

Research Article

The Influence of Work-Life Balance on Employee Performance: The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

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Abstract: Purpose – This study examines the influence of work-life balance on employee performance, with job satisfaction serving as a mediating variable, within the Nepal telecom sector of Karnali Province, Nepal.

Design/methodology/approach – A causal-comparative research design was adopted. Data were gathered from 387 employees using a convenience sampling method across multiple telecom sector organizations in Karnali Province. Validated structured questionnaires were used to assess work-life balance, job satisfaction, and employee performance. SmartPLS was employed to analyze both direct effects and the mediating role of job satisfaction.

Findings – The results reveal that work-life balance significantly and positively influences employee performance. Job satisfaction also demonstrated a significant positive effect on employee performance. Moreover, job satisfaction partially mediated the link between work-life balance and employee performance, indicating that work-life balance practices enhance performance not only directly but also indirectly by fostering greater job satisfaction.

Research limitations/implications – The use of convenience sampling and the focus on a single geographical region and sector may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Future studies could apply probability-based sampling and examine other sectors or provinces for broader insights.

Originality/value – This study contributes to the literature by integrating work-life balance, job satisfaction, and employee performance into a unified framework in the context of Nepal's telecom sector. It underscores the essential role of supportive work-life policies in enhancing satisfaction and cultivating a high-performing workforce within telecom organizations in Karnali Province.

Keywords: Work-life balance, job satisfaction, employee performance, telecom sector, PLS-SEM, Karnali Province, Nepal

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1. Introduction

Nepal has seen an extraordinary expansion in its telecommunications sector during the last twenty years. Nepal Telecom, the main player in Nepal's telecommunication space, is providing communication services throughout Nepal's urban and rural areas (Shrestha, 2020). The telecom sector has many human resources problems, especially in remote areas like Karnali Province, because of geographical barriers, lack of infrastructure, and low socio-economics in this region; therefore, there are very different workplace dynamics than other parts of Nepal that can affect employee behavior and organizational results.

Performance is the foundation of organizational success for all organizations, but most especially for service-oriented businesses where human capital defines quality of service and customer satisfaction (Sari et al. 2021). The employees must deal with rapidly changing technology, extremely demanding customers, and extreme competition, and

therefore, the organizations are facing increasing challenges to keep their employees at peak performance levels. Therefore, it is crucial for telecom organizations to identify the factors that contribute to employee performance to be able to retain top talent and help them achieve their maximum potential (K.C, 2025).

Achieving work-life balance has become a key factor in employee wellness and organizational effectiveness today. Work-life balance refers to the process of balancing work responsibilities with personal or private responsibilities, such as family obligations, leisure time, and personal development (Dwitanti et al., 2020). Employees in the telecom sector experience difficulty in achieving a work-life balance due to their non-standard working schedules, shift work, and high pressure work environment (Pandit et al. 2025) and the proliferation of digital technologies have made it even harder for employees to maintain a work-life balance as they have created the opportunity for employees to work from home and blur the lines between their work and private lives (Udin, 2023).

Research shows that achieving a work-life balance affects not only employee wellness but also affects organizational performance. Employees who successfully achieve a work-life balance tend to be more engaged, creative, and productive (El-Qebaisi, 2025), while employees who do not achieve a work-life balance tend to suffer from burn out, lower motivation, and increased intent to leave the organization, which negatively impacts the organization (Ashwin & Muthukumar, 2024). Therefore, it is important for telecom organizations operating in difficult environments, such as Karnali Province, to understand the impact of these issues in order to develop effective human resources strategies.

Job satisfaction is the emotional and evaluative responses employees have towards their jobs, including their perceptions of the job itself, the work environment, relationships with coworkers and supervisors, and their perceptions of organizational justice (Ndulue & Ekechukwu, 2016). Job satisfaction has been identified as a critical mediator between organizational practices and employee outcomes. When employees are satisfied with their jobs, they are more committed to the organization, absent less frequently, and perform better (Bhende et al., 2020).

Telecom sector organizations operating in Karnali Province have challenges that make the need to investigate these challenges imperative. Karnali Province is the largest geographic area of Nepal and has the lowest population density and the greatest distance to travel to access basic services such as healthcare and education (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2021). Employees working for telecom organizations in this area often experience isolation from family, limited options for recreation, and poor living conditions. All of these factors may increase conflict between work and life and thus decrease job satisfaction and subsequently decrease performance.

While there is a considerable body of literature emphasizing the importance of work-life balance to employees' behaviors and attitudes, the number of research studies which have explored the relationships between work-life balance, job satisfaction, and performance are limited; and particularly so in telecommunication industries in remote and difficult to reach areas of Nepal, including Karnali Province. A lack of empirical studies in this area also means that telecom organizations do not have an evidence-based framework upon which they can develop strategies to meet the specific needs of their workforce, thereby limiting their ability to develop effective human resource strategies.

Therefore, the primary objective of this research is to examine whether or not the level of work life balance experienced by employees has a positive impact on employee

performance and to determine if job satisfaction mediates the relationship between levels of work-life balance and performance.

In addition, this research will examine the relationships between work-life balance, job satisfaction and performance within the telecommunication industry in Karnali Province. It is expected that this research will provide managers in telecom organizations with strategic recommendations that will allow them to improve the effectiveness of their workforces through human resource strategies that support employee wellness, increase employee job satisfaction and ultimately lead to improved performance.

The research will contribute theoretically to the discipline of Telecommunications Management in Nepal as well as provide practical applications for managers of telecommunications organizations in Nepal.

2. Statement of the Problem

Despite Nepal Telecom's efforts to reach out and provide services throughout the Karnali Province, many HRM problems still exist and as a result Nepal Telecom is unable to deliver optimal and efficient service to the entire province. Employees that are assigned to rural areas experience difficulty managing their work commitments and fulfilling their individual responsibilities due to their posting away from their families and the lack of supporting infrastructure in the area.

The operational requirements of the telecom industry produce a number of expectations from employees, some of which compete with their personal and family responsibilities and require a significant amount of effort. This may be especially difficult for employees assigned to the Karnali Province, where they may have limited or no contact with their families, and very little opportunity for leisure activities and/or social interactions. While preliminary data collection and anecdotal information indicate that employees experiencing conflict between their work and family responsibilities may exhibit less than average motivation, less than average job satisfaction, and less than average performance, there is a need for additional research in order to understand how work-family conflict affects performance in the telecom industry in Nepal.

There is also a need for regionally-based research that recognizes the unique challenges associated with employees in the telecom industry that work in the Karnali Province. The unique characteristics of the Karnali Province (remote, infrastructure limitations, low level of financial resources), make it different from other, more developed regions. Therefore, organizational leaders in telecom companies located within the Karnali Province do not have empirical data to use when developing work-family policies and practices that meet the needs of their employees. Additionally, without understanding how work-family conflict affects employee performance, and without understanding how job satisfaction functions in the relationship between work-family conflict and employee performance, organizational leaders will not be able to develop targeted, and effective programs to enhance both employee well-being and productivity.

Additionally, the lack of empirical data to support work-family policies and practices means that organizational leaders will be forced to rely upon generic policies and practices developed based upon research conducted in other industries and geographic areas.

To address these issues, the proposed study will investigate the following questions: What is the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance in the telecom sector in Karnali Province? Does job satisfaction mediate the relationship

between work-life balance and employee performance? Through answering these questions, the study will establish a foundation for recommending evidence-based improvements to HRM practices in Nepal's telecom industry.

3. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Workplace conditions are influenced by employee satisfaction and performance according to Herzberg's Two Factor Theory. Herzberg (1959) identified two kinds of factors: Hygiene Factors - for example, Working Conditions & Work-Life Balance; Motivator Factors - for example, Recognition & Achievement. Work-life balance operates as a hygiene factor in this context - when there is good management of work-life balance employees will have less dissatisfaction and be more open to Motivator Factors that can improve their performance. Job Satisfaction is shown to be a critical intermediary variable in the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance.

Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Hobfoll, 1989) is also referenced in the study. According to Hobfoll (1989), people seek to conserve and preserve resources like time and energy. Poorly managed work-life balance depletes these resources and increases stress resulting in decreased performance. Policies that support work-life balance and support employees in conserving their resources lead to improved performance. Within COR Theory, Job Satisfaction is an indicator of whether or not employees feel they have sufficient resources to be effective at work.

In conjunction with the ideas from COR Theory, Herzberg's Two Factor Theory indicates that improving work-life balance enhances performance through the reduction of resource drain and dissatisfaction and the enhancement of job satisfaction. The job satisfaction intermediary role within the work-life balance and employee performance relationship supports the study's focus on job satisfaction as a mediator.

Work-Life Balance and Employee Performance

Considerable scholarly interest has been placed on the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance in a variety of settings and industries. Research by Ashwin and Muthukumar (2024), which focused on the automobile industry in Chennai, India demonstrated that there was an extremely high correlation between effective work-life balance and employee productivity as a result of effective implementation of such balance programs. They concluded that companies who made work-life balance their priority experienced increases in efficiency and quality of output.

Xiaoli (2024) also identified strong positive linkages between work-life balance in manufacturing and employee performance. Xiaoli found that when employers provided employees with flexibility in scheduling or through family-supportive policies they had a significant positive effect on employee performance. Dede (2024) found similar results in that effective work-life balance has a positive impact on employee performance in terms of completion of tasks, quality of products/services, and customer satisfaction.

In South Asia, Ansari et al., (2015) identified very strong positive correlations between work-life balance and employee performance; they further stated that alignment of work requirements with employee needs for well-being maximizes organizational performance while maintaining employee commitment to the organization. In Sri Lanka, Mendis and Weerakkody (2018) identified strong positive correlations between work-life balance and employee performance, which included that better work-life balance practices improve both employee performance and job satisfaction.

Limited research exists regarding work-life balance in Nepal; however, Paudel (2023) and Khanal (2021) each found that Nepali employees reported higher levels of work-life balance were associated with higher levels of performance and lower turnover intent than those with lower levels of work-life balance. Therefore, based upon the empirical support, the following hypothesis is developed:

H_{A1}: Work-life balance significantly influences employee performance.

Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction

Work-life balance and job satisfaction are two issues that have been studied in a number of studies regarding the relationship between them, as indicated in many of the management articles and studies conducted to date. Pratama and Srimulyani (2022), were able to identify statistically significant relationships between work-life balance and job satisfaction; they also stated that these two issues can support each other in the context of an organization. Similarly, Pratama and Srimulyani (2022) found that when employees experience a work-life balance, they experienced consistent high levels of job satisfaction across all job-related areas. M et al. (2024), found strong correlations between work-life balance and job satisfaction; they reinforced the idea that these two issues can be interdependent in today's workplace environment. Likewise, Siagian et al. (2024), demonstrated that quality of work life and work-life balance, both positively and significantly impacted job satisfaction, and that these two issues are both important for employee satisfaction and well-being.

Lopes et al. (2022), demonstrated that employees who experience a good work-life balance, as evidenced by their ability to meet their professional obligations while maintaining a sense of personal well-being, report significantly higher levels of job satisfaction than do those employees who are unable to achieve such a balance. Furthermore, Mahale and Shetty (2024), investigated media professionals, and found that work-life balance was significantly related to job satisfaction, but that the negative aspects of the job, such as irregular hours and changing expectations and demands, negatively impact job satisfaction among media professionals.

Pandey (2016), demonstrated through empirical analysis that work-life balance positively and significantly impacts job satisfaction; he further demonstrated that employees who experience a work-life balance experience greater emotional fulfillment from their employment, and less stress from their employment, than those who are unable to achieve such a balance. Similarly, Tamrakar and Shrestha (2017), found that Nepali telecom employees who had a better work-life balance, also experienced higher levels of job satisfaction. Telecom work can be demanding due to the need to work non-traditional hours and under the pressure of meeting technical requirements, which may make it difficult to maintain a balance, and thus highlights how important a balance is to experience job satisfaction in this field. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed based upon the findings of previous studies:

H_{A2}: Work-life balance significantly influences job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction and Employee Performance

One of the most studied concepts in organizational behavior is the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance. According to the study by Ndulue and Ekechukwu (2016) at Nigerian Breweries, there are three major satisfaction dimensions of a job the nature of a job, job rewards, and job security all having a positive relationship to performance. Similarly, Dorte et al. (2022) also states that "Job Satisfaction has a significant and Positive Impact on Performance," supporting the belief that satisfied employees will be more productive and engaged. Likewise, Rodrigo et al. (2022) have

shown there was a statistically significant correlation between job satisfaction and performance, and that job satisfaction leads to an alignment with organizational goals from the employee's perspective.

Ratnasari et al. (2020) furthered these findings by confirming a direct and positive effect of satisfaction on performance; as such, increasing workplace satisfaction can lead to quantifiable increases in productivity. Furthermore, Sah and Pokharel (2022) conducted their study of Nepali organizations and identified a statistically significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and performance. Further, they stated that satisfied employees are more productive than those who are dissatisfied. Likewise, In telecom research, Khadka and Maharjan (2022) reported that job satisfaction was a strong predictor of performance for Nepali telecom employees. Telecom work is both complex and customer facing which makes employee attitudes very important when it comes to performance outcomes. With this empirical basis, the next hypothesis is:

H_{A3}: Job satisfaction significantly influences employee performance.

Job Satisfaction as Mediator Between Work-Life Balance and Employee Performance

There has been an increase in interest in the mediating effects of job satisfaction in the relationships of work-life balance to performance as well as its relatedness. In their study (2022), Faisal et al., provided evidence of how job satisfaction acts as mediator in the relationship between work-life balance and performance, by proving that working life balance enhances employee satisfaction which in turn increases employee performance. Additionally, Udin (2023) found that employees who practice a better balance at work and at home experience increased job satisfaction, leading to enhanced productivity.

Moreover, Saleh et al. (2022) found positive correlations between balance at work and home and job performance. The authors further found that job satisfaction functions as mediator for the correlation. Employees achieve better balance and therefore have a greater sense of accomplishment when they are satisfied with their jobs; the level of satisfaction bridges the gap between the balance achieved and the outcome of increased performance. Faisal et al. (2022) similarly identified partial mediation of job satisfaction in the balance-performance relationship in Indonesian service organizations.

Although the above-mentioned studies established a pattern of mediation for different contexts, there are few studies which examine the same type of relationships in Nepal's telecom sector. Furthermore, given the special difficulties faced by telecom workers in remote areas such as Karnali Province, it would be useful to understand whether job satisfaction also serves as mediator for the balance-performance relationship. Therefore, based on the established pattern of mediation in previous literature the following hypothesis is proposed.

H_{A4}: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance.

4. Conceptual Framework

This study's conceptual framework identifies work-life balance as a predictor (independent variable), employee performance as a criterion measure (dependent variable), and job satisfaction as a mediator (mediating variable). The conceptual framework also hypothesizes three direct relationships: (1) Work-life balance has a positive relationship with employee performance; (2) Work-life balance has a positive relationship with job satisfaction; (3) Job satisfaction has a positive relationship with employee performance. Lastly, the conceptual framework hypothesizes an indirect

relationship between work-life balance and employee performance, mediated by the mediator of job satisfaction.

Independent Variable Mediating Variable Dependent Variable

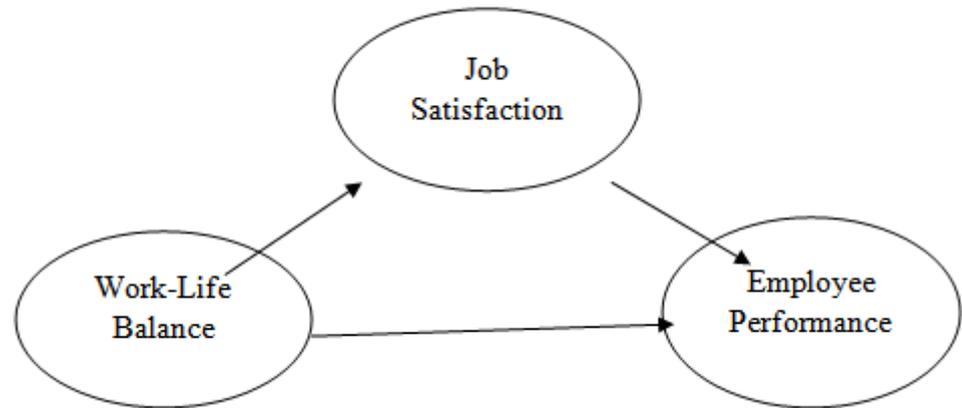


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

This framework aligns with theoretical propositions from Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Conservation of Resources theory, suggesting that work-life balance serves as both a direct performance enabler and an indirect influence operating through enhanced job satisfaction.

5. Research Methodology

Research Design

A causal-comparative and descriptive research design were employed in this study to determine the effect of work-life balance on employee performance mediated by job satisfaction in telecom sector organizations in the Karnali province of Nepal. A causal-comparative design is appropriate to identify cause and effect relationships among variables without experimental manipulation and also has a descriptive component that allows characterization of the study population and distribution of variables.

Study Population and Sample

The study population was employees from Nepal Telecom and other telecom service providers operating in the Karnali province. With ten districts in the province (Jumla, Dolpa, Mugu, Humla, Dailekh, Jajarkot, Surkhet, Rukum Paschim, Salyan, and Kalikot) and the nature of telecommunications operations spread across the region, convenience sampling was the approach adopted to ensure adequate representation across levels of organization and geographic location.

According to Hair et al. (2017), recommendations for structural equation modeling indicate a minimum sample size of 10 observations per indicator variable. Given that the study instrument contained 28 items across three constructs, a minimum sample of 280 respondents was required. Accounting for non-response and incomplete questionnaires, 450 questionnaires were distributed across five telecom offices in the district, resulting in receipt of completed responses from 387 respondents or an 85.56% response rate that exceeded recommended thresholds for analysis using PLS-SEM.

Instrumentation

Data collection utilized structured questionnaire developed through expert consultation and comprehensive literature review. The instrument comprised two sections: demographic information and construct measurements. Questions for demographics captured characteristics of respondent such as age, gender, educational qualification, job

tenure, and position within organization using multiple choice formats. Measurements of constructs used five-point likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Validity and Reliability

The Content Validity of the survey instrument was demonstrated via a panel of experts consisting of 3 academics from the fields of human resource management and organizational behavior. The experts reviewed each item and determined whether each item was relevant, clear and comprehensive in nature. As a result of this expert review process there were some minor word changes made to each item to better assist respondents' comprehension of the items.

The two types of validity for assessing the construct validity of the survey tool were discriminant and convergent validity. Convergent Validity was evaluated by the average variance extracted (AVE), and the Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT). The AVE was used to evaluate if the amount of variance explained for the measurement model exceeded 0.5; this would indicate the measurement model is adequate to converge on the constructs being measured. The HTMT was utilized to evaluate the discriminant validity of the constructs and values less than .85 would be a sufficient indicator that the constructs were sufficiently distinct.

To evaluate the reliability of the survey tool, Cronbach's alpha coefficient and composite reliability coefficients were used. These statistical measures evaluate internal consistency of the constructs within the survey tool. For each construct to be evaluated as having acceptable internal consistency, both the Cronbach's alpha coefficient and composite reliability coefficient should exceed 0.7.

6. Data Analysis and Findings

Utilizing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)

PLS-SEM, utilizing SmartPLS v.4.1.1.6, was the chosen statistical software for data analysis to assess the survey data. The choice of PLS-SEM was determined by its suitability with small sample sizes, its capability to model multiple layers of mediation, and its less stringent requirements for data distribution (Hair et al., 2017).

Evaluation of Measurement Model

The initial stage of the analysis was the assessment of the measurement model to verify that all constructs were measured in a manner that demonstrated reliability and validity. After validation of the measurement model, the second stage of the analysis assessed the structural model to evaluate the hypothesized relationships among the constructs. In addition to assessing the direct effects, the indirect mediating effect was evaluated. To provide estimates of the standard error for the purpose of significance testing, as well as to determine whether the indirect effect was statistically significant to meet the requirements for a mediation analysis per Baron and Kenny (1986), bootstrap sampling (n = 5,000) was employed.

Table 1

Demographic Profile of the respondent

Categories		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	246	63.6
	Female	141	36.4
Age	18-25	80	20.7

	26-33	175	45.2
	34-41	112	28.9
	42 and above	20	5.2
Marital Status	Married	289	74.7
	Unmarried	97	25.1
	Divorce	1	0.3
Caste Status	Brahman	158	40.8
	Chettri	176	45.5
	Janajati	49	12.7
	Dalit	4	1.0

The demographic characteristics of the respondents helped provide a description of a diverse participant population based on gender, age, marital status, and caste/ethnicity. In reference to gender, males made up the larger portion of the participants (63.6%), while females comprised less than 37% of the total participants. With regards to age, the greatest number of participants were found to be in the 26–33-year-old category (45.2%) as well as those participants who were between 34–41 years of age (28.9%). The younger participants (18–25) made up about 21% of the sample size, while participants 42 and older accounted for about 5%. Concerning marital status, roughly three-fourths of the participants reported that they were married and nearly a fourth of the participants stated that they were single/unmarried; however, there was only one participant who identified herself as being divorced. Lastly, the data concerning the caste of the participants showed that Chettri (45.5%) and Brahman (40.8%) were the two largest groups of participants, while Janajati comprised around 13% of the sample, and Dalits represented less than 1%.

Measurement Model Assessment

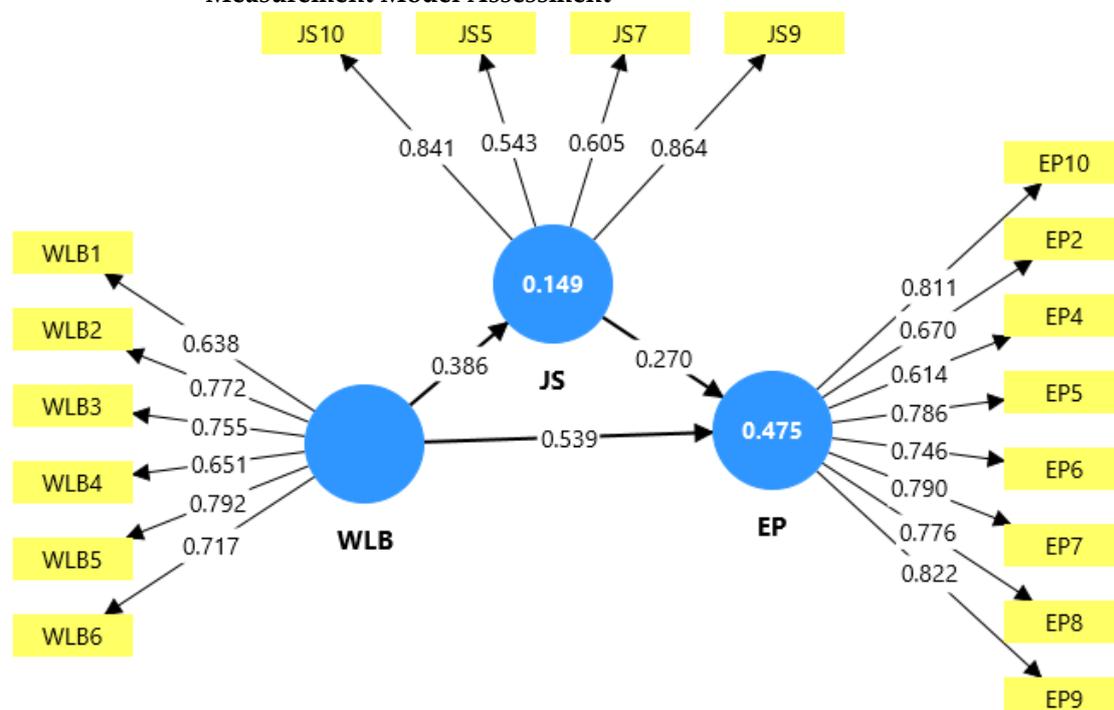


Table 2
Factor Loadings, VIF, Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliabilities, and Average Variance Extracted

Construct	Factor Loading	VIF	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
EP10	0.811	2.597	0.890	0.895	0.913	0.570
EP2	0.670	1.644				
EP4	0.614	1.480				
EP5	0.786	2.517				
EP6	0.746	1.847				
EP7	0.790	1.982				
EP8	0.776	2.310				
EP9	0.822	2.786				
JS10	0.841	1.589	0.718	0.809	0.812	0.529
JS5	0.543	1.282				
JS7	0.605	1.309				
JS9	0.864	1.636				
WLB1	0.638	1.389	0.817	0.828	0.867	0.523
WLB2	0.772	1.807				
WLB3	0.755	1.779				
WLB4	0.651	1.439				
WLB5	0.792	1.675				
WLB6	0.717	1.543				

The measurement model of Table 2 was evaluated using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to assess the latent constructs Employee Performance (EP), with eight items, Job Satisfaction (JS), with four items, and Work-Life Balance (WLB), with six items. The standardized factor loads were all statistically significant, ranging from .543 (JS5) to .864 (JS9). Most of the factor loads exceeded 0.7 and none fell below 0.6; as such, there was generally strong item-level convergent validity. The VIF ranged between 1.282 and 2.786, all less than 3.0, which demonstrated that there was no multicollinearity between the indicators. Reliability was acceptable at the measure level for all of the measures: the Cronbach's alpha values for EP, JS, and WLB were .890, .718, and .817; the composite reliabilities (ρ_a) were .895, .809, and .828; and the composite reliabilities (ρ_c) were .913, .812, and .867, respectively, all greater than the .70 threshold. The average variances extracted (AVE) for the three constructs were .570, .529, and .523, respectively, and all were greater than the .50 threshold; as such, there was sufficient convergent validity for each of the three constructs.

Overall, the measurement model demonstrated high reliability and acceptable to high levels of convergent validity, and thus provided a strong basis for future structural models.

Table 3
Construct reliability and validity

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (CR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
EP	0.890	0.913	0.570
JS	0.718	0.812	0.529
WLB	0.817	0.867	0.523

The construct reliability and validity measures were computed for each of the three latent variables: Employee Performance (EP), Work Life Balance (WLB), and Job Satisfaction (JS). Each of these variables demonstrated high levels of reliability, with Employee Performance ($\alpha = .890$; CR = .913) demonstrating the highest level of reliability and Work Life Balance ($\alpha = .817$; CR = .867) the second. Reliability was least strong for Job Satisfaction ($\alpha = .718$; CR = .812), however, all three constructs exceeded the minimum recommendation of 0.7 for both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability as well as a value of at least 0.5 for AVE.

Each of the three latent variable constructs (Employee Performance, Work Life Balance, and Job Satisfaction) were measured using a reliable scale and demonstrated sufficient convergent validity which indicates that they were psychometrically sound and can be used to test hypotheses in the structural model.

Table 4
Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) – Matrix

Construct	EP	JS	WLB
EP			
JS	0.530		
WLB	0.738	0.435	

The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMR) Matrix in Table 4 is used to test Discriminant Validity across the three constructs as they relate to one another. The values from the HTMR Matrix show a ratio of .530 between Employee Performance (EP) and Job Satisfaction (JS), a ratio of .738 between Employee Performance (EP) and Work Life Balance (WLB), and a ratio of .435 between Job Satisfaction (JS) and Work Life Balance (WLB). Each ratio is less than the conservative .85 ratio, and each ratio is less than the liberal .90 ratio; the largest ratio (.738 between EP and WLB) shows enough separation between the constructs, even though there is some relationship.

Therefore, the HTMR results demonstrate significant Discriminant Validity and confirm that Employee Performance, Job Satisfaction, and Work Life Balance are separate constructs, even with moderate correlations between the two pairs of constructs; thus, the authors have satisfied the most rigorous contemporary criteria for Discriminant Validity using PLS-SEM.

Table 5
R-Square

Construct	R-square	R-square adjusted
EP	0.475	0.473

The job satisfaction (JS) construct explained 14.9 percent of employee performance (EP) and had an adjusted r-squared value of .147; this represents a moderate predictive ability. The work-life balance (WLB) construct explained 47.5 percent of the variance in job satisfaction (r-squared = .473); this represents a high degree of explanatory power. In total, the structural model explains approximately half of the variation in employee performance (47.5%). This amount of explanation is considered to be moderate to substantial in behavioral research employing partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM).

Overall, the structural model has a good level of explanatory power, especially for job satisfaction, and an adequate level of predictive relevance for employee performance, thus validating work-life balance and job satisfaction as viable antecedents within the conceptualized framework.

Structural Model Assessment

The structural model analysis examined hypothesized direct and indirect relationships. Path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values were generated through bootstrapping procedures.

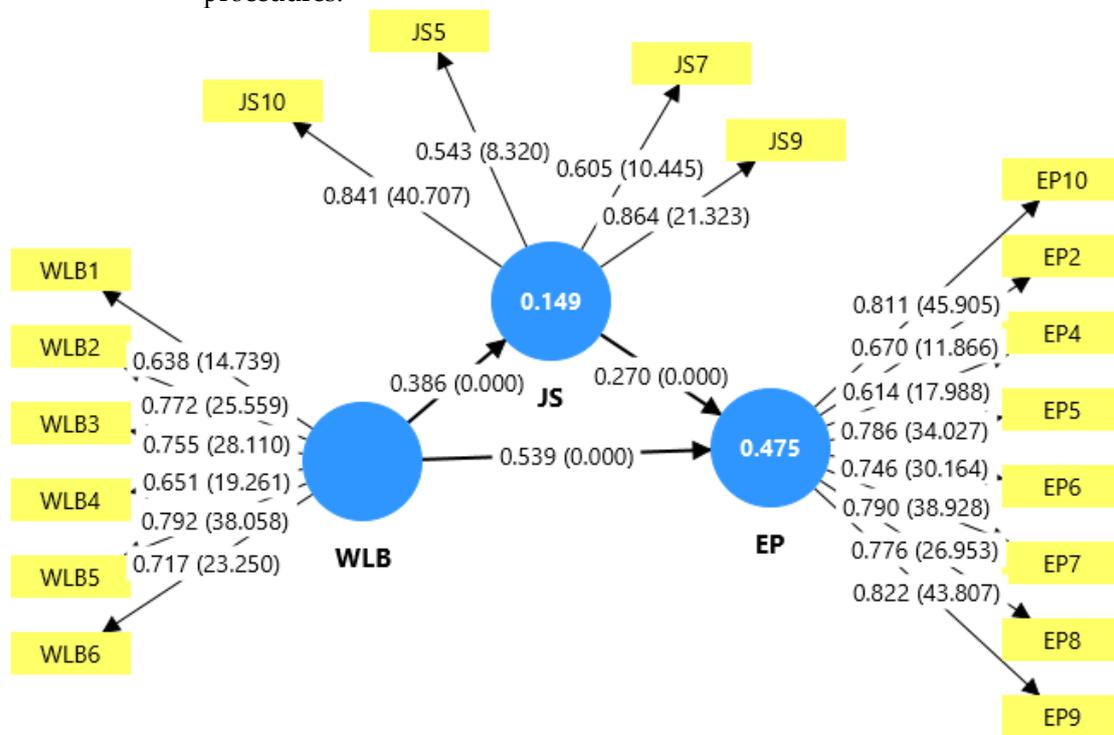


Table 6
Path Analysis (Direct Effects)

Construct	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Decision
JS -> EP	0.270	0.274	0.042	6.481	0.000	Supported
WLB -> EP	0.539	0.540	0.041	13.162	0.000	Supported
WLB -> JS	0.386	0.393	0.046	8.390	0.000	Supported

Table 6 shows the results of the direct effects of the PLS-SEM structural model. There were three hypothesized paths that were all statistically significant (p < .001) and

supported. Work-Life Balance was found to have a high level of positive relationship with Employee Performance ($\beta = .539$, $t = 13.162$) and was the highest influencing variable in the model. In addition, Work-Life Balance had a moderate-to-high positive relationship with Job Satisfaction ($\beta = .386$, $t = 8.390$). Finally, there was a positive relationship between Job Satisfaction and Employee Performance ($\beta = .270$, $t = 6.481$), indicating that Job Satisfaction is a positive influencer for Employee Performance, although it may be a partial mediator.

The structural model provided support for all direct hypotheses; therefore, Work-Life Balance provides a strong positive relationship with both Job Satisfaction and Employee Performance and, therefore, Job Satisfaction is an additional positive influencer for Employee Performance. Overall, the findings indicate that Work-Life Balance is the most influential variable within the structural model.

Table 7
Specific indirect effects

Construct	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Decision
WLB -> JS -> EP	0.104	0.108	0.022	4.730	0.000	Supported

The table shows how Work-Life Balance (WLB) affects Employee Performance (EP), in part indirectly by way of increased Job Satisfaction (JS) ($\beta = .104$; $t = 4.730$; $p < .001$). Therefore, the mediation of this work-life balance and employee performance relationship by job satisfaction is supported as well as high in significance, showing that JS partially mediates the relationship of WLB and EP.

In addition to the direct relationship of WLB to EP, the results indicate an important indirect effect of WLB on EP through the increase in job satisfaction, which explains about 16% of the total effect of WLB on EP (i.e., $0.104 / [(0.539 + 0.104)] = .16$). Thus, it supports partial complementary mediation of the WLB-EP relationship, thereby supporting and strengthening the theoretical model in that the positive effects of WLB on performance are due to both direct and job satisfaction mediated relationships.

Table 8
F-Square

Construct	EP	JS	WLB
EP			
JS	0.118		
WLB	0.472	0.175	

Source: Calculation based on Author Survey, 2025

As seen in Table 8, Work-Life Balance (WLB) had a significant large effect size on Employee Performance ($f^2 = .472$), as well as a moderate effect size on Job Satisfaction ($f^2 = .175$). Job Satisfaction (JS) had a small to moderate effect size on Employee Performance ($f^2 = .118$).

Therefore, Work-Life Balance is clearly the most powerful driver of the model with a significantly greater amount of unique explanatory power for both Job Satisfaction and Employee Performance than does Job Satisfaction which has a somewhat smaller effect

size to Employee Performance beyond that of Work-Life Balance. The magnitude of these effect sizes further solidifies the primary position of Work-Life Balance within the model as it relates to influencing employee outcomes.

7. Discussion

The research investigated the impact of Work-Life Balance on Employee Performance through Job Satisfaction as a Mediator, using data collected from telecom employees in Karnali Province, Nepal.

Work-Life Balance positively impacts Employee Performance (H_{A1}), and there is complete agreement with prior empirical evidence (Ashwin & Muthukumar, 2024; Xiaoli, 2024; Melayansari & Bhinekawati, 2020; Ansari et al., 2015; Mendis & Weerakkody, 2018; Poudel & Sharma, 2021; Karki, 2025) reporting that Work-Life Balance Programs (flexible working arrangements, family-friendly policies etc.) improve employee productivity, efficiency and overall performance.

Similarly, H_{A2} , stating that Work-Life Balance positively impacts Job Satisfaction was also supported with a significant result ($\beta = .386$, $p = .000$). As with prior studies (Pratama & Srimulyani, 2022; M et al., 2024; Siagian et al., 2024; Runze et al., 2023; Shetty & Mahale, 2024; Pandey, 2016; Tamrakar & Shrestha, 2021) these studies confirm that effective Work-Life Balance Practices lead to increased levels of employee satisfaction, emotional fulfillment, and reduced stress.

As with prior studies (Ndulue & Ekechukwu, 2016; Appasamy, 2022; Kishori & Priya, 2020; Ratnasih et al., 2022; Sah & Pokharel, 2022; Khadka & Maharjan, 2022), the third hypothesis (H_{A3}), that Job Satisfaction positively impacts Employee Performance, was also confirmed with a significant result ($\beta = .270$, $p = .000$). Studies have shown that satisfied employees are more productive, engaged, and aligned to organisational objectives.

Finally, the fourth hypothesis (H_{A4}) stated that Job Satisfaction mediated the relationship between Work-Life Balance and Employee Performance, and results showed a significant indirect effect ($\beta = .104$, $p = .000$). Results were similar to those reported by Jamilah et al. (2024); Udin (2023); Efendi et al. (2022); Prasetyo & Ratnawati (2020), indicating that job satisfaction acts as an important mediator to convert positive Work-Life Balance practices into higher employee performance. Indirect effect accounted for approximately 16% of the total effect of Work-Life Balance on Employee Performance, providing evidence of complementary partial mediation.

Overall, the results of this study demonstrate that Work-Life Balance has a direct positive effect on both Job Satisfaction and Employee Performance, and that Job Satisfaction has a positive effect on Employee Performance and partially mediates the relationship between Work-Life Balance and Employee Performance. Given the ability of Work-Life Balance to explain 47.5% of the variation in Employee Performance and its large effect size ($f^2 = 0.472$), it demonstrates the major contribution that Work-Life Balance can make to enhancing employee outcomes. Results from this study are very consistent with previous global research and theoretical frameworks, reinforcing the view that developing supportive Work-Life Balance Practices is critical for enabling organisations to achieve satisfied employees who continually produce high levels of performance, particularly in operationally difficult and resource constrained environments, like the telecom sector of Karnali Province, Nepal

8. Conclusion and Implications

The impact of work-life balance on employee performance, with job satisfaction acting as the mediator was investigated in this study using telecom employees working in the Karnali Province of Nepal as the sample population. Findings were supportive of all four hypotheses: there is a positive correlation between work-life balance and employee performance (Hypothesis 1); work-life balance improves job satisfaction (Hypothesis 2); there is a positive correlation between job satisfaction and employee performance (Hypothesis 3); and job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance (Hypothesis 4). Work-life balance proved to be the most influential predictor of employee performance and explained 47.5 percent of the variation in employee performance (with a large effect size $f^2 = .472$) while job satisfaction provided an additional indirect path that accounted for approximately 16 percent of the total effect. The results validate both Herzberg's Two Factor Theory (which identifies work-life balance as a key hygiene factor that prevents job dissatisfaction) and Conservation of Resource theory (which explains how maintaining resources allows for continued performance investment).

Practically, the findings of this study have significance to both theory and practice. Theoretical, the results demonstrate that the work-life balance – job satisfaction – performance model has strong predictive capability in locations where geography, infrastructure, and cultural differences may inhibit or limit the ability of employees to experience work-life balance (Karnali Province; similar to other resource poor regions or developing countries). Practically, telecom organizations working in similar challenging environments need to implement comprehensive work-life balance programs. This would include flexible scheduling, reasonable leave policies, family-supportive supervisory behavior, and remote work opportunities when feasible. HRM needs to realize that investing in work-life balance will produce two direct returns: enhanced employee performance and improved job satisfaction that further contributes to enhanced employee performance. Telecom policymakers in Nepal should establish industry-wide guidelines for work-life balance best practices, especially for employees working in remote areas of the country. Future studies could investigate the potential role of additional mediators (such as organizational commitment and employee engagement) and moderators (demographic characteristics and organizational culture) and generalize the results to different industries and provinces within Nepal.

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