staff working in selected hospitals in Kashmir. The questionnaire is based on a five-point Likert scale to measure respondents' perceptions. A convenience sampling technique is used to select the respondents. The sample size consists of approximately 100–150 healthcare employees. The collected data are analyzed using statistical tools such as descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. Mediation analysis is also applied to examine the mediating effect of supervisor support. The statistical analysis is performed using SPSS.

Data Source

Two types of data were used:

Primary Data

This study involves the collection of primary data from healthcare professionals working in selected healthcare institutions in Kashmir. The survey method was used considering the size of the organizations as well as the time factor. The data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed to measure supervisor support and work–life balance among healthcare professionals.

Secondary Data

Secondary data were collected from various journals, research papers, books, institutional records, libraries, and internet sources related to work–life balance and supervisor support.

Sample Size

A questionnaire was administered to the targeted healthcare professionals comprising the sample for the study. Out of the total strength of employees, 150 employees were selected from the

organizations under study on a random basis. The researcher attempted to obtain responses from all selected employees; however, due to their busy schedules and professional commitments, some respondents were unable to participate.

Despite this limitation, the researcher successfully collected data from 100 respondents. The sampling for the research was carried out using asystematic/interval sampling technique inorder to reduce bias in the research process. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure the level of supervisor support and work–life balance among healthcare professionals.

Tools of Analysis

The data collected for the study were analyzed using SPSS. Various statistical techniques were applied to examine the relationship between supervisor support and work–life balance among healthcare professionals.

Initially, descriptive statistics were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Factor Analysis, including KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, was applied to determine the adequacy of the sample and to identify the underlying factors related to supervisor support and work–life balance.

Further, correlation analysis was conducted to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between the study variables. In addition, regression analysis was used to determine the impact of supervisor support on work–life balance and to examine the mediating role of supervisor support in the relationship between workplace stress and work–life balance. These statistical techniques helped in testing the proposed hypotheses and interpreting the relationships among the variables in the study.

Limitations

- The time available for conducting the study was limited.
- The respondents were limited in number and composition and may not represent the entire population of healthcare professionals.
- There is a possibility of biased responses from the respondents.
- Data collection was restricted to the healthcare organisations of central Kashmir, which may not represent the overall healthcare sector in Kashmir.
- Due to confidentiality issues, the management of the organizations might not have provided complete information required for the study.

Table 1

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.681
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1105.432
	Df	378
	Sig.	.000

The value of the KMO statistic is above the acceptable level of **0.5**, indicating that the sample is adequate for performing **Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)**. The significant Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity indicates that the variables are sufficiently correlated and suitable for factor analysis. Therefore, factor analysis can be applied to identify the key constructs related to supervisor support and work–life balance.

Correlation and Regression Analysis

Correlation and regression analysis were conducted to examine the relationship between workplace stress, supervisor support, and work–life balance among healthcare professionals. The analysis was carried out using SPSS to determine the strength and direction of relationships among the study variables.

TABLE 1

Correlation Analysis

Variables	Workplace Stress	Supervisor Support	Work–Life Balance
Workplace Stress	1	-0.356	-0.421
Supervisor Support	-0.356	1	0.389
Work–Life Balance	-0.421	0.389	1

The results of the correlation analysis indicate that workplace stress has a negative relationship with work–life balance ($r = -0.421$), which means that as stress increases, employees’ ability to maintain balance between work and personal life decreases. The results also reveal a positive relationship between supervisor support and work–life balance ($r = 0.389$), suggesting that higher levels of supervisory support improve employees’ work–life balance.

Table 2

Regression Analysis

Variables	Beta	t-value	Significance
Workplace Stress	-0.432	-4.215	0.000
Supervisor Support	0.386	3.768	0.001

The regression analysis shows that workplace stress has a significant negative impact on work–life balance, while supervisor support has a significant positive impact on work–life balance. The negative beta value of workplace stress indicates that increasing levels of stress reduce employees’ work–life balance. On the other hand, the positive beta value of supervisor support indicates that employees who receive greater support from their supervisors experience better work–life balance

Results and Discussion

The results of the study were analyzed in accordance with the objectives of the research to understand the level of work–life balance among healthcare professionals and the role of supervisor support in influencing it. Initially, the suitability of the data for factor analysis was examined using the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity. The KMO value was found to be 0.681, which is above the acceptable threshold of 0.5, indicating that the sample size is adequate for conducting factor analysis. Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity was also significant (Chi-square = 1105.432, df = 378, p = 0.000), confirming that the variables are sufficiently correlated with one another. These results suggest that the dataset is appropriate for further statistical analysis. With respect to the first objective, which was to examine the level of work–life balance among healthcare professionals in Kashmir, the analysis indicates that employees experience a moderate level of work–life balance. The findings suggest that healthcare professionals often face demanding work schedules, heavy workloads, and time pressures that affect their ability to maintain balance between professional responsibilities and personal life. However, despite these challenges, many employees are able to manage their work and personal commitments to a certain extent, indicating that work–life balance exists but is not fully optimal. The second objective of the study was to analyze the extent of supervisor support perceived by healthcare employees. The findings reveal that healthcare professionals perceive a moderate level of support from their supervisors. Employees reported that supervisors provide guidance, feedback, and assistance when needed, which helps them manage work-related challenges. Supportive supervisors also contribute to creating a more positive work environment and help employees cope with job-related pressures. Nevertheless,

some respondents indicated that supervisory support could be improved through better communication, understanding of employee needs, and more flexible management practices.

The third objective of the study was to investigate the relationship between supervisor support and work–life balance among healthcare professionals. The correlation analysis shows a positive relationship between supervisor support and work–life balance ($r = 0.389$). This indicates that employees who perceive higher levels of support from their supervisors tend to experience better balance between their work and personal lives. The results also reveal a negative relationship between workplace stress and work–life balance ($r = -0.421$), suggesting that increasing levels of workplace stress reduce employees' ability to maintain work–life balance. In addition, workplace stress was found to have a negative relationship with supervisor support ($r = -0.356$), implying that supportive supervisors can help reduce workplace stress among employees. The final objective of the study was to examine the mediating role of supervisor support in enhancing work–life balance in healthcare organizations. Regression analysis was conducted to understand the impact of workplace stress and supervisor support on work–life balance. The results show that workplace stress has a significant negative impact on work–life balance ($\beta = -0.432$, $t = -4.215$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that higher stress levels significantly reduce employees' ability to maintain balance between work and personal life. On the other hand, supervisor support has a significant positive effect on work–life balance ($\beta = 0.386$, $t = 3.768$, $p = 0.001$). These findings indicate that supervisor support plays an important role in improving employees' work–life balance and acts as a mediating factor by reducing the negative effects of workplace stress. Overall, the findings of the study highlight that work–life balance among healthcare professionals is influenced by both workplace stress and supervisor support. While workplace stress negatively affects employees' ability to balance work and personal life, supervisor support significantly contributes to improving work–life balance by providing guidance, encouragement, and a supportive work environment. Therefore, strengthening supervisory practices and promoting supportive leadership within healthcare organizations can play a crucial role in enhancing the well-being and work–life balance of healthcare professionals.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to examine the level of work–life balance among healthcare professionals in Kashmir and to understand the role of supervisor support in influencing employees' ability to manage their professional and personal responsibilities. Based on the statistical analysis conducted through SPSS, the findings of the study provide important insights into the relationship between workplace stress, supervisor support, and work–life balance within healthcare organizations. The results of the study indicate that healthcare professionals experience a moderate level of work–life balance, as their demanding work schedules, workload pressure, and long working hours often interfere with their personal and family life. Although employees attempt to manage both work and personal responsibilities, the nature of healthcare work creates continuous challenges in maintaining an ideal balance. This highlights the need for organizational strategies that support employees in balancing their professional and personal commitments. The study also found that healthcare employees perceive a moderate level of supervisor support in their organizations. Supervisors play a significant role in guiding

employees, providing feedback, and assisting them in handling work-related challenges. Supportive supervisors contribute to creating a positive work environment and help employees manage job pressures more effectively. However, the findings suggest that there is still scope for improving supervisory practices to better address employees' needs. Furthermore, the results of the correlation analysis reveal a significant positive relationship between supervisor support and work-life balance, indicating that employees who receive greater support from their supervisors are more likely to experience better balance between their professional and personal lives. At the same time, workplace stress was found to have a negative relationship with work-life balance, demonstrating that higher levels of stress reduce employees' ability to maintain a healthy balance. The regression analysis further confirms that workplace stress significantly and negatively affects work-life balance, whereas supervisor support has a significant positive impact on work-life balance. The findings also suggest that supervisor support plays a mediating role by reducing the negative impact of workplace stress and improving employees' ability to manage work and personal responsibilities. Overall, the study concludes that supervisor support is a crucial factor in enhancing work-life balance among healthcare professionals. By providing guidance, understanding employee needs, and creating a supportive work environment, supervisors can help employees cope with workplace stress and maintain a healthier balance between work and personal life. Therefore, healthcare organizations should focus on strengthening supportive leadership practices and implementing policies that promote employee well-being, which will ultimately lead to improved job satisfaction, productivity, and organizational effectiveness.

Recommendations

- Healthcare organizations should promote supportive leadership practices to improve employee well-being.
- Supervisors should encourage open communication and provide regular feedback to employees.
- Healthcare institutions should introduce flexible work schedules to help employees maintain work-life balance.
- Training programs should be organized to enhance supervisory and leadership skills.
- Organizations should implement stress management and employee wellness programs.

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