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Work–Life Balance and Career Success in Higher Education: Examining the Moderating Role of Gender

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between work-life balance and career success among university faculty in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, with a particular focus on the moderating role of gender. Recognizing the growing importance of balancing professional and personal responsibilities in academia, the research investigates how effective work-life balance practices contribute to individuals' perceptions of career achievement and progression. Grounded in Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, the study highlights how access to personal and organizational resources enables faculty members to manage competing demands, thereby enhancing their professional outcomes and long-term career success. A quantitative research design was employed using structured questionnaires distributed to faculty members across universities in the region. The study targeted a sample of 400 teaching faculty selected from a population of approximately 5,000 across 32 universities. Convenience sampling was used to ensure representation from diverse institutions and academic disciplines, enabling a comprehensive analysis of the variables under investigation. The findings reveal that work-life balance has a significant positive effect on career success, indicating that faculty who effectively manage their professional and personal roles experience greater satisfaction with career growth, achievement, and stability. The analysis further examined gender as a moderating variable; however, the results indicate that gender does not significantly alter the strength of the relationship between work-life balance and career success. This suggests that the benefits of work-life balance are largely consistent across male and female faculty members. The study offers important practical implications for higher education institutions, emphasizing the need to design inclusive work-life balance policies that support all faculty regardless of gender. By fostering resource-rich and supportive work environments, universities can enhance faculty well-being, sustain career development, and improve institutional

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effectiveness. Limitations of the study and directions for future research are also discussed.

Keywords: Work-life Balance, Career Success, Gender, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

1.1 Background of the Study

In the contemporary global higher education landscape, work-life imbalance has emerged as a critical challenge, with UNESCO reporting that 62% of academics worldwide experience chronic stress due to conflicting work–family demands (2023 Global Education Report). This crisis is particularly acute in developing nations like Pakistan, where higher education reforms have intensified faculty workloads without commensurate support systems. In today's rapidly evolving environment, the value of employees has become more apparent than ever (Testa et al., 2023; Ismail, 2023). Organizations that aim to succeed must acknowledge that their achievements are inextricably linked to the dedication, enthusiasm, and performance of their workforce (Akgunduz et al., 2023; Rachmad, 2025).

Career success is conceptualized through both objective dimensions (e.g., promotions and salary growth) and subjective dimensions (e.g., job satisfaction and personal fulfillment), following the multidimensional framework established by Ng et al. (2005). Within this study, career success is examined as an outcome influenced by work-life balance, while gender is investigated as a contextual moderator that may shape how individuals experience and translate balance into professional advancement. As businesses strive to maintain a competitive edge, identifying and fostering the factors that drive employee performance has become a central focus (Banmairuroy et al., 2022; Nieto-Aleman et al., 2025). Employees are more than just the individuals who keep the wheels turning—they are the innovators, problem-solvers, and core drivers of institutional growth (Akther & Tariq, 2020; Chanana & Sangeeta, 2021). Their skills, experiences, and dedication play a pivotal role in realizing strategic goals and sustaining competitive advantage (Banmairuroy et al., 2022).

Recent HEC Pakistan data (2023) reveals alarming trends: faculty work an average of 58 hours weekly, 71% report inadequate family time, and female academics are 3.2 times more likely to resign due to work–family conflicts than their male counterparts. These statistics underscore the urgent need for context-specific research examining how work-life balance contributes to sustainable career outcomes in academia. To ensure that employees are equipped to meet evolving role demands, organizations must prioritize ongoing training and development, which improves skills while also boosting

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morale and motivation (Diamantidis & Chatzogloum, 2019; AbdELhay et al., 2025).

This study is grounded primarily in Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which explains how individuals strive to obtain, retain, and protect valuable resources such as time, energy, and social support. Work-life balance functions as a resource-preservation mechanism that reduces strain and enables individuals to invest energy into career development and goal attainment. Achieving balance directly impacts employees' physical health, mental well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, all of which significantly influence productivity and performance (Yadav et al., 2022; Bocanegra & Granados, 2025). When employees maintain a harmonious balance between professional and personal domains, their overall well-being improves, leading to stronger motivation and clearer career trajectories.

Empirical literature consistently links supportive work environments to improved work–family integration. Organizational structures such as workspace design, institutional culture, and support mechanisms can either facilitate or hinder employees' ability to manage work and family roles (Poulose & Sudarsan, 2014). Flexible work arrangements, for instance, allow employees to better manage competing responsibilities, resulting in enhanced satisfaction and retention. Support systems may include formal mechanisms such as work–family benefits and flexible scheduling, as well as informal practices like managerial encouragement and professional autonomy (Allen, 2021; Eby et al., 2022).

Contradictory evidence exists regarding the strength of the work-life balance–career success relationship across regions. Meta-analyses report strong positive associations in Western contexts (Allen et al., 2020), whereas studies from South Asia suggest comparatively weaker effects, partly due to cultural normalization of long working hours and role overload (Ahmad & Omar, 2021). Achieving work-life balance is therefore far from simple; individuals interpret and experience it differently depending on organizational expectations, technological changes, and shifting work structures (Powell, Greenhaus, Allen, & Johnson, 2019; Prado & Sedillo, 2025). These contextual variations highlight the necessity of localized investigation within Pakistan's higher education sector.

From a policy perspective, Pakistan's Higher Education Policy 2023 explicitly mandates the provision of work-life balance initiatives, yet implementation remains inconsistent across institutions (HEC Policy Brief, 2023). This gap between policy intent and institutional practice necessitates empirical evidence to guide effective application. Conferences and

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professional forums have increasingly emphasized workplace well-being, mental health, and respect as essential components of sustainable academic environments (SHRM Annual Conference, 2018; Nurhasan & Sinambela, 2025). Toxic workplace conditions, as highlighted by Pfeffer (2018), further demonstrate how imbalance can produce adverse professional and personal outcomes.

Career success itself is a multifaceted construct influenced by both objective indicators—such as salary, promotions, and hierarchical advancement—and subjective perceptions of achievement and fulfillment (Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1995; Gattiker & Larwood, 1986). Scholars argue that maintaining a balanced work–life dynamic is essential for fostering satisfaction, long-term career sustainability, and overall well-being. Consequently, understanding how work-life balance translates into measurable and perceived career success remains a critical scholarly concern.

1.2. Gender as a Contextual Moderator

Gender dynamics play a significant role in shaping experiences of work-life balance. Work–family border theory suggests that individuals continuously navigate boundaries between professional and personal domains (Clark, 2000). Socially constructed gender roles can influence access to flexibility, expectations of caregiving, and perceptions of professional commitment. Research indicates that flexible work arrangements may enhance performance outcomes differently for men and women, as female employees often encounter greater family-related demands without equivalent institutional support (Lotten et al., 2016; Sullivan & Lewis, 2001). In some cases, flexibility policies may inadvertently reinforce gendered divisions of labor (Hilbrecht et al., 2008).

Taken together, these discussions indicate that while work-life balance is widely acknowledged as a determinant of well-being and professional development, its translation into career success may vary depending on contextual and demographic factors such as gender. Therefore, examining this relationship within Pakistan's higher education sector provides an important opportunity to understand how balance-related resources influence academic career trajectories and whether these effects differ across male and female faculty members.

1.3. Research Gap

Despite increasing attention to work-life balance, there is still a limited understanding of whether, how, and in what contexts work-life balance contributes to career success. Existing research often overlooks work-life balance as a key explanatory factor in career progression, leaving its influence insufficiently examined within professional and academic environments.

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Work-life balance challenges are frequently embedded within organizational systems, making them less visible and consequently underexplored despite their broad impact (Perrigino, 2018, p. 184; O'Brien, 2022). Career outcomes are also shaped by contextual elements such as gender roles and caregiving responsibilities, yet these influences have not been adequately studied in relation to career mobility and success (Islam & Xin, 2025).

Earlier studies have examined related dynamics but did not directly investigate work-life balance as a predictor of career success. For instance, Najam et al. (2020) analyzed career commitment and success while recommending that future research incorporate demographic variables as moderators to better understand how such factors influence career outcomes (Locke, 2025). Houssein et al. (2020) suggested extending research across industries to gain a clearer understanding of career-related processes, while Ugwu et al. (2023) emphasized the need for broader academic-based investigations (Hirschi & Pang, 2025).

Furthermore, scholars have recommended that institutions promote sustainable work cultures emphasizing balance and professional growth (Zhang, 2020; Zhu et al., 2022; Amah & Ogah, 2021), yet empirical evidence explaining how these practices translate into career success—particularly in higher education within developing countries remains scarce.

Therefore, this study addresses this gap by examining the direct relationship between work-life balance and career success and by investigating gender as a moderating factor within the higher education context of Pakistan.

1.4. Problem Statement

Organizations increasingly recognize the importance of creating workplaces that promote work-life balance (WLB) to sustain employee well-being and effectiveness. HRD professionals, therefore, focus on helping individuals manage the demands of professional and personal roles while enabling organizations to achieve their strategic goals (Wood et al., 2020). However, the practical implications of work-life balance extend beyond well-being and may shape employees' long-term career outcomes, an area that remains insufficiently explored.

A substantial body of research has examined how personal life conditions such as nonwork satisfaction and work–nonwork conflict shape employees' work experiences (Perrigino, 2018; Najam et al., 2020; Houssein et al., 2020; O'Brien, 2022; Ugwu et al., 2023; Ali et al., 2025). Since both professional and family domains require time, energy, and emotional investment, their interaction is inherently reciprocal. Prior studies have documented dimensions such as work–family imbalance, conflict, enrichment,

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facilitation, and spillover, demonstrating how these dynamics influence employees' functioning and well-being (Ilies et al., 2017; Vîrgă et al., 2015; Adah et al., 2025).

Work-life balance may also shape how individuals evaluate their careers, influencing attitudes, perceptions, and eventual career outcomes (Lyness & Judiesch, 2014; Kossek et al., 2014). Evidence suggests that career advancement is associated with autonomy and the ability to effectively manage professional and personal responsibilities (Lee et al., 2016; Mas-Machuca et al., 2016). Furthermore, social and organizational contexts play an essential role in determining how employees experience both work-life balance and professional success (Ferreira et al., 2020; Najam et al., 2020). These relationships indicate the need to assess career success using both objective and subjective indicators (Ray et al., 2025).

Despite these insights, limited research has explicitly examined how work-life balance contributes to career success within academia, particularly in developing-country contexts. Additionally, demographic factors such as gender may shape access to resources, expectations, and opportunities, thereby influencing how work-life balance translates into professional achievement. Understanding this relationship is essential for developing institutional strategies that support academic professionals in advancing their careers while maintaining personal well-being.

Therefore, this study investigates the relationship between work-life balance and career success among university faculty and examines the moderating role of gender in this linkage. The findings are expected to inform policymakers and university administrators seeking to enhance faculty welfare, productivity, and sustainable career development in higher education.

1.5 Objectives:

RO1: To investigate the impact of the work-life balance on career success of HE institutions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

RO2: To investigate the moderating role of gender in relationship between the work-life balance and career success of HE institutions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

1.6 Research Questions

RQ1: Does the work-life balance impact the career success of HE institutions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?

RQ2 Does gender moderate the relationship between the work-life balance and career success of HE institutions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it examines how work-life balance (WLB) influences career success among university faculty in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,

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Pakistan, with gender as a moderator. While WLB is widely studied, its direct impact on academic career outcomes in the Pakistani context remains underexplored.

The research offers both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it extends Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory by showing how balanced work and personal roles function as resources that support career advancement. Practically, it provides insights for higher education administrators and policymakers to design flexible, supportive, and inclusive policies that enhance faculty well-being, job satisfaction, retention, and professional growth.

By highlighting gender differences, the study informs strategies to address diverse faculty needs across career stages. Overall, the findings contribute to academic knowledge and guide institutional practices, supporting sustainable career development and improved organizational effectiveness.

Literature Review

2.1. Work-Life Balance

Over the past decades, employee health and well-being have gained prominence, and work-life balance (WLB) has become a central focus in both research and practice (Jones et al., 2013; Kinnunen et al., 2014; Wagner et al., 2014). WLB refers to maintaining a balance between professional and personal responsibilities to enhance overall well-being (Campbell Clark, 2000).

Balancing multiple roles is central to WLB, as time and energy are allocated appropriately between work and family life (Marks, 1977; Marks & MacDermid, 1996). However, work-family and family-work interactions can produce positive or negative effects depending on the extent of interference or enrichment between domains (Mache et al., 2016). Changes in family structures, increased female workforce participation, and technological advancements enabling remote work have further emphasized the importance of managing time across work and personal life (Peeters et al., 2005; Kinnunen et al., 2014).

Theoretical perspectives conceptualize WLB in two ways: (1) minimizing interference between work and personal life, and (2) actively engaging in multiple non-work roles. Both approaches have been associated with benefits such as improved job and life satisfaction, higher organizational commitment, career advancement, reduced absenteeism and turnover, and increased productivity (Allen et al., 2000; Baltes et al., 1999; Blazovich et al., 2014; Konrad & Thompson et al., 1999). Supervisor and colleague support, along

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with organizational culture, are key antecedents enabling employees to maintain WLB effectively.

Some definitions focus on the separation of work and personal time (Kanter, 1977), while others highlight the interdependence of work and family domains, emphasizing enrichment opportunities (Kalliath & Brough, 2008). Work enrichment occurs when demands or experiences in one domain positively enhance the other, improving organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and quality of life.

In summary, WLB encompasses strategies and practices that help individuals manage professional and personal demands. Achieving balance yields multiple individual and organizational benefits, making it an essential factor for employee well-being, productivity, and career success.

2.2. Career Success

The nature of careers has evolved significantly over recent decades due to globalization, technological advancements, economic changes, and organizational restructuring (Makri, 2009). Traditional linear career models, focused on hierarchical promotion, loyalty, and long-term employment, have shifted toward more flexible, individual-centered approaches. Contemporary models—such as boundaryless, protean, portfolio, and kaleidoscope careers—emphasize mobility, autonomy, and personal responsibility for career development (Handy, 1994; Hall, 1996; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Lips-Wiersma & Hall, 2007; Clarke, 2009).

The boundaryless career model highlights physical and psychological mobility, suggesting that advancement need not follow traditional organizational hierarchies. The protean model focuses on individual autonomy and self-directed career management, where employees take personal responsibility for shaping their career paths.

These shifts have also transformed the concept of career success. While earlier approaches measured success through objective indicators such as promotions, salary, and prestige, contemporary perspectives emphasize subjective evaluations, including personal fulfillment, achievements, and the meaning employees attach to their careers (Heslin, 2003; Hall & Chandler, 2005; De Vos & Soens, 2008; Herrbach & Mignonac, 2012). Career success now reflects both objective milestones and subjective experiences, recognizing that employees may feel successful even in non-traditional career trajectories or with fewer promotions if their work aligns with personal goals and values.

2.3. Relationship between Work-Life Balance and Career Success

Research indicates that WLB initiatives often serve organizational image rather than genuine cultural change (Bloom, 2016; Cramer et al., 2019; Eikhof et al., 2007; Muhr et al., 2012; Orgad, 2019). Gender plays a notable role in

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career outcomes: motherhood can hinder women's career progression, while fatherhood often enhances men's recognition, pay, and prestige (Windsor & Auyeung, 2006; Fuller & Cooke, 2018; Kugelberg, 2006; King, 2008). Even flexible policies, while providing some schedule relief, may reinforce vertical segregation or "pink-collar" roles for women (Saffran & Scovarra, 1987; Dwyer & Roberts, 2004; Almer et al., 2012).

Flexible and supportive work environments positively impact family life, parenting, and relationships (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000; Frone et al., 1997; Haas, 1999; Parasuraman et al., 1996; Voydanoff, 2001). Job characteristics such as autonomy and task complexity further enhance family satisfaction (Grimm-Thomas & Perry-Jenkins, 1994; Perry-Jenkins et al., 2000). Social support from both family and workplace is crucial for career satisfaction and growth (Adams et al., 1996; Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000; Frone et al., 1997; Voydanoff, 2001).

Gender differences influence WLB outcomes: for men, marriage and children often correlate with positive career outcomes, while for women, greater family involvement is linked to higher work engagement (Bretz & Judge, 1994; Rothbard, 2001; Jacobs, 1992; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Most WLB research has been Western-centric, with emerging studies in Asia enhancing cross-cultural understanding (Chandra, 2012; Hassan, 2010; Cooke & Jing, 2009; Bhatnagar & Rajadhyaksha, 2001; Baral & Bhargava, 2011).

Theoretical frameworks explain these relationships. Resources such as supervisor support, flexible work arrangements, and spousal support reduce work-family conflict and enhance facilitation (Voydanoff, 2005; Byron, 2005; Michel et al., 2011; Carlson et al., 2006). Conservation of Resources (COR) theory highlights that personal and contextual resources enable individuals to meet work and family demands, generating positive outcomes through a "resource gain spiral" that enhances performance and well-being in both domains (Hobfoll, 1988, 2002; ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012).

2.4. Moderating Role of Gender

Research shows that men and women manage work and family differently, shaped by societal norms and organizational culture (Powell & Greenhaus, 2010). Women often face higher work-family conflict, particularly due to caregiving responsibilities, which can hinder career advancement and perceptions of success (Eagly & Wood, 2012; Hochschild & Machung, 2012). Empirical evidence highlights systemic gender disparities: women shoulder more unpaid domestic work, limiting time for career development (Craig & Brown, 2017; Shockley et al., 2021), while flexible work arrangements sometimes reinforce these inequalities, contributing to burnout and slower career progression (Ruppanner et al., 2021; Hennekam & Shymko, 2022).

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Conversely, men are pressured to prioritize work over family due to cultural norms equating masculinity with career ambition. Men who engage in caregiving may face "flexibility stigma," potentially affecting promotions, despite benefits like the "fatherhood premium" (Rudman & Mescher, 2013; Williams et al., 2013; Cech & Blair-Loy, 2019). Organizational policies can amplify these disparities: the "mother penalty" reduces wages and promotion opportunities for women after childbirth, whereas men often gain career rewards (Budig & England, 2001). In supportive contexts, such as Sweden's shared parental leave, gendered biases are mitigated (Olivetti & Petrongolo, 2017), but traditional roles in countries like Pakistan exacerbate inequalities (Syed & Ali, 2019).

Gender also influences career success perceptions: men focus on objective indicators (salary, rank), while women emphasize subjective fulfillment (job satisfaction, work-hour flexibility) (Hagqvist et al., 2017). Effective WLB interventions must consider these differences; flexible scheduling alone may not suffice if men face stigma or women carry excessive invisible labor (Kelliher et al., 2021). Intersectional approaches, including mentorship, mandatory paternal leave, and bias training, can help address structural barriers and gendered expectations, particularly in higher education where research productivity and administrative duties add complexity (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Allen et al., 2022; Misra et al., 2021).

2.5. Theoretical Perspective: Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory

The dynamics of work-life balance, career success, and employee engagement can be explained using Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, which emphasizes the acquisition, preservation, and protection of resources such as time, energy, and social support to manage stress and maintain well-being (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll, 2001). Work-life balance involves optimizing the fit between professional and personal commitments, and organizational support—like flexible work options and wellness programs—helps employees conserve these resources, reducing burnout and enhancing job satisfaction (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999).

Career success, both objective (pay, promotions) and subjective (self-fulfillment, satisfaction), depends on acquiring and defending organizational resources such as skills, reputation, and networks (Ng et al., 2005; Hobfoll et al., 2018). Resource availability fosters employee engagement, which in turn promotes commitment, productivity, and professional growth (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009; Wayne et al., 2017).

COR theory also explains how perceived organizational support, such as flexible schedules or career development opportunities, enhances resource

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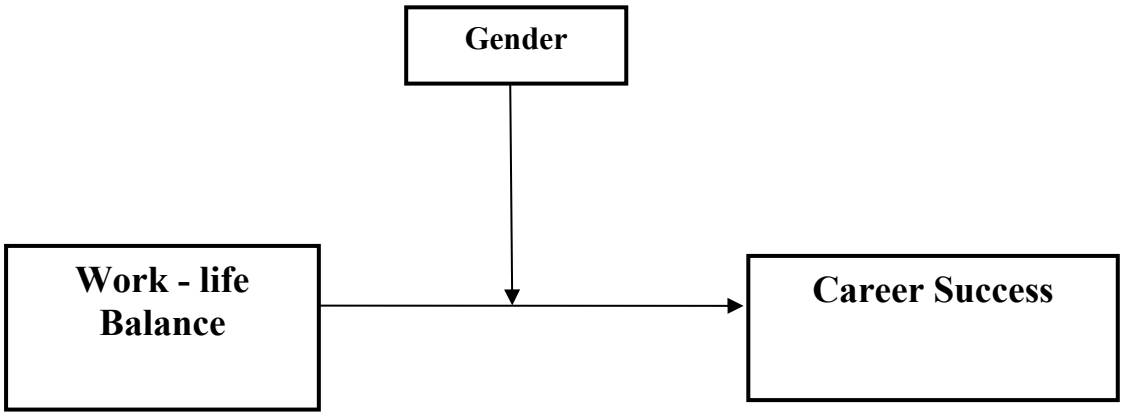
security, leading to higher engagement and career satisfaction (Hobfoll, 2001; Hobfoll et al., 2018). In this framework, career success can act as both an outcome and a driver of engagement: achieving promotions or skill development increases personal and professional resources, reinforcing commitment and positive behavior (Wayne et al., 2017).

In summary, COR theory highlights the importance of helping employees manage and accumulate resources. Organizations that actively support work-life balance and career development can foster employee engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty, yielding sustainable benefits for both employees and the institution (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018).

2.6. Conceptual Framework



2.7. Study Hypotheses

H1: Work-life balance has positive significant impact on career success.
H2: Gender moderates the relationship between Work-life balance and Career Success.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Philosophy

The study follows a positivist philosophy, emphasizing objective reality measurable through data. This approach supports structured surveys, Likert-scale measurement, and statistical analysis, ensuring reliable and generalizable findings. Positivism is particularly suitable for examining quantitative relationships, such as the moderating role of Gender.

3.2. Population

The population consisted of approximately 5,000 teaching faculty members from 32 public universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan (HEC, 2018). This population was selected due to the province's socio-cultural context, low faculty retention rates (HEC, 2020), and the relevance of gender as a moderating factor.

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3.3. Sampling

A non-probability convenience sampling technique was used, with 400 faculty members selected according to Yamane's (1967) formula. The sample included diverse academic ranks, gender representation, qualifications, age groups, and work experience to enhance generalizability and minimize bias.

3.4. Data Collection

Data were collected using an adapted questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale, measuring WLB, gender, and career success. Scales were adapted from validated studies and tested through a pilot study (n=30) to ensure clarity and reliability. The Drop-Off and Pick-Up (DOPU) method (Allred & Ross-Davis, 2011) was used to maximize response rates and clarify study objectives for participants.

3.5. Measurement of Variables

Employee work-life balance (WLB**)** was measured using a five-item scale adapted from Gröpel and Kuhl (2009), with sample items such as, "Because of my work, I have no free time." Career success (CS) was assessed using a 12-item scale developed by Shockley et al. (2016), including items like, "Organizations I worked for have recognized me as a good performer." All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"), consistent with previous studies in similar contexts.

4. Data Analysis

4.1. *Age wise Frequency Distribution of Respondents*

Age Group		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21-30	33	8.3	8.3	8.3
	31-40	289	72.3	72.3	80.5
	40 and Above	78	19.5	19.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

The participants' age distribution indicated that the majority of faculty members were between 31 and 40 years old (n = 289, 72.3%), followed by those 40 years and above (n = 78, 19.5%), and a smaller proportion aged 21–30 years (n = 33, 8.3%).

Table 4.2: ***Gender wise Frequency Distribution of Respondents***

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	266	66.5	66.5	66.5
	Female	134	33.5	33.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

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The sample comprised 266 male faculty members (66.5%) and 134 female faculty members (33.5%), indicating a higher representation of men in the public sector universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

4.3. Validity Analysis

Table 4.3.1: ***Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's Test of Work Life Balance***

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.817
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1100.765
	Df	10
	Sig.	**.000**

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value for Work-Life Balance was 0.817, which falls into the 'meritorious' category, indicating that the data is well-suited for factor analysis. In addition, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant, $\chi^2(10) = 1100.765$, $p < .001$. This suggests that the correlations between the variables are strong enough to move forward with factor analysis. In other words, the data is suitable for identifying the underlying structure and reducing dimensions, making it ideal for this type of analysis.

4.3.2: ***Factor Loadings of Work Life Balance***

WLB1	.836
WLB 2	.724
WLB 3	.844
WLB 4	.829
WLB 5	.870

The Component Matrix for Work-life Balance (WLB) below depicts the loadings of all the items in the first extracted component. As observed, all the five items (WLB1 to WLB5) have loaded highly positive on the first component suggesting high correlation of the items with the underlying component.

These high loadings (all above 0.7) indicate that all items are loading well on the only factor extracted - the most likely work-life balance construct. From this, we suggest that it is possible for these items to capture this dimension well.

Table 4.3.3: ***Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's Test of Career Success***

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.961
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3515.917
	Df	66
	Sig.	**.000**

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The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy for Career Success was 0.961, indicating excellent sample adequacy for conducting factor analysis, as values above 0.9 are considered "superb." This suggests that the sample data is highly suitable for this type of analysis.

Additionally, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($\chi^2(66) = 3515.917$, $p < .001$), confirming that there are sufficient correlations among the variables to justify the use of factor analysis. These results indicate that the data for Career Success is appropriate for structure detection and further factor analysis.

Table 4.3.4: ***Factors Loading of Career Success***

CS1	.609
CS2	.675
CS3	.757
CS4	.792
CS5	.803
CS6	.773
CS7	.823
CS8	.804
CS9	.775
CS10	.782
CS11	.724
CS12	.743

The Component loadings using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) of each item in the CS are presented in the Component Matrix for Career Success (CS) below. All the twelve items (CS1 to CS12) have correlated positively with the first component with moderate to strong magnitude thus confirming that all the items are closely related to this underlying factor.

All items have loadings greater than 0.6, with most having loadings greater than 0.7, which indicates that all these items are measuring a single construct which is probably Career Success. These findings provide evidence for the extraction of a single component, because the high loadings for all items suggest that the items together assess a coherent concept.

4.4: ***Reliability Analysis***

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's α
Work-Life Balance (WLB)	5	0.89
Career Success (CS)	12	0.77

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The internal consistency of the study variables was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (α). Work-Life Balance (WLB), measured with 5 items, demonstrated excellent reliability (α = 0.89), indicating that the items consistently capture the construct. Career Success (CS), measured with 12 items, showed acceptable reliability (α = 0.77), suggesting that the scale is sufficiently consistent for use in this study. Both reliability coefficients exceed the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, supporting the adequacy of the instruments for further statistical analyses.

4.5: *Correlation Matrix*

		WLB	CS	EE
WLB	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	400		
CS	Pearson Correlation	.548**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	400	400	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to examine the relationships between Work-Life Balance (WLB), Career Success (CS), and Employee Engagement (EE). Results indicated a significant positive relationship between WLB and CS ($r = .548$, $p < .01$).

Regression Analysis

H1: Work-life balance has positive significant impact on career success.

Table a: *Model Summary*

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.548[a]	.301	.299	.46620	.301	171.170	1	398	**.000**

a. Predictors: (Constant), WLB

From the model quantification it is observed that WLB has significant impact on the dependent variable, CS. The analysis results for this part indicate a correlation coefficient of .548 proving that the relationship between WLB and CS is moderate and positive. The R Square value of .301 means that 30.1% of the variation of Career Success can be accounted by Work-Life Balance. The Adjusted R Square value of .299 indicates that another aspect of the model offsets over estimation of R Square due to sampling by ensuring the value is an optimal fit. The standard error of the estimate is .46620 indicates the

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average distance of observed values from the regression line. Also, F Change ($F(1, 398) = 171.170$, $p < .001$) this suggest that Work-Life Balance used in this study is an excellent predictor of Career Success.

Table b: ***Coefficients***

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	3.535	.172		20.506	**.000**
	WLB	.395	.030	.548	13.083	**.000**

a. Dependent Variable: CS

The findings indicate that the predictor, Work-Life Balance (WLB), is positively associated with the outcome variable, Career Success (CS). The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.395$) shows that a one-unit increase in WLB leads to a 0.395 increase in CS, confirming a positive relationship. The constant value ($B = 3.535$) represents the baseline level of Career Success when WLB is zero.

WLB demonstrates a moderate positive effect on Career Success ($\beta = 0.548$), indicating that improvements in WLB substantially enhance perceptions of career success. The relationship is statistically significant, $t(398) = 13.083$, $p < .001$, supporting the theoretical assumption that better balance between work and personal life contributes to more favorable career outcomes.

Thus, the hypothesis proposing a direct positive impact of Work-Life Balance on Career Success is accepted.

Gender as a moderator in Association between Work life Balance and Career Success

H2: Gender moderates the relationship between Work-life balance and Career Success.

Table a: ***Model Summary***

R	R-sq	MSE	F	Df1	Df2	P
.5503	.3028	.2178	57.3322	3	396	**.0000**

OUTCOME VARIABLE:CS

The hierarchical regression analysis examined gender as a moderator of the Work-Life Balance (WLB)–Career Success (CS) relationship. The overall model was significant, $F(3,396) = 57.33$, $p < .001$, indicating that WLB, gender, and their interaction collectively explain a meaningful portion of the variance in career success. The model accounted for 30.28% of the variance in CS ($R^2 = .3028$), reflecting moderate explanatory power, while the correlation coefficient ($R = .5503$) showed a moderate positive association between the predictors and career success.

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The mean square error (MSE = .2178) suggests an acceptable level of prediction accuracy, indicating that the differences between observed and predicted values were relatively small. Although the overall model significantly predicts career success, the inclusion of gender as a moderator does not substantially strengthen the relationship, implying that while WLB is an important predictor of CS, the effect remains largely consistent across genders.

Table b: ***Coefficients***

Model	coeff	Se	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.9286	.4434	8.8593	**.0000**	3.0568	4.8004
WLB	.3319	.0786	4.2216	**.0000**	.1773	.4865
Gender	-.2469	.2516	-.9810	.3272	-.7416	.2479
Int_1	.0401	.0441	.9105	.3631	-.0465	.1268

The moderation analysis examined gender as a moderator in the relationship between Work-Life Balance (WLB) and Career Success (CS). The constant was significant, b = 3.9286, t(396) = 8.86, p < .001, 95% CI [3.0568, 4.8004], indicating that respondents already reported a baseline level of career success before accounting for WLB, gender, and their interaction.

Work-Life Balance showed a significant positive main effect on Career Success, b = 0.3319, t(396) = 4.22, p < .001, 95% CI [0.1773, 0.4865], confirming that higher WLB is associated with higher career success. In contrast, the main effect of gender was not significant, b = −0.2469, t(396) = −0.981, p = .327, 95% CI [−0.7416, 0.2479], suggesting that career success does not differ based on gender alone.

Moreover, the interaction between WLB and gender was also non-significant, b = 0.0401, t(396) = 0.911, p = .363, 95% CI [−0.0465, 0.1268]. This indicates that gender does not moderate the relationship between WLB and career success. Therefore, the positive influence of work-life balance on career success is similar for both male and female employees, implying that challenges and benefits related to balancing work and life affect career outcomes in largely the same way across genders.

Table c: ***R^2 Increase due to Interaction(s)***

R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
.0015	.8289	1	396	.3631

Table C shows the results of an R^2 change due to the interaction effect of WLB and gender in regard to CS.

The $\Delta R2$ was also calculated as .0015 which pointed out that the incorporation of the interaction of work life balance and gender contributed only an additional 0.15% toward the variance of career success. This increase

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in explained variance is however small and does not reach the level of significance F(1,396)=0.829, p=.363.

Further, work-life balance by gender interaction is not statistically significant because the p-value is equal to 0.363 for this interaction term suggesting that adding interaction between work-life balance and gender to the model provides little additional prediction of career success. To put it in other words, this study has found that gender does not moderate the work-life balance and career success relationship. As expected, work-life balance has a total impact on career success while the addition of gender as a moderator does not make any tremendous contribution in the prediction of career success. The amount of R^2 increase due to the interaction term is very small and statistically not significant.

Findings

The results indicate that work-life balance (WLB) is a significant predictor of career success (CS), while gender does not moderate this relationship. Regression analysis revealed a statistically significant positive association between WLB and CS ($r = .548$), indicating a moderate relationship. The model explained 30.1% of the variance in career success ($R^2 = .301$; Adjusted $R^2 = .299$), and the overall model was significant ($F = 171.170$, $p < .001$). The unstandardized coefficient ($B = .395$, $p < .001$) confirmed that higher levels of work-life balance lead to greater perceived career success, thereby supporting H1.

Further analysis tested the moderating role of gender. Although the overall moderation model was significant ($F = 57.332$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .3028$), the interaction between WLB and gender was not significant ($B = .0401$, $p = .363$; $\Delta R^2 = .0015$). Additionally, gender itself had no significant direct effect on career success ($B = -.2469$, $p = .327$), whereas WLB remained a strong predictor ($B = .3319$, $p < .001$). These findings led to the rejection of H3, indicating that the positive effect of work-life balance on career success is consistent for both men and women.

Discussion

The present study examined the relationship between work–life balance (WLB) and career success (CS), while assessing whether gender moderates this relationship among university faculty. The findings provide clear empirical support for the direct influence of work–life balance on career success, but they do not confirm a moderating role of gender.

First, the results demonstrate that work–life balance is a significant and positive predictor of career success. Faculty members who reported better balance between professional and personal responsibilities also perceived higher levels of career achievement. This suggests that when employees are

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able to effectively manage time, energy, and role demands, they are more capable of investing in professional development, maintaining productivity, and experiencing satisfaction with their career progress. From a resource-based perspective, balanced individuals are better positioned to preserve psychological and social resources, which enhances both objective and subjective dimensions of career success.

Second, the study found that gender does not significantly moderate the WLB–career success relationship. Although descriptive differences between male and female faculty exist, the statistical analysis indicates that the positive impact of work–life balance on career success operates similarly for both groups. In other words, achieving balance is beneficial regardless of gender, and both men and women appear to translate balanced role management into comparable perceptions of career advancement. This finding suggests that, within the academic context examined, institutional structures and professional expectations may shape career outcomes more strongly than gender-based differences.

These findings carry important implications for higher education institutions. Universities aiming to enhance faculty career development should prioritize policies that support work–life balance, such as flexible scheduling, manageable workloads, and supportive organizational cultures. Since the benefits of WLB were found to be universal rather than gender-specific, such initiatives can be implemented broadly without targeting only one demographic group. This reinforces the idea that work–life balance is not merely a personal concern but a strategic organizational factor influencing long-term career sustainability.

The absence of a moderating gender effect may also reflect changing professional norms in academia, where performance indicators, research output, and institutional expectations apply similarly to all faculty members. As a result, structural pressures may minimize observable gender differences in how work–life balance translates into career outcomes.

Conclusion (Concise Version)

The findings identify work–life balance as a critical factor in enhancing university faculty members' career success, with employee engagement strengthening this relationship. Faculty who maintain a healthy balance between professional and personal responsibilities report greater job satisfaction, improved performance, and sustained career growth. Engagement-related attitudes such as vigor, dedication, and active involvement enable faculty to better utilize work–life balance resources, creating a positive cycle of motivation, resilience, and professional advancement.

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These results are supported by Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory. SET explains that when institutions provide supportive policies, faculty reciprocate with stronger commitment and positive work attitudes. COR Theory further suggests that access to resources such as time, flexibility, and institutional support helps faculty manage stress, preserve well-being, and sustain engagement, ultimately contributing to long-term career development.

Practically, universities should design and implement policies that foster work–life balance while actively promoting employee engagement. Such initiatives can enhance retention, strengthen institutional commitment, and improve overall job satisfaction. Future research may further explore demographic variations to better tailor these interventions. Overall, investing in supportive environments and resource provision is essential for cultivating a productive academic workforce and advancing sustainable career success.

Recommendations

- **Prioritize Work–Life Balance as a Strategic Institutional Policy:**

Universities should formally integrate work-life balance into HR and academic policies through flexible scheduling, manageable teaching loads, remote work options (where feasible), and leave facilitation. Since WLB directly enhances career success, such initiatives can improve both faculty performance and long-term career progression.

- **Ensure Equal Access to Work–Life Balance Resources for All Genders:**

As gender was not found to moderate the WLB–CS relationship, institutions should implement **gender-neutral policies** rather than segmented programs. Work-life balance benefits career success uniformly; therefore, support systems should be inclusive and equally accessible to all faculty members.

- **Redesign Workload Structures to Reduce Role Conflict:**

Universities should review teaching, research, and administrative expectations to prevent overload. Balanced workload allocation enables faculty to conserve time and energy resources, which the study shows contributes to stronger perceptions of career achievement.

- **Promote Supportive Academic Environments that Enable Balance:**

Departmental heads should encourage realistic deadlines, collaborative teaching/research models, and supportive supervision. Such environments help faculty maintain equilibrium between professional and personal roles, reinforcing the positive pathway to career success identified in the study.

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- **Integrate Work–Life Balance into Career Development Frameworks:**

Promotion criteria and professional development plans should acknowledge sustainable productivity rather than overwork. Recognizing balanced performance can motivate faculty to maintain healthy work patterns while still achieving career milestones.

- **Provide Resource-Based Support Mechanisms:**

Institutions should offer mentoring, counseling services, and time-management training to help faculty effectively utilize work-life balance opportunities, aligning with Conservation of Resources (COR) theory's emphasis on sustaining personal and professional resources.

- **Continuously Monitor Faculty Work–Life Balance Outcomes:**

Regular surveys and institutional assessments should evaluate how WLB initiatives influence satisfaction, productivity, and perceived career success, ensuring that policies remain evidence-based and responsive.

Overall, universities should treat work-life balance not as a welfare initiative but as a career-enabling mechanism, given its demonstrated role in enhancing faculty career success regardless of gender differences.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study, while highlighting the positive link between work-life balance (WLB) and career success (CS) among university faculty, has limitations. Data were collected only from universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, limiting generalizability. The quantitative, survey-based, and cross-sectional design may not capture nuanced experiences or causal relationships. Demographic factors like income and family responsibilities were not fully explored.

Future research should use broader, multi-regional samples, adopt qualitative or mixed methods for deeper insights, and employ longitudinal designs to examine causal links. Investigating demographic moderators and integrating frameworks like the JD-R model could further enhance understanding. Additionally, studies should assess the long-term impact of WLB initiatives on career sustainability and institutional performance.

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