

PERCEIVED SUPERVISOR SUPPORT, BURNOUT, AND WORK LIFE BALANCE: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY**Vidyadayini Shetty**

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ABSTRACT

Work-life balance refers to the extent to which individuals can fulfil their professional goals while also dedicating time to family, friends, and personal interests. Burnout is characterized by a combination of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a sense of low personal accomplishment, all of which contribute to reduced work. Employees' work life balance and burnout has a great implication on the employees' well-being and productivity and welfare of the organization. This research study examines the effects of perceived supervisor support on work life balance and burnout of individuals working in the teaching, banking and finance, and IT sectors. A total of 97 participants responded to three scales namely Perceived Supervisor Support Scale, Bergen Burnout Inventory (BBI), Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL), and a self-constructed demographic scale. The findings of the research study emphasize the crucial role of perceived supervisor support in influencing both work interference with personal life and feelings of burnout among employees. However, the study did not find significant differences across sectors or demographic factors in terms of perceived supervisor support, work-life balance, and burnout scores. The implication of the study is enhancing supervisor support and implementing effective organizational policies for fostering employee well-being and organizational success. These efforts could potentially mitigate work-family conflict, reduce burnout, and contribute to a more supportive and productive work environment.

Keywords: perceived supervisor support scale, burnout, work-life balance, organizations

INTRODUCTION

Workplaces are intricate systems that incorporate the characteristics of the organization, the various jobs within it, the individuals performing those jobs, and the interactions between organizational, job, and individual attributes (Glisson & Durick, 1988). Emotionally and physically taxing environments, rising expectations, extended working hours, and inadequate support systems have resulted in growing job-related frustration for many workers. Consequently, Burnout Syndrome (BOS) has become a significant barrier to maintaining a healthy work environment, particularly among healthcare professionals and individuals in other high-stress occupations such as firefighters, law enforcement officers, and educators (Mealer et al. 2012). Burnout is characterized by a combination of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a sense of low personal accomplishment, all of which contribute to reduced work effectiveness (Maslach, 1966). This syndrome is particularly prevalent in professions that involve significant interaction with people, such as physicians, nurses, social workers, and teachers. However, burnout has also been observed in a variety of other professions (Kaschka, 2011).

Work-life balance refers to the extent to which individuals can fulfil their professional goals while also dedicating time to family, friends, and personal interests (Cambridge Dictionary). The idea originated during the Industrial Revolution when labour unions advocated for eight-hour workdays, dividing the 24-hour day into equal parts: eight hours for work, eight hours for leisure, and eight hours for sleep. Improving your work-life balance can improve your overall well-being, including your physical, emotional, and mental health. Studies have found that working long hours can lead to such serious health issues as "impaired sleep, depression, heavy drinking, diabetes, impaired memory, and heart disease" (Harvard Business Review, 2023). Unfortunately, as these conditions arise they can also exacerbate our work-life issues, leading to burnout and other negative repercussions.

Employees' work life balance and burnout has a great implications on the employees' well-being and productivity and welfare of the organization. This research study examines the effects of perceived supervisor support on

International Journal of Applied Engineering & Technology

work life balance and burnout of individuals working in the teaching, banking and finance, and IT sectors. Kossek et al. (2011) define perceptions of supervisor work-life support as an employee's perception that their supervisor cares about his or her work-life well-being. Supportive supervisor behaviors include emotional support, instrumental support, role modeling behaviors, and creative work-life management (Hammer et al. 2009). The purpose of the study is to highlight the relationship between perceived supervisor support, work-life balance and burnout symptoms among employees. Furthermore, the study also aims to find the differences in perceived supervisor support, work life balance and burn out among the teaching, banking and finance, and IT sectors and the influence of demographic factors on the variables under study.

Following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Perceived supervisor support are significantly related to perceived work-life balance.
2. Perceived supervisor support are significantly related to burnout syndrome.
3. There will be a significant variation in perceived supervisor support, work-life balance, and burnout scores among individuals working in the teaching, banking and finance, and IT sectors.
4. There will be a significant difference in perceived supervisor support, work-life balance, and burnout scores between male and female employees.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

A total of 97 participants responded, all of whom were in full-time employment within the teaching, banking and finance, or IT sectors. The age distribution of the participants was as follows: 65 individuals (67%) were aged 25-35 years, 13 individuals (13.4%) were aged 36-45 years, and 19 individuals (19.6%) were aged 46-55 years. The gender distribution was nearly equal, with 49 females (50.5%) and 48 males (49.5%).

Regarding educational qualifications, 36.1% of the participants were graduates, 44.3% held postgraduate degrees, and 14% had obtained PhDs. The sector distribution showed that 28.9% of the participants worked in banking and finance, 27.8% in IT, and 43.3% in the teaching sector.

In terms of job profiles, 11.3% of the participants were in decision-making roles, 69.1% were involved in planning and implementation, and 19.6% held supervisory positions.

Tools Used

Perceived Supervisor Support Scale

The Perceived Supervisor Support Scale (Cheng et al., 2015) was developed to measure employees' perceptions of supervisor support. All items were rated using seven-point Likert scales (ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree"). Higher scores indicate a strong perceived support.

Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL)

WIPL (Hayman, 2005) use a 5-point Likert scale anchored with the end points 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. The scale measures the extent to which work responsibilities interfere with personal and family life. Higher scores on the WIPL indicate a higher level of work interference with personal life.

Bergen Burnout Inventory (BBI)

The Bergen Burnout Inventory (BBI) is a comprehensive tool designed to measure burnout, a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged stress and overwork. The BBI has been validated in various studies, showing good reliability and validity. It is considered a robust tool for assessing burnout across different occupations and cultural contexts.

Procedure

A Google Form was circulated within personal groups, outlining specific inclusion criteria. Participants were asked to provide demographic information including age, gender, education level, and job role. Following this, three scales were administered to gauge perceived supervisor support, work-life balance, and burnout levels.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**Table 1:** Descriptive data of Perceived supervisor support, burnout, and work interference in personal life

		PSS	BO	WLB
Mean		32.6	24.2	19.9
Median		33	23	19
SD		6.64	8.08	7.58

The means in the above table indicate that participants experience moderate levels of perceived supervisor support and burnout. Additionally, a lower-level work interference was observed.

Table 2: The correlational values of Perceived supervisor support, burnout, and work life balance

		PSS	BO
BO	Pearson's r	-0.523***	—
	p-value	< .001	—
WLB	Pearson's r	-0.386***	0.782***
	p-value	< .001	< .001

The above table indicates a statistically significant negative but a weak relationship between perceived supervisor support and work interference in personal life ($r = -0.386$). In other words, higher the perceived supervisor support, lower levels of work interference experienced by the participants or vice versa. The findings support past research findings. A study conducted by Johnson and Sikora (2018) highlighted that even in situations where employees faced work-family conflict, higher levels of perceived supervisor support may buffer the negative effects of work-family conflict, leading to better work-life balance. Many other studies point to the fact that besides, supervisor support, job demands, organizational culture and policies such as a strong emphasis on work-life balance initiatives, employee personality factors such as resilience, proactive behaviours, and growth mind-set can be mediating factors in work life balance.

The study also explored the relationship between perceived supervisor support and feelings of burnout experienced by employees. A statistically significant moderate negative relationship was found between the variables. The findings supports past findings (Wang & Zhang, 2018); Johnson & Brown, 2019). A vast body of researches indicate that perceived supervisor support in form of emotional support, instrumental support, and providing better job resources to the employees will result in positive outcomes such as increased job satisfaction, more work commitment and work engagement, which will further lead to the organizational well-being.

The analysis revealed no statistically significant differences among the three variables concerning the sectors where respondents were employed. Similarly, demographic factors such as age, gender, education, and job profile did not exhibit variations in perceived supervisor support, work-life balance, and burnout scores. However, several limitations of the study should be noted. These include the use of self-report measures, unequal distribution of participants across sectors and gender, which could potentially influence the study's findings.

CONCLUSION

In sum, the current research study emphasizes the crucial role of perceived supervisor support in influencing both work interference with personal life and feelings of burnout among employees. The findings of the promotes that supportive supervisor behaviours, including emotional and instrumental support, as well as resource allocation, contribute significantly to positive workplace outcomes such as work-life balance and reduction of burnout among employees

International Journal of Applied Engineering & Technology

Moreover, while this study did not find significant differences across sectors or demographic factors in terms of perceived supervisor support, work-life balance, and burnout scores, it is important to acknowledge that future research could benefit from addressing these limitations to further validate and extend these findings.

Overall, the results have important implications for decision-makers to formulate policies and programs which will provide an environment of enhancing supervisor support and implementing effective organizational policies that promote a conducive environment which are crucial for fostering employee well-being and organizational success. These efforts could potentially mitigate work-family conflict, reduce burnout, and contribute to a more supportive and productive work environment.

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