

The Mediating Role of Work-Life Balance in the Relationship between Work-Related Factors and Job Satisfaction among Travel Outbound Service Employees in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Work life balance and job satisfaction are central issues in travel outbound service sector due to nature of job complexity and customer centric job role. This study aims to examine the mediating role of work life balance in the relationship between work related factors and job satisfaction special reference to travel outbound service sector employees in Sri Lanka. A quantitative research approach was adopted, and data were collected from 217 employees currently working in travel outbound service sector organizations across Sri Lanka. The data were analysis using IBM SPSS Statistics software. The findings depicted eight hypotheses formulated were accepted while two direct hypotheses were rejected. Accordingly, the study concludes that work-life balance partially mediates the relationship between supervisory support and job satisfaction as well as the relationship between job-role and job satisfaction. But work life balance depicted indirect-only mediation relationship between workload and job satisfaction of employees. Overall, this study suggests critical role of work life balance in enhancing job satisfaction. Based on the findings it is recommended to implement effective work life policies namely, flexible work arrangements, clarity of job roles, autonomy of decision making in job role and supervisory support systems to accelerate job satisfaction of employees.

Keywords: Job Role, Workload, Supervisory Support, Work Life Balance, Job Satisfaction, Travel Outbound Services

Study Background

Work-life balance (WLB) has become a central concern in contemporary human resource management, particularly as organizations seek to align with Sustainable Development Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth (United Nations, 2019). The modern occupational environment is characterized by heightened stress, ongoing deadlines, shifting demographics, a faster pace of change, growing reliance on technology, and the productive workplace (Zhang et.al., 2024; Del Villar et.al., 2025). Those evolving work conditions often distort the boundaries between professional and personal life, create tension that reduces job satisfaction and overall well-being in any sector.

Travel outbound service sector indicates a highly demanding and customer-oriented work environment. Employees in this sector play a crucial role in planning, making reservations, coordinating airlines, hotels, restaurants and handling customer inquiries (Knowles and Westcott, 2015). The quality of tourist's experience is heavily dependent on the service provided by travel agencies (Kumasaru, 2019; Assella & Arachchi, 2020). Thus, employees work as a critical connector between service provider and customer. Making their well-being and job satisfaction is essential for service excellence. Balancing work life is issue facing by travel service sector employees due to challenging nature of the job. They frequently encounter high workload, peak sessions pressure, irregular working hours and multiple responsibilities. According to Syed (2021) employee perception on work life balance policies and practices create higher job satisfaction among employees who work in the travel service sector. Though, job satisfaction and work life balance are crucial aspects that define overall performance in travel service companies, but there are limited studies underpinning the impact of work life balance on job satisfaction issue in global and Sri Lankan travel outbound service companies.

Work life balance influence diverse work related and non-work outcomes (Sirgy & Lee, 2018; Nieto-Aleman et.al., 2025). Job satisfaction is one of the work-related outcomes that are extensively investigated. Besides, job satisfaction is a key variable in organizational research evident its strong association with performance, commitment, and retention (Krekel et al., 2019). Scholars identified workload (Asse et.al., 2025), stress (Assella & Arachchi, 2020), job role, supervisor support (Pathiranage et.al, 2023), co-worker support, work arrangement (Wong et.al., 2017) factors impact on work life balance of employees. Besides, job role (Assella & Arachchi, 2020), workload (Bumrah, 2025; Inegbedion et.al., 2020), supervisory support (Putri & Surya, 2021; Bumrah, 2025) factors identified as determinant of job satisfaction. There are few studies that conceptualize work life balance as mediator in between construct and behavioral outcomes (Pathiranage et.al, 2023; Sirgy & Lee, 2018). But majority of studies examined these variables in isolation (Asse et.al., 2025; Del Villar et.al, 2025; Bocean et.al., 2023; Assella & Arachchi, 2020) rather than adopting a holistic framework (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). Moreover, Pathiranage (et.al, 2023) revealed inconsistency between workload, work life balance and job satisfaction constructs bring this study to systematically address the empirical gap.

Present study specifically examines key work-related factors link with work life balance and job satisfaction to provide a holistic perspective. Hence, grounded in the Job demands-resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), this study conceptualized workload as a job demand and job role and supervisory support as job resources. In conceptualization, work

life balance functions as a psychological mechanism linking job demand and job resource to job satisfaction. Besides application of job-demands -resources model is limited in travel service-oriented studies, specifically Sri Lanka. It is evident application of job demands-resources models in hospitality and airline sector studies (Del Villar et, al, 2025), which were similar sectors to travel outbound service sector This study bridges the gap by adopting job demands -resources model specifically related to travel outbound service sector.

To bridge those gaps present study is to adopt a holistic approach based on job demands-resources model, to examine the mediating role of work life balance in between work-related factors and job satisfaction constructs. Therefore, this study aims to examine the mediating role of work life balance, in the relationship between work related factors (workload, job role, supervisory support) and job satisfaction among employees in travel outbound service companies in Sri Lanka. Hence, the scope of this study is confined to employees working in travel outbound service companies in Sri Lanka. This study contributes to literature by offering a sector-specific and theoretically grounded explanation of how work conditions influence employee satisfaction through work-life balance.

Research Problem

Human capital role is crucial where it is becoming a strategic resource in the modern business landscape (Zhang et.al., 2024). Among the key dimensions in human capital management, job satisfaction remains a critical concern of both organization and individual well-being. It is evident that struggle between work and life greatly impacts on job satisfaction level which leads to lower organization performance. Although the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction has been extensively examined, findings remain inconsistent (Pathiranage et al., 2023; Rashmi & Kataria 2023). Specifically, empirical study of Pathiranage (et.al, 2023) revealed inconsistency between workload, work life balance and job satisfaction constructs bring this study to systematically address the empirical gap. Scholars have proposed that this relationship is shaped by various individual and work-related factors such as workload, job role, family matters, stress and supervisory support (Pathiranage et.al, 2023; Assella & Arachchi, 2020; Wong et.al., 2017). Dispute of existing studies have mainly studied these factors as independent predictors, research on collective impact related to work related factors remains limited (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). Hence, this study systematically examines the collective impact of multiple work-related factors, namely workload, job role, and supervisory support along with work life balance and job satisfaction.

Research aligned to job satisfaction in the travel outbound service sector are limited in international and local context though performance gaps are evident in the industry. In a global scale survey depicted travel service employees ranked at a bottom 32% careers, based on their job satisfaction (Sokanu Interactive Inc, 2025) where they depicted the importance of studies addressing job satisfaction performance gap in travel service sector. But the existing body of knowledge mainly highlighted consumer perspective studies (Kang et.al.,2011), technology application (Xie & Zhang, 2016), whereas employee perspective studies are limited. Studies addressing employees' issues are highly vital as they are a connecting point with customers in the travel service industry. Further, it is evident that scholars had examined the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction balance based on hospitality (Al-Omari et.al., 2020; Heimerl et.al, 2020) and travel agencies (Putri & Surya, 2021; Syed, 2021) but there are limited studies in travel inbound/outbound service sector. Hence present

study is specifically addressing the vacuum in job satisfaction issues align with employees who work in the travel outbound service sector. The present study examines the relationship between workload, job role and supervisory support with work life balance and job satisfaction reference to travel outbound service context in order to bridge the gaps. By considering that this study following the research problem, “How work life balance mediate relationship between work related factors and job satisfaction in outbound travel service sector in Sri Lanka?”. Aligning to main research problem below research questions and objective were formulated.

Research Questions

This research seeks answers to following questions.

RQ1: Does work life balance mediate relationship between job role and job satisfaction of employees working in travel outbound service sector in Sri Lanka?

RQ2: Does work life balance mediate relationship between workload and job satisfaction of employees working in travel outbound service sector in Sri Lanka?

RQ3: Does work life balance mediate relationship between supervisory support and job satisfaction of employees working in travel outbound service sector in Sri Lanka?

Research Objectives

Main objective of this study is to examine how work life balance mediates the relationship between work related factors and job satisfaction of employees working in travel outbound service sector. Accordingly, below specific objectives were formulated.

RO1: To examine mediating role of work life balance in the relationship between job role and job satisfaction of employees working in travel outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.

RO2: To examine mediating role of work life balance in the relationship between workload and job satisfaction of employees working in travel outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.

RO3: To examine mediating role of work life balance in the relationship between supervisory support and job satisfaction of employees working in travel outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.

Literature Review

Overview of Travel Outbound Service Sector in Sri Lanka

The travel service sector encompasses a complex web of links between destination marketing organizations, tourism products, travel agents, inbound and outbound travel services. Travel services provide a direct influence on tourist experience (Kang et.al., 2011). Travel outbound services are a highly intangible service sector that encompass planning, coordination and execution of international travels (Kang et.al., 2011; Knowles and Westcott, 2015). Rise of technology significantly caused growth of travel outbound services across the world. Asia-Pacific is dominating travel outbound tourism (Xie & Zhang, 2016). Sri Lankan travel outbound service sector driven diverse companies ranging from large conglomerates to local operators. According to Rathnayaka (2014) as cited in Samarathunga et.al. (2016), although quantity of inbound and outbound service companies was not documented, it is assumed 60 percent are outbound travel service providers while remaining 40 percent are inbound travel service providers. It is evident limited studies based on travel outbound service sector. Existing body of knowledge address mainly customer perspective whereas employee perspective studies are limited. Hence, the present study based on job satisfaction problem faced by travel outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction indicates employees' positive emotional state which results from their work experience. In any organization, the satisfaction of external customers influences by internal employee satisfaction (Bailey & Dandrade, 1995 as cited Rani et.al, 2011). The concept of employee satisfaction has evolved over time. In early literature, it defines job satisfaction as a broad construct by Locke, via a perspective of psychological and emotional components of job satisfaction (Biddle, 1986). Oshagbemi (1999) further emphasized it as the positive emotional reaction of an individual toward their job. More recent literature, however, views job satisfaction as a more subjective and individualized concept. Rani and Mariappan (2011) argue that job satisfaction should be examined in the context of individual job roles and experiences, rather than through a globalized lens. Supporting this, Nikola et al. (2025) defines job satisfaction as the degree to which employees perceive their organization's ability to meet their personal and professional needs. This highlights the importance of subjective elements such as perception, expectations, and internal values.

Job satisfaction is also widely studied within the field of organizational behavior, as it plays a critical role in determining employee performance, retention, and overall organizational success. Though job satisfaction is extensively studied construct in diverse sectors, it indicates implications have not been thoroughly explored in specifically, travel outbound service sector. Scholars have proved that employee satisfaction is influenced by multiple factors. In that respect job security, remuneration, work life balance, work environment, career development opportunities and appreciation are some of the crucial factors to be considered (Robbins et al., 2010). Present study considers examine relationship between key work-related factors and job satisfaction.

Work Related Factors Impact Job Satisfaction

Job Role

Individual job role significantly influences maintain healthy work -life balance. Job role plays significant functions of coordinating and integrating individual behavior. Job role is defined in different ways by scholars. Katz & Kahn (1978) defined job roles broadly, as the set of expectations and responsibilities associated with an employee's position in the organization. The role theory defines individual behavior according to specific work-related actions perform in their position (Dierdorff & Morgeson, 2007). This theory explains employees occupy roles that link with the expectations derived from supervisors, coworkers and organization. When these expectations are clear, employees' trend to experience positive attitude towards their jobs. Role clarity, role ambiguity and role conflict are concepts derived from role theory. A recent study revealed those three factors (role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload) as stressor aligned to job role and direct impact on wellbeing of travel service sector employees (Asella & Arachchi, 2020). But in some studies, examined job role in terms of task and responsibilities versus broad expectations such as personal traits and behaviors (Dierdorff & Morgeson, 2007).

Workload

Workload is a critical determinant of employee productivity, satisfaction and turnover. Job workload is defined as overwhelming, emotional exhaustion and burden occur from work (Bumrah, 2025). Extensive workload leads to emotional exhaustion which leads to diminishing effectiveness and job satisfaction. Further, workload refers to intensity of work allocated to

an individual in a specific period. It is the amount of work assign for individual during specific time period (Inegbedion et.al., 2020). The heavy workload and unreasonable demand for work often generates stress and burns out, having the dampening effect on work-life balance, whereas reasonable workload with appropriate job demands due to allowing adequate time for personal activities improves work-life balance significantly (McDowall, 2009). Accordingly, workload construct considers in two perspectives, in Asella and Arachchi (2020), Bumrah, (2025) studies considered workloads as job stressors while Inegbedion et.al. (2020) study considered workload as a job resource.

Supervisory Support

Supervisors are key to cultivating positive work environment in any sector. Supervisor is the person who is responsible to monitors employee performance and guiding employees in their career path. According to Iqbal et.al. (2020) supervisory support defines employees' perception towards their supervisor's encouragement and guidance provided regarding their job performance and concerns. Besides, Supervisory support is defined as critical element in person- organization fit (Putri & Surya, 2021). Supportive behavior of supervisor defines the positive behavior of an employee towards the organization. According to job demands-resources model supervisor support is considered as resource factors that influence positive behavioral outcome of an employee (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Hecne present study considers supervisory support as key work-related factor that influences behavioral outcome of an individual.

Work-life Balance

Work life balance concept was introduced in 1970s (Bocean et.al., 2023). Work-life balance defines in diverse perspective. First, work life balance is derived from two different visions; personal life and professional life, where synergy between two visions is a key component of individual development (Bocean et.al., 2023). According to Sirgy and Lee (2018) work life balance refers to equal involvement of diverse roles such as work role, family role, leisure life, community role and spiritual life. Scholars highlighted conflict between work and life can be initiated as work-family or family -work domains. This can negatively and positively impact on employee job satisfaction, productivity, job commitment, employee retention and loyalty (Azeem & Altalhi, 2015). Work life balance compromises two dimensions; namely, active role engagement in work and personal life and minimizing conflict between work and personal roles (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). Accordingly, individuals must actively engage in social roles in work and nonwork to establish work life balance.

Theoretical Foundation

This study is grounded in the job demands-resources (JD-R) model that explains how well job demand and job resource factors influence employee well-being and organizational outcome via two primary processes namely, impairment process and motivation process (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). According to job demands-resources model, job demand refers to physical and physiological components in a job that require to sustain effort and lead to burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). In the present study workload conceptualized as job demand align to prior studies (Chowhan & Pike, 2023; Portoghese et.al, 2025). Excessive workload led to emotional exhaustion and work life conflicts. Conversely, job resource components of work that support to achieve growth (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). According to prior studies, job role (autonomy) and supervisory support conceptualized as job resource factors in the study

(Chowhan & Pike, 2023; Portoghese et.al, 2025). Supervisory support and job role can buffer high workload and lead to positive behavioral outcomes. Grounded on JD-R model, high workload consumes employee physical and psychological energy leading to strain and disrupt work-life and job satisfaction. In construct, clear job roles and supervisory support, enhance autonomy, enable them to manage their responsibilities and preserve work life balance. Hence, according to JD-R model, theorizes job demand as workload leads to strain, and job resource such as supervisory support and job role enhance employee well-being. In this framework, work life balance represents the key physiological state through which job demand and resources influence job satisfaction. When job demand exceeds available resources, work life balance deteriorates and leads to decrease job satisfaction. Conversely adequate, supervisory support buffers the negative effect of demand, improves the balance of work-life balance and enhances satisfaction. Accordingly, job demands -resource model provides a strong theoretical justification in the present study to examine work life balance as a mediator between work-related factors (job role, workload, supervisory support) and job satisfaction. Application of job-demand resource models in hospitality and airline sector studies are evident which were similar sectors to travel outbound service sector (Del Villar et, al, 2025). But application in job demands -resources model is absence specifically related to travel outbound service sector. Thus, present study addresses this gap by extending application of job demands resource model to travel outbound service sector.

Hypotheses Development

Direct Effects

According to Dierdorff and Morgeson (2007), stated that employees' consideration of job-role requirements across different professions. In travel service sector, job roles are highly customer centric as responsibilities are ranging booking reservations, assisting customers choosing destinations, transportation, communicate rates of currency exchange and coordinating traveler's passport and visa requirements. Travel service employees had to coordinate with diverse stakeholders as part of their job role. Besides, Dierdorff and Morgeson (2007) revealed job task and work conditions including interdependence, autonomy, and routine that define how clearly job role expectations are shared. Manageable and meaningful job roles cause job satisfaction of individual. Scholars claim job role as key construct that link create job satisfaction. Research concluded that congruence between job role lead higher satisfaction of individual (Kristof-Brown et.al., 2005; Cowin & Moroney, 2018; Asella & Arachchi, 2020). However, majority of these studies acknowledge job role impact on job satisfaction, with specific dimensions namely work conflict and clarity. Thus, present study provides a holistic approach to bridge the gap. Accordingly, H1 is formulated as below.

H1: *Job role has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction of employees in outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.*

Excessive workloads diminish job satisfaction (McDowall, 2009; Bumrah, 2025; Inegbedion et.al., 2020). Besides, workload below the standards leads to diminishing performance and job satisfaction (Inegbedion et.al., 2020). Hence, balanced workload is crucial to satisfy employees. Studies based on travel service sector highlighted importance of workload on job satisfaction. Asse et.al. (2025) conclude that workload as a main factor that define performance of travel service sector organization based on Indonesia. Concurrently, Assella & Arachchi (2020) concluded workload as a stress factor that negatively impacts on performance of non-managerial employees working in travel agencies in Sri Lanka (Assella &

Arachchi, 2020; Inegbedion, 2020). Empirical studies validate the relationship between workload and job satisfaction. Accordingly, H2 is formulated as below.

H2 - *Workload has a significant negative effect on job satisfaction of employees in outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.*

Extensive literature highlighted link between supervisory support and job satisfaction of employees in diverse sectors (Njeri, 2014; Heimerl et.al., 2020). Supervisory support is considered a job resource that creates job satisfaction and a crucial factor that mitigates emotional exhaustion related to job (Bumrah, 2025). Supervisory support fosters positive work environment and enhances employee engagement. Relationship between supervisory support and job satisfaction indicates strong empirical investigations. Studies based on tourism and hospitality concluded supervisory support is correlated with job satisfaction of employees significantly (Heimerl et.al., 2020; Bumrah, 2025). A study based on travel service sector Bali, Indonesia concluded that supervisory support had direct correlation with job satisfaction (Putri & Surya, 2021). This study concluded that supervisory support construct strengthens the person-organization fit and job satisfaction relationship. Correspondingly, Heimerl et.al. (2020) study summarized employee enjoy the job, where they have positive and strong relationship with their supervisor. Based on the evidence below hypothesis is formulated.

H3 - *Supervisory support has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction of employees in outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.*

Work life balance deals with different consequences; namely, work related outcomes, nonwork related and stress related outcomes (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). Present study specifically examined job satisfaction which is considered as work-related outcome. Previous studies consistently verified positive correlation between work life balance and job satisfaction. Hence, Al-Omari et.al. (2020) stated work-life balance becomes a part of organization culture to enhance employee job satisfaction. A multi-country study done by Haar et al. (2014) concluded that work life balance significantly predicts job satisfaction across diverse cultural contexts. Employers strategizing work life balance prior to employee job satisfaction (Syed, 2021; Mansor et.al., 2022). Accordingly, below hypothesis is formulated to further validate the relationship between work life balance and job satisfaction in related to outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.

H4 - *Work-life balance has a significantly positive effect on job satisfaction of employees in outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.*

Work Related Factors and Work Life Balance

Existing body of knowledge revealed work life balance in two distinct dimensions that include organizational predictors and personal predictors. Moreover, Sirgy and Lee (2018) stated work life balance conceptualization based on work related, non-work related and stress related outcomes. Present study considering work related predictors as it is directly link with work related outcomes. Among number of work-related factors, present study considers job role, workload and supervisory support as work related antecedent influence work life balance. Employees in travel outbound service sector experienced high workload due to dynamic nature of sector. Prior studies proved significant association between workload and work life balance (Rani et.al.,2011; Pathiranage et.al, 2023). Aligning prior evidence below H6 was formulated.

H5 - *Job role has a significant positive effect on work-life balance of employees in outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.*

Job role is another work-related antecedent that can influence work life balance as well as individual outcomes. Well-defined job roles can facilitate work-life balance by reducing stress and ambiguity, as workers are given clear expectations and boundaries of their work (Biddle, 1986). Similarly, Robbins et al. (2010) believe that a properly defined job will contribute to better performance as personnel then know what their primary focus is and what they are expected to achieve. In Sri Lankan context, employees struggle between job and family responsibilities causes for dissatisfaction in work arrangements (Arunshantha, 2019). Hence, H5 is formulated as below.

H6 - *Workload has a significant negative effect on work-life balance of employees in outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.*

Among the predictors of work life balance, supervisory support is key antecedent categorized under organizational support systems (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). Work-life balance can be facilitated or hindered by specific supervisory support - flexible work times, work-life benefits, or effective communication; on the other hand, inflexibility in workplaces and lack of top supervisory support may lead to a critical situation for a worker to effectively balance personal and job-related life (Freeman and Shaw, 2006). Managerial Support' is consistently emphasized in discussions and studies as a factor influencing work/life balance (Rani Et.al, 2011; Njeri, 2014; Thu, 2025; Portoghese et.al, 2025). Accordingly, H7: formulated as below.

H7 - *Supervisory support has a significant positive effect work-life balance of employees in outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.*

Mediating Effects

Scholars examined work life balance mediating role in studies related to job satisfaction. According to Sirgy and Lee (2018) conceptualization revealed that work life balance mediates between individual and organizational antecedents and work related, stress related and no work-related outcomes. Similarly, Rani et.al (2011) reflected work life balance mediating job role and employee satisfaction. A study focusing on non-academic administrative officers in Sri Lankan universities highlighted that increased workload adversely affected their work-life balance, leading to lower job satisfaction (Pathiranage et.al, 2023). Studies concluded work life balance mediating role between supervisory support, workload and job satisfaction based on different contexts (Mas-Machuca et.al, 2016). According to a study based on banking sector conclude workload and job satisfaction relationship is not mediating via work life balance with is contrast to previous findings (Fuadiputra and Novianti, 2020). Pathiranage (et.al, 2023) revealed inconsistency between workload, work life balance and job satisfaction constructs relationships compared to prior studies. Based on this inconsistency in empirical evidence present study was conceptualized to examine the mediation role of work life balance in between work related factors (workload, job role and supervisory support) and job satisfaction of employees. Besides, as per the theoretical justification, job demands-resources model provides a strong theoretical justification in the present study to examine work life balance as a mediator between work-related factors (job role, workload, supervisory support) and job satisfaction. As per Bakker and Demerouti (2007) job demands-resources model, workload act as job demand factors and supervisory support and job role act as resource factors that influence work life balance which consequently lead job satisfaction (Chowhan &

Pike, 2023; Portoghese et.al, 2025). Thus, present study examines work life balance mediating role of work-related factors and job satisfaction via formulating below H8, H9 and H10.

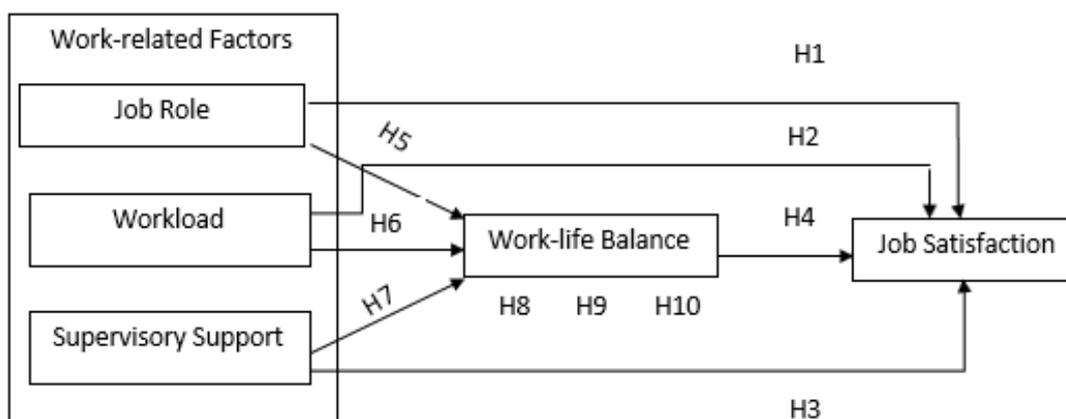
H8: Work life balance mediates the relationship between work-role and job satisfaction of employees in outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.

H9: Work life balance mediates the relationship between workload and job satisfaction of employees in outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.

H10: Work life balances the relationship between supervisory support and job satisfaction of employees in outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature review and theoretical foundation conceptual framework of this study is presented in Figure 01.



Source: Author (2025)

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Methodology

This research adopted a deductive approach under a positivistic research philosophy. The present study used a survey as a research strategy and a quantitative research approach. According to available industry statistics, the outbound travel agency population consists of approximately 500 employees who are recognized as permanent staff, which is considered the population of the present study (Rathnayaka, 2014). Data were collected from the employees work in travel outbound service companies in Sri Lanka in a cross-sectional time horizon. Initially, the questionnaire was sent to all the employees working in travel outbound service companies in Sri Lanka. Altogether 300 questionnaire surveys were administered. After discarding invalid questionnaires, 230 questionnaires were utilized for data analysis with a 77% respondent rate. Accordingly, the present study used simple random sampling technique to collect a sample of 230 employees who work in travel outbound service companies in Sri Lanka. After removing invalid and unfilled questionnaires, 217 used for data analysis. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size of 217 is acceptable since the table recommends a minimum sample size of about 217 for a population of 500 in order to guarantee a representative sample.

Previously used scales, questionnaires, and items that are validated were used in operationalizing the constructs of the present study. Job role, workload and supervisory support construct measures using the scales used by Njeri (2014), Karatepe (2014) and

Bumrah (2025) articles. Work-life balance items were derived from the study done by Njeri (2014), which is used in Omar's (2020) study. Finally, the employee job satisfaction construct is derived from Susanto et.al (2022). Items of all latent variables were measured via five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Data analysis was performed via IBM SPSS statistical package while mediation analysis was performed via the PROCESS macro, with a bootstrapping method of 5000 samples to test the significance of direct and indirect effects (Hayes, 2018) and findings of the analysis discussed in below.

Data Analysis and Results

Data analysis of the present study conducted in three phases namely, descriptive analysis, data reliability and validity testing and regression analysis.

Respondent Profile

Sample used for present study characterized diverse respondents based on gender, age, marital status, work experience and education level as shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, when considering the gender, age, marital status, work experience and education qualifications the majority of the respondents are females, belong to 20 to 35 age group, married, has 1 to 5 work experience and graduates respectively.

Table 1
Profile of Respondents

Category	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	106	48.8
	Female	111	51.2
Age	20-35	145	66.8
	36-45	33	15.2
	46-55	29	13.4
	Above 56	10	4.6
Marital status	Single	106	48.8
	Married	102	47.0
	Widow	2	.9
	Separated	6	2.8
	Divorced	1	.5
Work experience	Less than 1 year	18	8.3
	1-5 years	105	48.4
	6-10 years	44	20.3
	11-15 years	25	11.5
	16-20 years	16	7.4
	Above 21 years	9	4.1
Education qualifications	Advanced Level	14	6.5
	Undergraduate Level	21	9.7
	Graduate Level	111	51.2
	Masters	67	30.9
	Doctorate	4	1.8

Source: Author (2025)

Prior to testing the measurement model, the data set was tested for reliability, validity and correlation. Initially factor analysis was carried out to test reliability of the questions used to measure the constructs. According to the common rule in SPSS, P values above 0.50 in rotated component matrix- are acceptable (Albayrak, 2005). According to threshold value 0.5 all the factor loadings related to the study indicated acceptable Value.

The next phase construct reliability and validity test conducted. Table 2 depicted reliability and validity test related to present study.

Table 2

Reliability and Validity Test

Variable	Items	Cronbach's alpha value	KMO values	Bartlett's test of Sphericity values
Job role	06	0.817	0.829	0.000
Workload	08	0.942	0.923	0.000
Supervisory support	05	0.936	0.856	0.000
Work life balance	06	0.975	0.909	0.000
Job satisfaction	05	0.915	0.848	0.000

Source: Author (2025)

Table 2 depicted reliability and validity test related to present study. The Cronbach's alpha test was calculated to test reliability of the constructs (Sekaran, 2003). According to results of Cronbach's alpha test work-life balance indicates highest value ($\alpha = 0.975$), while the workload and supervisory support indicators are also reliable ($\alpha = 0.942$ and $\alpha = 0.936$, respectively). In addition, job role indicators (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.817$) as well as job satisfaction indicators (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.915$) exhibit satisfactory levels of reliability that make the measures reliable for use in this research.

Next, results of "Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test" and "Bartlett's Test of Sphericity" test was performed. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test result accepted the value of 0.50 (Aydin, 2007). The results of the factor analysis show the appropriacy of the data in the study through high KMO values of (0.829-0.923 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($p = 0.000$) of all variables. The extracted factors correspond to the items for each variable which suggests coherent constructs and sufficient to measure variables.

Table 3
Correlation Analysis

		Job role	Workload	Supervisory support	Work-life balance	Job satisfaction
Job role	Pearson Correlation	1	.295**	.735**	.821**	.757**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
Workload	Pearson Correlation	.295**	1	.118	.240**	.115
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.083	.000	.091
Supervisory support	Pearson Correlation	.735**	.118	1	.760**	.777**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.083		.000	.000
Work-life balance	Pearson Correlation	.821**	.240**	.760**	1	.739**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
Job satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.757**	.115	.777**	.739**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.091	.000	.000	
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

Source: Author (2025)

Then, correlation analysis was carried to validate association between variables. The correlation analysis also underlines the strong positive effects of job role, the level of supervisory support and work-life balance and the level of employee job satisfaction. The most significant relationships are revealed between job role and work-life balance ($r = 0.821$, $p < 0.001$) and between supervisory support and satisfaction ($r = 0.760$, $p < 0.001$). On the other hand, workload has a lower association with work-life balance, ($r = 0.240$) and has no association at all with employees' satisfaction.

As initial phase of the hypothesis test, regression was performed to test each relationship individually. The result of regression analysis is depicted in Table 4.

Table 4

Results of Regression Analysis

Hypothesis	Beta value (β)	Sig. value	Result
H1: Job role has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction of employees in outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.	0.448	0.000	Accepted
H2: Workload has a significant negative effect on job satisfaction of employees in outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.	- 0.056	0.096	Rejected
H3: Supervisory support has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction of employees in outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.	0.370	0.000	Accepted
H4: Work-life balance has a significantly positive effect on job satisfaction of employees in outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.	0.563	0.000	Accepted
H5: Job role has a significant positive effect on work-life balance of employees in outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.	0.749	0.000	Accepted
H6: Workload has a significant negative effect on work-life balance of employees in outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.	0.038	0.348	Rejected
H7: Supervisory support has a significant positive effect work-life balance of employees in outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.	0.363	0.000	Accepted

Source: Author (2025)

The p-values recorded in the hypothesis testing summary table depicted all direct paths are significant at the 0.05 percent level ($p < 0.05$). The results show that job role ($\beta = 0.448$, $p < 0.05$), supervisory support ($\beta = 0.370$, $p < 0.05$) significantly affect job satisfaction. Furthermore, the direct relationships between job role ($\beta = 0.749$) and supervisory support ($\beta = 0.363$) with work-life balance were also significant. This suggests that not only do these factors shape work-life balance, but they also directly contribute to how satisfied employees feel with their jobs. But result depicted workload ($\beta = - 0.056$, $p < 0.05$), with job satisfaction and workload ($\beta = 0.038$, $p < 0.05$) with work-life balance, which is insignificant. Accordingly, all other direct relationships H1, H3, H4, H5 and H7 were found statistically significant by H2 and H6 not significant.

As final step the mediation analysis conducted to determined presence of mediation. Table summarized key statistical results and the conclusions regarding the hypothesis indicated in Table 5.

Table 5

Mediation Analysis

		Total effect	Direct effect	Indirect effect
H8	Work life balance mediates the relationship between work-role and job satisfaction of employees in outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.	0.777 LLCI = 0.687 ULCI= 0.867	0.475 LLCI= 0.325 ULCI= 0.625	0.302 LLCI =0.107 ULCI=0.498
H9	Work life balance mediates the relationship between workload and job satisfaction of employees in outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.	0.091 LLCI= -0.015 ULCI= 0.205	-0.055 LLCI= -0.132 ULCI= 0.022	0.150 LLCI= 0.040 ULCI=0.253
H10	Work life balances the relationship between supervisory support and job satisfaction of employees in outbound service sector in Sri Lanka.	0.407 LLCI= 0.310 ULCI=0.504	0.213 LLCI= 0.104 ULCI=0.335	0.267 LLCI=0.133 ULCI=0.421

Source: Author (2025)

The results of H8 show that work-life balance serve partial mediation between work-role and job satisfaction. The total effect of job role on job satisfaction was significant (0.777), were indicated employees with strong job role perceived high job satisfaction. Further, direct effect depicted significant (0.475), and indirect effect through work life balance also depicted significant (0.302). This concludes enhancing job role and supporting work life balance creates greater job satisfaction among employees. The results of H9 depicted total effect of workload and job satisfaction 0.091 not statistically significant. Direct effects depicted not significant (-0.055), but indirect effects through work life balance depicted significant (0.150). Even though the total effect was weak, the indirect effect was significant as confidence interval did not include zero, indicating indirect-only mediation. Though, individual direct relationship between work life balance non significance, in regression analysis, bootstrap result depicted significant effect consist with contemporary mediation analysis (Hayes,2018). The results indicate that work life balance indirect-only mediation relationship between workload and job satisfaction of employees. This concludes employee's ability to balance between work and life transmit the effect of workload to job satisfaction. Hence organizations require to promote work life balance to buffer the effect of workload on job satisfaction. As for H10, role of work life balance on the relationship between supervisory support on job satisfaction indicate partial mediation. The total effect of supervisory support on job satisfaction was significant (0.407), where indicated employees with strong supervisory support perceived high job satisfaction. Further, direct effects depicted significant (0.213), and indirect effects through work life balance also depicted significant (0.267). The findings conclude that work-life balance partially mediates the relationship between supervisory support and job satisfaction. Work life balance demonstrates significant indirect effect across all relationships, though the strength and type of mediation vary. Hence, the findings indicate that work-life balance plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between work-related factors (workload, job role and supervisory support) and job satisfaction.

Discussion

The study aims to examine the mediating role of work life balance in the relationship between work related factors (job role, workload, supervisory support) and job satisfaction among the employees in travel outbound service sector in Sri Lanka. In corresponding to previous studies, present study claim work life balance has a significant correlation with all three work-related factors: namely, job role, workload and supervisory support. This finding highlights important insights on role of work life balance in between work related factors and job satisfaction in high customer oriented and demanding service environment.

First findings of the present study revealed the relationship between job role and job satisfaction partially mediate by work life balance, findings concurrent to Sirgy and Lee (2018), Cowin and Moroney (2018), Asella and Arachchi (2020), Rani et.al. (2011) studies. This indicates well defined, manageable and meaningful job roles can accelerate job performance not only by providing clarity and role fulfillment but also enables balance of work and family responsibilities. Consist with previous studies, clearly define job roles foster a positive attitude towards work among employees were enable job satisfaction by facilitating better work life balance (Arunashantha, 2019; Dierdorff & Morgeson, 2007). In the context of travel outbound service sector where job roles are multitasking, coordinating with multiple stakeholders and extended working hours, job role clarity and autonomy appear to support work life balance and job satisfaction. Besides, persistence of direct effect suggests task variety and skills utilization contribute to independent job satisfaction.

Existing literature revealed contrast in findings related to mediating role of work-life balance in between workload and job satisfaction as highlighted by Pathiranahe et.al (2023). The second finding of the present study addresses this gap, and it is concluded work life balance indirect-only mediation in between the relationship of workload and job satisfaction. Hence, present study further validates conclusions driven in some studies (Mas-Machuca et.al., 2016; Arunashantha, 2019). This revealed workload doesn't directly influence job satisfaction, where work-life balance acts as mediator. Instead, workload impact on job satisfaction preliminary though employee's ability to maintain work and family life balance. In travel outbound service sector employees often face high customer demand, peak season pressure and irregular working hours subjected to excessive workload which disrupt work life balance and leads to job dissatisfaction. This finding underscore central role of work life balance as a key mechanism to link job demand to job satisfaction.

The third finding concludes that supervisory support has significant relationship with job satisfaction and work life balance, partially mediate relationship between supervisory support and job satisfaction. Consist with prior research, findings highlighted dual role of supervisory support in enhancing behavioral outcome (Mas-Machuca et.al, 2016; Alegre et.al., 2016; Sirgy & Lee, 2018; Asella & Arachchi, 2020). The findings revealed supervisory support directly and indirectly influenced job satisfaction. In travel outbound service sector, employees where coordinate customers and handle time sensitive task, supervisor support directly improve individual recognition and motivation. Besides, supervisors enable flexible work settings and emotional support leads grater work life balance and job satisfaction among employees.

Overall, these results indicate work life balance pivotal mediating role in between work related factors (job role, workload, supervisory support) and job satisfaction. Sirgy and Lee

(2018) highlighted work life balance mediating role in his study. Present study further validates work life balance mediating role in related to travel outbound service sector.

Implications

Present study contributes to human resource management literature. Firstly, Pathiranage et.al, (2023) highlighted contract finding on work life balance mediating role in between workload and job satisfaction constructs. Present study findings address this gap and conclude indirect-only mediation work life balance mediating role in between workload and job satisfaction. Secondly, this study findings contribute to extending body of knowledge by examining the nature of mediating role of work life balance in between key work-related factors (job role, workload and supervisory support) on job satisfaction specifically based on Sri Lankan context. Thirdly, the study extends job demands-resources model by positioning work-life balance as a mediator linking job demand and job resources to job satisfaction. In addition, it is extended adaptation of the theory in to travel outbound service sector, which was underexplored in JD-R research.

From the managerial perspective the research findings provide insights to improve job satisfaction special refer to travel outbound service sector. The findings reinforce focusing on clearly defining job roles, ensure manageable workload and adequate managerial support to promote healthy work life balance. The result depicted, fostering healthy work-life balance acts as a mediating mechanism through which these work-related factors enhance job satisfaction levels. Moreover, it highlights the importance of supportive workplace policies and need of employee centric approaches in human resource management in workplace. Based on the findings, organizations need to implement effective work life policies align in the sense of flexible work arrangements, clarity of job roles, autonomy of decision making in job role and supervisory support systems.

Limitations and Future Research Direction

Several limitations can be acknowledged. Firstly, study highly focuses on travel out bound service sector in Sri Lanka that limit the generalizability other industries and cultural contexts. Secondly, present study considered only three key work-related factors namely, job role, workload and supervisory support. Some other important construct such as organizational and external factors to be unfolded. Thirdly, work life balance construct measures by only considering balance between work and family perspective where other perspectives were excluded.

To address these limitations, future research could be conducted in other industries specifically travel inbound service sector. Further, future research can evaluate inter-relationship between independent factors along with work life balance mediators. Future research can adopt broad conceptualization of work life balance construct based on perspectives leisure life, community role and spiritual life as mentioned by Sirgy and Lee (2018). Finally, there is a potential research direction to test organizational and external factors along with work life balance mediator influence on job satisfaction.

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