

Understanding Work-Life Balance among Women Executives in IT Firms: Examining the Mediating Effect of Job Stress

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Abstract: Purpose: This study seeks to comprehend the impact of workplace factors on work-life balance among female IT executives and the role of job stress in this impact. In this technology-driven, high-performance work culture with 24/7 availability, it's crucial to understand the factors influencing work-life balance, particularly for women with multiple role obligations.

Methodology: The research follows a quantitative approach and uses primary data from 407 women executives employed in IT firms in the National Capital Region (NCR) of India. Data were collected through a questionnaire and relationships between variables were tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM).

Findings: The results show that workplace factors positively influence work-life balance. Also, the impact of workplace factors on work-life balance is significantly mediated by job stress, suggesting that workplace factors affect work-life balance mainly by impacting employees' psychological stress.

Implications: This Research has significant theoretical and practical implications as it broadens the application of the Job Demands-Resources model and stresses the importance of stress management in the workplace. This study implies that organisations need to take a two-pronged approach, blending supportive workplace conditions with measures to reduce stress among employees to improve work-life balance and well-being.

Keywords: Work-life balance, Job stress, Women executives, IT sector, Employee well-being.

1. Introduction

Work-life balance is a prominent concern in today's organisational environment as employees face challenges in balancing their work and personal lives (Suhartini & Nurnadjamuddin, 2023). The pace of technological change, globalisation and changing work arrangements have led to increased job demands, creating difficulties in establishing effective work-life boundaries (Aruldoss et al., 2021). This is especially relevant in knowledge-based industries like the IT sector, where employees often work in high-stress, time-critical and technology-driven work environments (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Brough et al., 2014). The IT industry, with its dynamic innovation, project management and global collaboration, has redefined work structures. Although technology has improved flexibility and productivity, it has also led to work intensification and continuous connectivity, with potential consequences of longer working hours and psychological distress (Derks & Bakker, 2014; Tarafdar et al., 2015). Such factors can severely impact work-life balance and are critical research questions in the field of organisational studies. Work-life balance is particularly crucial for women executives, given their multiple work and non-work roles (Sirajunisa & Panchanatham, 2010). Women often have greater family and care responsibilities that may cause role conflict and limit their ability to achieve work-life balance in many socio-cultural contexts, such as India (Shockley et al., 2017). As the number of women in leadership and executive roles increases, it's critical for organisational performance and equality that we



look at factors influencing work-life balance among female executives (Kamboj, 2026). Among these are workplace factors. These factors, such as work demands, organisational support, flexibility and technology-based work, affect employees' experiences and ability to juggle multiple roles (Haar et al., 2014). Workplace factors such as organisational support and flexible working can help achieve work-life balance, while factors such as workload and lack of organisational support can result in imbalance and stress (Allen et al., 2013).

However, the relationship between workplace factors and work-life balance is not always direct. A growing body of literature highlights the importance of job stress as a critical psychological mechanism linking workplace conditions with employee outcomes (Aruldoss et al., 2021). Job stress arises when job demands exceed an individual's capacity to cope, leading to emotional exhaustion, reduced well-being, and impaired work-life balance (Parker & DeCotiis, 1983; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Recent studies in technology-driven work environments further suggest that stress mediates the impact of workplace conditions on various employee outcomes, including satisfaction and well-being (Ayyagari et al., 2011; Tarafdar et al., 2015). Despite the growing attention to work-life balance and job stress, there remains a limited understanding of the mediating role of job stress in the relationship between workplace factors and work-life balance, particularly among women executives in the IT sector (Kamboj, 2026). Much of the existing research has either examined direct relationships or focused on general employee populations, with relatively fewer studies addressing gender-specific experiences within high-demand sectors and in emerging economies such as India (Suhartini & Nurnadjamuddin, 2023). Furthermore, the Indian context presents unique socio-cultural and organisational dynamics that may influence these relationships. The interaction of traditional gender role expectations, changing workplace cultures and growing technological developments provides a challenging backdrop for executive women to balance work and life. This makes it essential to undertake context-specific empirical studies to understand the factors that influence work-life balance in this context (Sirajunisa & Panchanatham, 2010).

The discussion as outlined above informs the present study, which seeks to fill an important gap by investigating the direct relationship between workplace factors and work-life balance and the indirect influence via job stress (as a mediator) among female executives in information technology (IT) firms. Through its emphasis on a particular demographic group in a high-growth industry, the research provides a context-specific and theoretically grounded view of work-life balance. The research is unique in its inclusion of both organisational (workplace factors) and psychological (job stress) factors, along with a gender- and industry-specific lens. In doing so, the study adds to the body of research by bringing together diverse approaches to better understand the dynamics of work-life balance in today's workplace. In order to meet the above-mentioned goals, the study proposes to answer the following research questions:

1. How do workplace factors influence the work-life balance of women executives in IT companies?
2. Does job stress mediate the relationship between workplace factors and work-life balance?

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Work-life balance (WLB) has become a focal point of research in organisational studies, especially in the era of rapidly changing work contexts due to technological developments, globalisation, and rising work demands (Molwitz et al., 2026). This term generally describes a person's capacity to juggle work and non-work responsibilities and maintain a satisfactory level of well-being (Liao et al., 2026). Today, in the workplace, work-life balance is increasingly difficult to attain because boundaries between work and non-work are more blurred due to increased connectivity through technology and shifts in work arrangements (Brough et al., 2014). The IT industry is a specific context where these challenges are magnified. The nature of work in IT organisations, including high workloads, deadlines and project-based work, as well as being connected across different time zones, can increase work demands and decrease recovery (Derks & Bakker, 2014; Tarafdar et al., 2015). The rise of technology has facilitated flexible and remote working but has also resulted in what is known as "always-on" culture, with employees being available outside traditional work hours. This can result in heightened role stress and work-life imbalance (Kamboj, 2026).

For women executives, work-life balance is an especially important consideration given the potential for enhanced role conflict due to social and family demands. Evidence indicates that women are more likely to experience the dual role phenomenon, juggling work with family and home-related responsibilities, thus increasing work-family conflict (Shockley et al., 2017). In sociocultural settings like India, gender roles still significantly shape the allocation of household work, which can make it harder for women to find work-life balance. Thus, understanding the work-life balance of women executives is important for both organisations and society. Workplace factors are one of the key factors contributing to work-life balance (Ayyagari et al., 2011). These range from workload, organisational support, flexibility, autonomy and technology work demands, which all contribute to employees' work experiences (Haar et

al., 2014). Favourable workplace factors, such as flexible schedules and family-friendly policies, have been shown to improve employees' role performance. On the other hand, negative workplace factors, including role overload and low support, may result in role imbalance (Allen et al., 2013).

In digital workplaces, workplace conditions are shaped by digitalisation and information technologies, which can both support and undermine work-life balance (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). Though digital technologies facilitate flexibility and telework, they also create technostress, or stress related to information and communication technologies (Ayyagari et al., 2011; Tarafdar et al., 2015). In elements like the constant notification, information overstimulation, and the pressure to respond instantly, this can enhance employees' psychological stress and encroach on their personal lives (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). This highlights the importance of a psychological concept of job stress for work-life balance. Job stress arises when the demands of a job overwhelm an individual's resources, causing emotional exhaustion, well-being and performance problems (Parker & DeCotiis, 1983). This is well explained by the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory, which distinguishes between job demands and resources (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). This theory suggests that excessive job demands contribute to strain, while job resources buffer their impact and enhance well-being.

Research has indicated that job stress has a negative impact on work-life balance by generating work-family conflict and limiting individuals' role management skills (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). In the IT industry, where cognitive and technological job demands are high, the role of job stress is critical in predicting work-life balance (Singha et al., 2024). Indeed, studies have shown that workplace factors impact employee outcomes both directly and indirectly through the influence of stress (Ayyagari et al., 2011). While there has been an abundance of studies on work-life balance, there are a few gaps. First, much research has focused on direct effects, without consideration of the possible mechanisms through which workplace factors affect work-life balance. Second, there is a lack of studies on women executives, particularly in high-tech growth industries like IT. Third, there is a dearth of empirical evidence from emerging economies like India, in spite of the socio-cultural and organisational characteristics that may impact these associations. To overcome these limitations, the present study adopts a macro-approach to understanding the relationships of workplace factors, job stress and work-life balance among women executives in IT firms. The study attempts to provide a better understanding of the process that occurs in work-life balance in 21st-century organisations by incorporating job stress as a mediator.

2.1. Hypotheses Development

2.2. Workplace Factors and Work-Life Balance

Workplace factors are known to be significant predictors of work-life balance, given their impact on employees' ability to juggle work and personal roles (Couser, 2008). The Job Demands-Resources theory posits that job resources (such as support, flexibility, and autonomy) help employees to deal with job demands and achieve balance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Research has demonstrated that positive workplace conditions contribute to better work-life balance and lower work-family conflict (Haar et al., 2014; Allen et al., 2013). Conversely, high job demands such as a high workload and time pressure can be stressful and interfere with employees' ability to balance multiple roles (Ugrin et al., 2008). In the IT industry, these issues are compounded by technological demands and demands for constant connectivity, making workplace factors a key predictor of work-life balance (Spector & Jones, 2004). Drawing on this research, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₁: Workplace factors have a significant impact on the work-life balance of women executives in IT companies.

2.3. Mediating Role of Job Stress

Although workplace factors affect work-life balance directly, they are likely to exert their effects through psychological mechanisms such as job stress (Chen et al., 2011). According to the Job Demands-Resources theory, excessive job demands create strain, which in turn has consequences for employees' well-being and work-life balance (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). Workplace factors like high workload, low flexibility and technological demands can lead to job stress, which, in turn, impairs employees' capacity to achieve work-life balance (Newman et al., 2015). In the context of technology-based workplaces, research has emphasised the importance of stress as a mediating variable between job factors and employee-related outcomes, especially technostress (Ayyagari et al., 2011; Tarafdar et al., 2015). Therefore, we expect that workplace factors affect work-life balance, both directly and indirectly via job stress. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₂: Job stress significantly mediates the relationship between workplace factors and work-life balance among women executives in IT companies.

2.4. Theoretical Framework

The current study draws on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory, which offers a holistic view of the impact of workplace factors on employee well-being and performance (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). This theory conceptualises job characteristics as job demands and job resources. Job demands, such as work demands, time pressure and technology demands, demand effort and can lead to strain, while job resources, such as organisational support, flexibility and autonomy, assist in coping with demands and contribute to well-being. Within the context of this research, the workplace factors are understood as a mixture of both demands and resources, which create the working conditions for employees. The JD-R theory also proposes that the effects of job demands on outcomes are frequently indirect, mediated by strain effects, especially job stress, which plays a vital role in connecting workplace factors to employee outcomes. Adopting this view, the current study argues that workplace factors affect work-life balance both directly and indirectly via job stress, providing a theoretically informed account of how organisational factors shape employees' work-life balance.

2.5. Workplace Factors (WF)

Workplace factors describe organisational and technological aspects that affect whether employees can take their professional duties and remain in balance in their work and personal life (Couser, 2008). Such aspects are workload, organisational support, flexible working arrangements, working hours and policies at work, managerial support and the application of digital technologies in carrying out work-related responsibilities (Vlachos & Siachou, 2018). The firm in the modern world, especially within the IT industry, has seen the forms of work greatly altered by the technological improvements in the organisation and even the greater connectivity of the organisations through digital means, which tends to make the line between work and personal life rather thin (Wong et al., 2017).

2.6. Job Stress (JS)

Job pressure is defined as the mental and emotional pressure of the employees when their job requirements surpass their capability to effectively cope with such requirements. It is caused by overworking of the employees, deadlines, role ambiguity, role conflict, failure of providing organisational support, or technological pressure on the employees (AbuAlRub, 2004). In the contemporary workplaces especially in the IT sector there is the tendency of employees being subjected to levels of job demand that may lead to heightened levels of stress (Costin et al., 2023).

2.7. Work-Life Balance (WLB)

Work-life balance can be considered as the level to which people can easily cope with the pressure of their occupations and personal life. It is the asset of a person to make enough time, energy and attention to work and non-work positions without feeling much conflict or strain (Casper et al., 2025). Once a healthy balance between work and life is attained, individuals could manage their duties in the two areas and still have an overall well-being. The trend of the work-life balance has gained momentum as a modern topic of interest in the research within the organization on the basis of the increased complexity of the contemporary work environment (Bello et al., 2024).

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design and Approach

The current study employs a descriptive research design to explore the relationships between work factors, job stress, and work-life balance among IT women executives. Primary data is gathered through a structured survey design as it enables rigorous measurement and statistical testing of relationships. The present study takes a deductive approach, where the hypotheses generated from the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model are statistically tested.

3.2. Population and Sampling

The population for this study is female executives of information technology (IT) firms in the National Capital Region (NCR) of India, home to the majority of IT firms and other business activities. This region was chosen because of the presence of a large number of IT companies and a diverse workforce, making this an appropriate place to study work-life balance issues within technological workplaces. Non-probability sampling, involving a combination of purposive and snowball sampling, was used. Purposive sampling was applied to select respondents based on certain characteristics, which in this case were women in senior-level positions in IT firms. Then snowball sampling was used to identify other respondents through their network to ensure access to a larger sample of relevant respondents. This is an appropriate technique when the population is not easily accessible (Etikan et al., 2016).

3.3. Sampling and Data Collection

This study uses data from a primary survey through a structured questionnaire with women executives in IT companies in the National Capital Region (NCR), India. The study used a non-probability sampling method, involving a combination of purposive and snowball sampling, to select respondents who fit the criteria of being executives or managers in the IT firms (Saunders et al., 2019; Bryman, 2016). The study was carried out in IT clusters like Gurugram and Noida, which contain a large number of multinational corporations, IT firms and Global Capability Centers (NASSCOM, 2023; Dun & Bradstreet, 2025). A sample of 450 questionnaires was administered using a combination of personal visits to technology parks and networking, with 407 valid responses received (response rate = 90.4%). While the sample size is larger than the recommended minimum sample size (384) proposed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), this threshold is not binding, as non-probability sampling was adopted. The sample size is also justified by the minimum sample size recommended for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) based on the "10-times rule" (Hair et al., 2021). To overcome potential biases and ensure the quality of the data, the respondents were assured anonymity and confidentiality, and it was voluntary.

3.4. Measurement of Variables

The study measures three key constructs: workplace factors, job stress, and work-life balance. All items were adapted from validated scales in existing literature and measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

- Workplace Factors (WF): Measured using items reflecting workload, organisational support, flexibility, and technological demands.
- Job Stress (JS): Assessed using items capturing psychological strain and perceived stress at work.
- Work-Life Balance (WLB): Measured through items reflecting the ability to manage work and personal responsibilities effectively.

The use of established scales ensures content validity and reliability of the measurement instrument (Hair et al., 2021).

3.5. Data Analysis Technique

The study uses Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPls to test the effect of relationships and mediation effect. PLS-SEM is ideal for more complex models with latent variables and mediation analysis, particularly when the goal of the study is to predict and generate theory (Hair et al., 2021). PLS-SEM is suitable for this study as it is able to cope with non-normal data, fairly complex models, and small sample sizes, and provide reliable estimates (Hair et al., 2021).

The analysis was conducted in two stages:

1. **Measurement Model Assessment** - evaluating reliability and validity (outer loadings, composite reliability, AVE, discriminant validity)
2. **Structural Model Assessment** - testing hypotheses using path coefficients, t-statistics, p-values, and mediation analysis

4. Results

Table 1: Demographic profile

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age Group	18–24	52	12.8
	25–34	168	41.3
	35–44	112	27.5
	45–54	53	13.0
	55 & above	22	5.4

Marital Status	Married	231	56.8
	Single	148	36.4
	Prefer not to say	28	6.9
Qualification	Bachelor's Degree	122	30.0
	Master's Degree	198	48.6
	Professional Degree	67	16.5
	Doctorate	20	4.9
Experience Level	Less than 5 years	124	30.5
	5–10 years	156	38.3
	11–15 years	78	19.2
	Above 15 years	49	12.0
Position	Junior Executive	102	25.1
	Middle-Level Executive	156	38.3
	Senior Executive	89	21.9
	Manager	60	14.7
Organisation Type	Multinational	212	52.1
	Domestic Company	134	32.9
	Start-up	61	15.0

Source: Author's Work

The demographic profile (Table 1) shows that most of the respondents in the survey were in the 25-34 age group (41.3%) followed by the 35-44 age group (27.5%). This indicates that the study mainly focused on the opinion of women executives who are at the early and middle stage of their professional lives. The majority of respondents were married (56.8%) and well-educated, with almost half holding a master's degree (48.6%). Regarding the experience in the job, a significant number of respondents had 5 to 10 years of experience (38.3%) indicating a relatively experienced cadre of employees. The sample also covered the different levels of management with the highest representation being found at the middle levels of management (38.3%). Furthermore, over half of the respondents worked for a multinational organisation (52.1%), which means that the findings are mostly representative of workplace experiences within structured and professionally competitive IT workplaces.

Table 2: Representation of variable items along with their outer loadings

Construct	Item	Code	Outer loadings
Job Stress	I often feel stressed because of my job responsibilities.	JS1	0.903
	My job requires me to work under tight deadlines.	JS2	0.895

	I feel emotionally exhausted because of my work.	JS3	0.919
	I feel pressure from work even during my personal time.	JS4	0.928
	The demands of my job make it difficult for me to relax.	JS5	0.921
	I find it difficult to manage stress caused by work responsibilities.	JS6	0.862
Workplace Factors	My organization provides flexible work arrangements that help employees balance work and personal life.	WF1	0.975
	My workload is manageable within my official working hours.	WF2	0.984
	My supervisor supports employees in balancing work and personal responsibilities.	WF3	0.959
	Organisational policies in my company promote work–life balance.	WF4	0.942
	Digital technologies enable me to perform my work efficiently.	WF5	0.975
	Constant connectivity through technology increases my work pressure.	WF6	0.986
Work-Life Balance	I am satisfied with the balance between my work and personal life.	WLB1	0.907
	My work schedule allows me to spend enough time with my family.	WLB2	0.929
	‘I am able to effectively manage both work and personal responsibilities.’	WLB3	0.934
	My job does not interfere with my personal life.	WLB4	0.870
	I feel that I maintain a healthy balance between work and personal commitments.	WLB5	0.867

Source: Author’s Work

The reliability of the measurement model was first assessed by examining the outer loadings of the indicators associated with each construct. The measurement items used in this study were adapted from established and validated scales in prior literature related to job stress, workplace factors, and work-life balance, with minor modifications to suit the context of women executives in the IT sector (Table 2). The use of previously validated instruments enhances the content validity and reliability of the constructs (Hair et al., 2021). Outer loadings indicate the extent to which individual items reflect their underlying latent constructs, with values above 0.70 considered acceptable for indicator reliability (Hair et al., 2021). The results presented in Table X show that all items across the three constructs job stress, workplace factors, and work-life balance exhibit strong outer loadings, ranging from 0.862 to 0.986. Specifically, the items measuring job stress (JS1–JS6) demonstrate loadings between 0.862 and 0.928, indicating a high level of internal consistency among the indicators. Similarly, workplace factors (WF1–WF6) show exceptionally high loadings, ranging from 0.942 to 0.986, reflecting a robust representation of the construct (Hair et al., 2021:2025). One item under workplace factors (WF6: “Constant connectivity through technology increases my work pressure”) was negatively worded to capture the demand-related aspect of the work environment. Prior to analysis, the item was

Hypothesis	Path relation	(β) Beta	t-Statistics	CI0.95	VIF “	f ²	f ²	R ²	P value	Significance
H1	WF→WLB	0.302	3.238	(0.122; 0.493)	2.694	0.058	3.294	0.632	0.001	Yes

Source: Author’s Work

The result indicates that workplace factors positively and statistically impact the work-life balance among women executives working in IT companies. The standardised path coefficient ($\beta = 0.302$) shows that there is a moderate positive correlation, which implies that the better the workplace conditions are, the better work-life balance outcomes are. A t-statistic of 3.238 is greater than the recommended t-test value of 1.96 and the p-value of 0.001 is much less than the required threshold of 0.05 that supports the statistical significance of this relationship (Hair et al., 2021). Moreover, the 95% confidence interval (0.122 to 0.493) does not cover zero, which supports the strength of the relationship and proves that the effect is not caused by a sampling error (Hair et al., 2021).

The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.632$) shows that the workplace factors account 63.2% of the variation in work-life balance, which is a noteworthy amount of explanatory power. Hair et al. (2021) state that an R^2 of greater than 0.50 is termed as moderate to substantial in a behavioural study, implying that workplace variables have a major role in influencing workers work-life balance (Table 5). The Variance Inflation Factor ($VIF = 2.694$) is less than 5, which means that the multicollinearity is not an issue in the model, and the estimates are valuable and consistent (Hair et al., 2021). With regard to the effect size (f^2), the findings indicate that the workplace factors do significantly influence the work-life balance. Effect size serves to determine the practical relevance of the relationship in addition to the statistical significance (Cohen, 1988), which means that work-related interventions could result in the observable change in the work-life balance of employees.

Theoretically, the results are aligned with the “Job Demands/Resources” (JD-R) theory by Demerouti et al. (2001) and expanded by Bakker and Demerouti (2007). According to the theory, job demands like workload and technological pressure have the potential to cause strain, and job resources like organisational support and flexibility can mediate these impacts and promote employee well-being. The positive correlation seen in this research shows that favourable working conditions enable employees to more effectively cope with conflicting work and personal demands. Contextually speaking, the findings are specifically applicable to the IT industry, where workers tend to be subjected to intense job-related pressure, rigid deadlines, and constant access to digital devices. The organisational support mechanism, work flexibility, and good management of workloads are important in such a working environment so that the employees may have a healthy work-life balance.

Also, the moderate strength of the relationship indicates that the workplace factors are important determinants although the work-life balance is determined by various dimensions, including personal and social factors and psychological determinants such as job stress. This underscores the multidimensionality of the “work-life balance” as well as justifies the incorporation of other variables “in future goals of the research (Figure.1). Thus, “it can be concluded that workplace factors have a significant and positive impact on the work-life balance of women executives in IT companies in the NCR region which supports H1.”

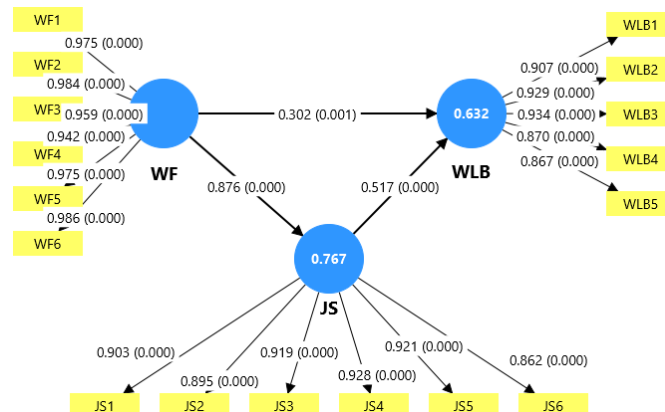


Fig. 1: Direct and Indirect Relationship among the constructs

Table 6: Mediation analysis

Hypothesis	Mediation	(β) Beta	Standard deviation	t statistics	CI0.95	P values	Significance
H12	WF \rightarrow JS \rightarrow WLB	0.453	0.084	5.387	(0.286; 0.617)	0.000	Yes

The mediation analysis results indicate that job stress significantly mediates the relationship between workplace factors and work-life balance ($\beta = 0.453$, $t = 5.387$, $p < 0.001$). The t-statistic exceeds the critical value of 1.96, and the p-value is well below the 0.05 threshold, confirming the statistical significance of the indirect effect (Hair et al., 2021:2025). Furthermore, the 95% confidence interval (0.286; 0.617) does not include zero, providing additional support for the presence of mediation (Table 6). This confirms the presence of partial mediation, suggesting that workplace factors influence work-life balance both directly and indirectly through job stress. Interestingly, the indirect effect is stronger than the direct effect, indicating that job stress serves as a substantial mechanism through which workplace conditions affect employees' work-life balance. This suggests that the impact of workplace factors on work-life balance is largely transmitted through employees' psychological experiences and stress levels.

The structural model results indicate that workplace factors significantly influence job stress ($\beta = 0.876$, $p < 0.001$), and job stress significantly influences work-life balance ($\beta = 0.517$, $p < 0.001$). These significant relationships confirm the existence of the required mediation pathways and support the examination of the mediating role of job stress in the relationship between workplace factors and work-life balance. The magnitude of the indirect effect suggests that workplace factors influence work-life balance substantially through job stress as an intervening variable. These findings highlight the importance of psychological mechanisms in explaining how workplace conditions translate into employee outcomes. Accordingly, H2 is supported, confirming that job stress plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between workplace factors and work-life balance among women executives in IT companies (Figure 1).

5. Discussion

The present study examined the impact of workplace factors on work-life balance with job stress as a mediator among women IT executives. The findings provide important insights into the interaction between workplace factors and psychological processes in employees' work-life balance (Aruldosset al., 2021). The results demonstrate a positive relationship between workplace factors and work-life balance, suggesting that positive workplace factors play a vital role in facilitating employees' ability to balance their multiple roles (Kamboj, 2026). This finding is in line with earlier research that suggests that workplace resources such as flexibility, organisational support and low workload support employees in balancing and avoiding work-family conflict (Allen et al., 2013; Haar et al., 2014). In the IT sector, where job demands are high and there is no clear boundary between work and non-work, the availability of these workplace factors is important. The findings align with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, which theorises that job resources help employees cope with job demands and improve well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

At the same time, the study demonstrates that workplace factors not only have a direct impact on work-life balance but also play an indirect role via job stress. The mediation findings suggest that job stress plays a significant role in conveying the influence of workplace factors to work-life balance, implying that poor workplace conditions may lead to psychological strain, which ultimately affects work-life balance. This finding aligns with other studies that highlight the importance of stress as a mediator between job characteristics and employee well-being (Ayyagari et al., 2011; Tarafdar et al., 2015). This finding also supports a strain process (JD-R) in which job demands result in stress, which in turn has an impact on well-being and employee behaviour. The relatively large indirect effect found in this study highlights the need to focus on psychological mechanisms when studying work-life balance. Organisational policies and practices play a crucial role, but the impact of these practices centres on their effect on employee stress. This implies that flexible policies may not be fully effective unless organisations understand the causes of stress, including workload and time pressures, as well as ubiquitous connectivity.

In terms of context, the insights are valuable for women IT executives who juggle multiple roles. The dual demands of work and socio-cultural roles may increase susceptibility to stress and subsequently impact work-life balance. This suggests that organisations need to consider a more comprehensive approach, including both structural and stress management strategies. Finally, the study adds to the body of knowledge by offering empirical insights that

job stress is a key intervening factor between workplace factors and work-life balance. Through a focus on women executives in a tech-enabled work environment, the study provides a contextual and theoretically informed perspective on work-life balance.

6. Implication

6.1. Theoretical Implications

This study provides a number of contributions to the existing literature on work-life balance, especially in relation to the extension of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model into a gendered and industry-specific context. First, by empirically showing that workplace factors play an important role in shaping work-life balance, this study lends support to the core tenet of the JD-R theory. Through its conceptualisation of workplace factors as a combination of job demands and resources, the study offers a more refined view of the way workplace factors both facilitate and impede employees' efforts to balance work and life. Second, theoretically, the study establishes job stress as a key mediator between workplace factors and work-life balance. Although previous studies have accepted stress as a predictor of employee outcomes, this study empirically confirms the indirect effect, thereby contributing to the understanding of the strain process in the JD-R theory. This demonstrates that the effects of workplace factors are not only direct but also indirect via psychological mechanisms, enhancing existing theories. Third, this study adds to the body of knowledge by examining the case of women CEOs in the IT industry, which is a unique segment of the workforce in terms of work-life balance. It brings together organisational and psychological factors to offer a context-specific theoretical view that reflects the complexities of today's workplaces. It also goes beyond current theories by taking gendered and socio-cultural factors, which are often absent in traditional organisational studies, into account. Finally, this study adds to the burgeoning field of research on technology-rich workplaces by emphasising the influence of workplace conditions and stress on employee well-being. This helps bridge the gap between classic work-life theories and challenges in the digital environment.

6.2 Practical Implications

The results of this research have several implications for organisations, especially IT companies, to improve work-life balance and subsequently employee well-being and performance. First, the strong influence of organisational factors on work-life balance highlights the importance of organisations creating flexible workplaces. This can be achieved through flexible working, manageable workloads, and employee-friendly policies that enable workers to strike a work-life balance. Employers need to go beyond policy development and ensure operationalisation of policies. Second, the moderating effects of job stress emphasise the need to focus on psychological well-being in organisations. Organisations should adopt stress-prevention measures such as stress-management programs, counselling and workload. Regular stress audits can help identify and avoid stress-related problems that may result in burnout and reduce productivity. Third, acknowledging the difficulties faced by women executives, organisations should create gender-sensitive policies to address their multiple role demands. Services such as child care support, flexible working and inclusive leadership can help women balance their work and family, and advance their careers. Lastly, in IT organisations, the digital always-on society should be tackled to avoid stress and work-life imbalance. Boundaries (e.g., "right to disconnect" and after-work contact) can help employees to disconnect and improve their quality of life.

7. Limitations and Future Research

While the study has revealed interesting findings, there are some limitations that offer avenues for future research. The cross-sectional nature of the study limits the scope for causal enquiry, and it is possible that future research may explore longitudinal methods to understand the dynamic changes in work-life balance and job stress over time. Moreover, the use of non-probability sampling (purposive and snowball) and data from female executives of IT firms in the NCR region may restrict the validity of the results to other industries and geographical areas. The use of self-reported data may also give rise to potential biases, although anonymity was assured. These limitations can be overcome by using probability sampling methods, collecting multi-source data and including a wide range of industries and geographical locations. In addition, incorporating other factors, such as organisational culture, leadership style and personal coping strategies, into the analysis may also help gain a better understanding of work-life balance in a changing work environment.

8. Conclusion

The current study provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the work-life balance of female IT managers, with a focus on workplace factors and job stress. The findings confirm the positive impact of

workplace factors on work-life balance and the importance of positive workplace conditions for coping with role conflict. More importantly, the study identifies that job stress is a critical moderator of the above relationship, implying that workplace factors influence work-life balance through psychological factors. Such a result indicates the need for emphasis on stressors that affect well-being rather than structural reforms. The inclusion of both organisational and psychological perspectives in the framework of the job demands-resources theory enables the study to offer a holistic and contextual perspective on work-life balance in the technological work environment. The study has practical relevance with the inclusion of female CEOs by considering the gender-specific problems with roles and responsibilities. In summary, this study provides insight to theory and practice in the area of stress and work-life balance by suggesting a multi-dimensional approach that involves favourable workplace conditions and stress management to achieve work-life balance. This is particularly relevant for organisations to achieve an inclusive and sustainable working environment for high performance in the new era.

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