

How Conducive Is the Workplace? Work Culture, Work-Life Balance, Gender, and Employee Well-being in Sri Lankan Banks

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of organizational culture on employee well-being, among Sri Lankan banking professionals, with particular emphasis on the mediating role of work-life balance (WLB) and the moderating role of gender. Survey data from 286 middle-level employees were analyzed via the PROCESS macro in SPSS and the Sobel test. The results indicate that a positive organizational culture significantly enhances well-being, with WLB partially mediating this relationship. These findings are primarily grounded in Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and supported by Perceived Organizational Support (POS) theory. Contrary to assumptions derived from social role theory, gender did not significantly moderate these relationships. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of supportive workplaces and WLB-friendly policies in improving employee well-being. In this context, as movements toward gender equality and inclusion continue to grow, equitable practices such as flexible working hours, parental leave for all genders, and well-being initiatives can foster inclusive, high-performing work environments.

Keywords: *Employees' Well-Being, Gender, Sri Lanka, Work Culture, Work-Life Balance*

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Introduction

Employee well-being has become a cornerstone of organizational success, as it directly influences productivity, job satisfaction, and overall performance (Lomas et al., 2017). It is commonly defined as individuals' emotional and physical health, how well they handle both their job and their personal life, and their overall quality of life (QoL) (Yan et al., 2020). A wide range of factors support better employee well-being along with a positive work culture, WLB, job demands and control, social support, physical work environment, job security, recognition and rewards, health and wellness programs, fairness and equity, and opportunities for growth (Nielsen & Noblet, 2018; Zhang & Liu, 2020; Patel et al., 2025; Grønstad et al., 2025). Among these, work culture is especially important, as it shapes organizational values, behaviors, and support systems that directly impact employees' emotional and psychological health (Zhang & Liu, 2020).

A positive work culture emphasizes flexibility, inclusivity, and recognition, fosters a sense of belonging, promotes collaboration, and enhances overall well-being, whereas a toxic culture can cause stress, low interest in work, and lower job satisfaction (Zhang & Liu, 2020; Monteiro & Joseph, 2023). Central to this dynamic is the WLB, which plays a key connecting role between work culture and employee well-being. WLB is a person's capacity to manage the demands of both their job and personal life effectively (Kossek et al., 2011). Research highlights that those organizational cultures fostering flexibility, adaptability, and supervisor support enhance WLB, thereby positively influencing employee well-

being (Guest, 2017; Stankevičienė et al., 2021; Peiris & Wanigasekara, 2023).

However, the way work culture interacts WLB, and employee well-being becomes even more complex when considering gender. Gendered expectations often shape how employees experience work-related stress, responsibilities, and organizational support (Hoogland et al., 2016). Therefore, examining how work culture influences WLB and well-being across genders is essential for addressing gender-specific challenges and creating a more balanced and supportive work environment that enhances overall employee well-being (Vial & Beneda, 2025).

Despite this, most studies have examined only the direct effects of work culture and WLB on employee well-being (Dike et al., 2012; Mauno, 2010; Groner, 2018; Clark, 2001) (Appendix A). Stankevičienė et al. (2021) and Peiris & Wanigasekara (2023) have introduced a mediating mechanism, and WLB has been the sole mediator explored in the work culture and well-being relationship. Beyond these, no other mediators have been tested. This study is significant as it is primarily grounded in SDT, which explains how work-culture practices enhance employee well-being by satisfying employees' basic psychological needs through improved WLB (Siregar et al., 2025). To strengthen this explanation, POS theory is incorporated as a complementary lens, clarifying how employees interpret these work-culture practices as supportive. Integrating SDT and POS provides a more comprehensive understanding of how work culture influences WLB and, in turn, well-being. Social Role Theory is then employed to explain gender

differences in this mediating pathway, illustrating how the indirect effect of work culture on well-being via WLB varies between men and women. By testing both the mediating role of WLB and the moderating effect of gender, the study addresses previously overlooked relationships and offers a valuable contribution to the literature.

Building on this contribution, the research focuses on the banking sector, where achieving WLB has become a crucial goal for them in today's fast-paced work environment (Varsha, 2023). Moreover, diverse work cultures have emerged as a response to regional socio-economic instability (Shabir, et al., 2024). Many countries across South Asia have faced economic challenges, political uncertainties, and evolving labor market conditions, prompting organizations to adopt varied strategies to manage workloads, employee expectations, and job demands (George et al., 2022). While the banking sector significantly contributes to the economy, it is also characterized by high-pressure environments, strict performance targets, extended working hours, and rigid hierarchies (Paul & Karunaratne, 2020; Fajimi, 2021). Combined with deep-rooted cultural norms and gender expectations, these conditions hinder employees' ability to achieve WLB, negatively affecting well-being and contributing to a growing talent retention crisis. Recent evidence from Sri Lanka shows that turnover rates in some sub-sectors, particularly state banks, have reached 12% to 15% (Jeewanthi et al., 2024).

The study targets middle-level employees, who are the backbone of banking operations, positioned between top management and frontline staff,

these employees experience pressures from both strategic decision-making and operational execution, making them an ideal sample for examining the dynamics of WLB (Thathsarani & Jayathilak, 2022). Therefore, we assume that their role provides valuable insights into how work culture, gender, and WLB interact to influence employee well-being within hierarchical organizations, an issue relevant to banking and financial institutions operating in high-pressure environments. Based on these insights, the study makes three key contributions. First, it advances theory by integrating SDT and POS theories into a moderated-mediation framework. Second, it provides empirical evidence from middle-level employees in the Sri Lankan banking sector, offering insights from a high-pressure and under-studied context. Third, it offers practical guidance for organizations, highlighting how flexible, supportive, and gender-sensitive work-culture practices can enhance employees' WLB and well-being.

Accordingly, the study addresses the following research questions,

1. What is the mediating effect of WLB on the relationship between organizational culture and employee well-being?
2. Does gender play a moderating role in the relationship between work culture and employees' well-being through WLB?

Literature Review

Work Culture and Employee Well-Being



Ozcan and Ozturk (2020) describe culture as a set of essential factors that influence employees' attitudes toward their roles, including norms, rules, and regulations that improve the performance. Similarly, Belias et al. (2015) further defined culture as how managers and employees communicate and cooperate within an organization. A positive work environment is essential in promoting an environment that promotes employee well-being. Empirical research consistently demonstrates that supportive and inclusive work cultures are positively associated with employee well-being (Monteiro & Joseph, 2023). A work environment characterized by open communication, recognition of employee contributions, and mutual respect that enhances job satisfaction, reduces stress, and supports mental health (Paul & Karunaratne, 2020). Koyuncu et al. (2018) discovered that a work culture that encourages open communication and acknowledges employee accomplishments is related to greater job satisfaction and psychological well-being. Creating a conducive work environment is therefore essential for sustaining employees' physical and psychological well-being (Monteiro & Joseph, 2023).

Drawing on SDT, the relationship between work culture and employee well-being can be explained through the satisfaction of three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Siregar et al., 2025). Work cultures that encourage participation in decision-making, recognize employee capabilities, and foster supportive interpersonal relationships satisfy these basic needs. When employees experience autonomy in their work, feel competent in performing their roles, and develop

meaningful connections with colleagues and supervisors, their intrinsic motivation and psychological well-being are enhanced (Khan et al., 2025). Thus, a positive work culture contributes directly to employees' well-being by fulfilling essential psychological needs.

Based on this theoretical grounding, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Work culture positively impacts employees' well-being.

Work Culture and Work-Life Balance

Bharathi and Mala (2016) conceptualized WLB as the capacity to maintain control, efficiency, and productivity in one's professional responsibilities, while concurrently pursuing a fulfilling, healthy, and relaxed domestic life. This dynamic often results in individuals dedicating more time to their careers at the expense of reduced family engagement. Several studies have shown that while individuals desire a strong WLB, achieving it is difficult due to work priorities consuming much of their effort and attention (Nneoyi & Bernard, 2025). Many believe that their career progression will suffer if they do not fully dedicate themselves to their work tasks (Groner, 2018). Similarly, those who manage to sustain a healthy WLB can manage work tasks efficiently while still dedicating sufficient time to social and personal activities (Medina-Garrido et al., 2023). Spending excessive time at work and too little on personal interests leads to increased stress and less satisfaction in life (Kaplan et al., 2017). In turn, this imbalance negatively impacts organizational performance, productivity, and employee health (Medina-Garrido et al., 2023).



Sudson (2025) suggested that supervisors who encourage their employees to maintain a strong WLB reduce overall strain and stress. They emphasized that the focus should not be on the amount of time workers dedicate to their work, but on the outcomes and projects. Based on the premises of the POS theory, a positive work culture that emphasizes perceived organizational support by fostering strengths, resilience, positive emotions, and high-quality connections within organizations can significantly enhance employees' skills in maintaining WLB (Fatema, 2025). In particular, supportive work cultures that encourage flexibility, recognize employee needs, and foster positive relationships enhance employees' perceived support, thereby improving WLB (Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2023).

Consequently, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Work culture positively impacts WLB.

Work-Life Balance and Employees' Well-Being

WLB is widely recognized as a crucial determinant of employee well-being (Hariri et al., 2024). When employees are able to effectively balance work and family responsibilities, they experience lower role conflict, greater job satisfaction, and enhanced psychological well-being (Hariri et al., 2024; Medina-Garrido et al., 2023). Consequently, employee well-being deteriorates when conflicts arise between work and family obligations (Aliasah et al., 2022). Poor WLB often results in dissatisfaction and unhappiness, negatively affecting well-being, reducing work quality, increasing

absenteeism, and raising employee turnover rates (Gálvez et al., 2020). Groner (2018) suggests that employees may fear that prioritizing work will hinder their career progression, leading to poor WLB and subsequent negative effects on well-being. However, maintaining a positive WLB enables employees to balance job demands with personal life, fostering a sense of accomplishment and reducing stress (Sharma & Singh, 2023). Fotiadis et al. (2019) found that employees with strong WLB experience lower stress levels and higher life satisfaction, as they can allocate sufficient time to both professional and personal activities. This balance results in increased happiness and fulfilment, as individuals perceive greater value in their work and everyday experiences.

SDT provides the core theoretical explanation for this relationship. SDT suggests that human motivation and well-being largely hinge on the fulfillment of three needs (Siregar et al., 2025). Achieving WLB enables employees to exercise control over their time (autonomy), feel effective in managing roles (competence), and maintain meaningful relationships (relatedness), thereby enhancing psychological well-being (Khan et al., 2025). This balance helps reduce stress and burnout, thereby enhancing overall well-being. Similarly, managing work demands while spending quality time with family and friends can help employees feel more competent and connected, positively influencing their mental health.

Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:



H3: WLB positively impacts employees' well-being

Mediating Role of Work-Life Balance between Work Culture and Employee Well-Being

WLB plays a crucial mediating role in explaining how work culture influences employee well-being. It comprises organizational fundamental principles, beliefs, and behaviors that significantly influence employees' experiences and attitudes (Ogbu, Zirra, & Oaya, 2020). Supportive work cultures that emphasize flexibility, autonomy, and fairness enable employees to better manage work and personal demands, thereby enhancing WLB. Recent studies emphasize the significance of organizational support in fostering a work environment conducive to achieving balance (Stankevičiūtė et al., 2021). Carnevale and Hatak (2020) found that organizations with supportive cultures significantly reduce employee stress and burnout, leading to improved well-being.

The WLB serves as a bridge connecting work culture to employee well-being (Stankevičiūtė et al., 2021). When an organization promotes a work culture that recognizes employees' personal lives and provides flexibility, employees are more likely to achieve a satisfactory WLB (Peiris & Wanigasekara, 2023). This balance, in turn, positively impacts their overall well-being by reducing stress, preventing burnout, and enhancing job satisfaction (Stankevičiūtė et al., 2021). Research indicates that a positive work culture that prioritizes WLB helps employees manage their time effectively, leading to improved mental health and productivity (Peiris & Wanigasekara, 2023).

This idea is mainly based on SDT. When the workplace supports employees' basic needs like feeling in control, feeling capable, and feeling connected, it helps them balance work and personal life better. This WLB then leads to higher well-being. POS theory adds another layer to this argument. It explains that when employees believe the organization truly cares about them and supports them, the effect becomes even stronger. In other words, if employees feel supported by the organization, the link between a supportive work culture, work-life balance, and well-being becomes much clearer and more powerful.

Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: WLB mediates the relationship between work culture and employees' well-being.

Moderating Effect of Gender

Gender is viewed as an important demographic factor in studies related to work and family (Shockley et al., 2017). Previous research indicates that work culture significantly affects WLB, which in turn impacts employee well-being. However, the study suggests that these relationships are often moderated by gender. For instance, women may experience greater work-family conflict due to their dual roles in the professional and domestic spheres (Emslie & Hunt, 2009). Studies have shown that supportive work cultures that offer flexibility and resources to manage work and personal responsibilities can enhance WLB and well-being for both genders, but the effects can be more pronounced for women (Chung, & Van, 2018). A study by Zheng et al. (2022) found that flexible work arrangements

and supportive management practices are particularly beneficial for women, reducing stress and improving overall life satisfaction. Despite a more modern and egalitarian approach to sharing family-related responsibilities (Irak et al., 2019), women still perform the majority of household tasks, even as their participation in the workforce increases. Additionally, stereotypes about women’s domestic roles remain widespread (Irak et al., 2019). Consequently, women frequently face more difficulties in attaining WLB than men, a pattern consistently observed in prior research (Rehman & Hasnani, 2025).

The function of gender as the moderating role on the indirect effect is further described by social role theory which explains that differences between men and women in behavior and attitudes are mainly shaped by social expectations and roles (Eagl & Wood, 2012). In line with the premises of social role theory, we argue that women may derive greater benefits from supportive work cultures because such environments help them manage the conflicting demands of work and family more effectively. Shockley et al. (2017) demonstrated that women in supportive work environments report higher levels

of WLB and well-being compared with their men. This is because supportive work cultures provide the necessary resources and flexibility that allow women to better balance their work and personal lives, thus reducing stress and enhancing well-being.

Thus,

H5a: Gender moderates the positive effect of work culture on WLB, such that the effect of work culture on WLB is stronger for women

As depicted in Fig. 1, Hypothesis H5a was developed to examine the moderating effect of gender on the relationship work culture and WLB. Furthermore, Hypothesis H5b was proposed to investigate the role of gender as a moderator in the indirect effect of work culture on well-being through WLB, representing a moderated mediation model (Hayes & Preacher, 2013).

H5b: Gender moderates the indirect effect of work culture on well-being via the WLB (Appendix B explains a summary of all hypotheses and their underlying theories).

Fig. 1 presents the conceptual framework of the research.

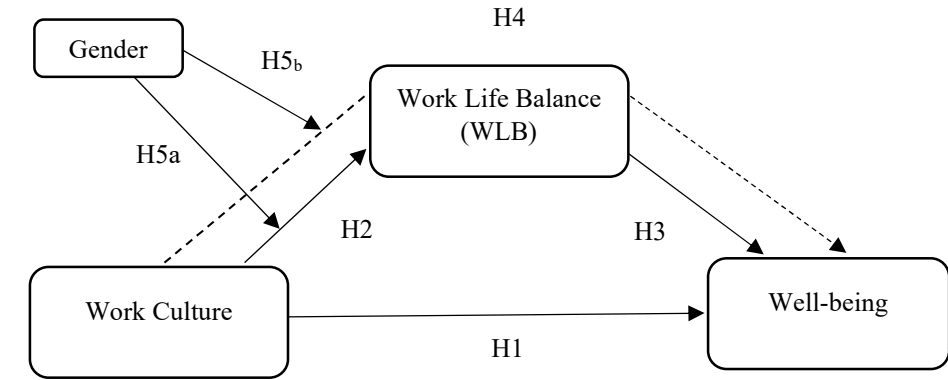


Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework

Source: The authors



Methods

Participants and Procedures

The study employed middle-level banking employees of Sri Lanka as the sample of the study. Their experiences reflect broader trends and challenges within the service industry in Sri Lanka, making them an insightful sample for studying work culture, WLB, and employee well-being. The sample for the study was selected using a convenience sampling technique with a sample size of 286 employees, representing 85.52% respondent rate. Convenient sampling was used because it was practical and easy to reach participants who were available, saving time and resources. Participants were identified through professional networks and contacts within the banking sector, and initial contact was made via email and phone to explain the study and invite participation. To confirm that respondents were indeed middle-level employees, participants were asked to specify their job title and department within the questionnaire, which was cross-checked against organizational hierarchies. A well-structured questionnaire was used to collect the primary data. Both the informed consent forms and the questionnaires were distributed via email to facilitate this process. This method was chosen for its efficiency and convenience, allowing participants to respond at their own pace while covering a wide geographical area without the logistical challenges of physical distribution. Participants were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality, with instructions that responses would be kept strictly confidential, used only for research purposes.

Measures

Workplace culture was assessed using Clark's (2001) survey, which included 13 items and demonstrated good reliability ($\alpha = 0.82$). A sample item is, "I am free to work the hours that are best for my schedule." Employee well-being was measured using the survey developed by Smith and Smith (2017), which comprised 10 items and showed high reliability ($\alpha = 0.86$). A sample item is, "I often describe myself as being positive." The mediating variable, work-life balance (WLB), was assessed using eight items from the study by Taşdelen-Karckay and Bakalim (2017), with the original scale exhibiting high reliability ($\alpha = 0.91$). A sample item includes, "I can manage my roles related to family and professional life in a balanced manner." For all measures, participants rated their agreement on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Analytical Strategy

Data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS version 23.0. The consistency of the variables was ensured using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Correlation coefficients were calculated to confirm the assumption of linearity. Following the identification of significant correlations among all variables, the direct and indirect effects were examined using the PROCESS macro in SPSS where the results, which integrated regression analysis with bootstrapping techniques, were presented using the PROCESS macro. Beta coefficients and bootstrapping confidence intervals were used to assess mediation effects. Model 4 was employed to obtain the mediation effect results, and the Sobel test was

subsequently used to confirm the significance of the indirect effect. To examine whether the effect of work culture on WLB differs by gender, model 7 was used.

Findings and Discussion

Preliminary Analysis

Before analysis, the data were examined for reliability, validity, and normality. The reliability coefficients for work culture (independent variable), employees' well-being (dependent variable), and WLB (mediating variable) were 0.883, 0.859, and 0.917, respectively. All reliability scores are

higher than the 0.7 benchmark, indicating that the items reliably measure the constructs and validate the variables (Butt & Yazdani, 2021). Item loadings and AVE values exceeded 0.50, supporting convergent validity (MacKenzie et al., 2011), and CR values above 0.7 indicate adequate convergent validity for the constructs. Skewness and kurtosis were used to assess the normality of the data (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). According to Hair et al. (2007), skewness between -1 and +1 and kurtosis between -3 and +3 indicate normal distribution. The normality assumption was met, as all variables had skewness and kurtosis within acceptable ranges.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Variables of Interest

	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Well-being	3.43	.498				
2. Work culture	3.31	.564	.620**			
3. WLB	3.54	.584	.833**	.636**		
4. Gender			.572	.866	.669	

Source: *The authors*

*Note: FWC = family-work conflict, *p < .05, **p < .01. Numbers in the diagonal represent Cronbach's values. Gender: 0 = Women (65%), 1 = Men (35%).*

Table 1 displays the means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients among the study variables. The linearity assumption was tested using Pearson's correlation coefficients (Abu-Bader & Jones, 2021). The initial associations observed between the variables provide preliminary support for the hypotheses. The Pearson correlation coefficients revealed strong positive association between work culture and employee well-being (0.620), well-being and WLB 0.833), and work culture and WLB (0.636), all significant at $p < 0.001$.

These findings confirm the linearity assumption in the analysis.

No significant differences in well-being were found based on the independent t-test (0.57; $p > .05$) and WLB (0.66; $p > .05$) between the genders. However, a significant difference in work culture was observed between women and men (0.86; $p < .001$). The average levels for work culture (mean = 3.31, SD = 0.564), well-being (mean = 3.43, SD = 0.498), and WLB (mean = 3.54, SD = 0.584) were calculated. generally reported slightly higher levels of well-being (mean = 3.46, SD = 0.550) and WLB



(mean = 3.58, SD = 0.628) compared to men, whose means were 3.41 (SD = 0.458) for well-being and 3.52 (SD = 0.552) for WLB. However, the differences in the means were relatively small. The standard deviations indicate that there is consistently more variability in responses among women across all measured variables, suggesting greater diversity in 's experiences of work culture, well-being, and WLB.

Hypotheses Testing

Mediating Role of Work-Life Balance

The mediating role of WLB in the relationship between work culture and employee well-being was assessed using Model 4 of the PROCESS macro (Table 2). The findings revealed that work culture has a significant direct effect on well-being ($\beta = 0.54$, $t = 8.93$, $p = 0.00$), confirming hypothesis H1. Additionally, work culture significantly impacts WLB ($\beta = 0.65$, $t = 9.32$, $p = 0.00$), supporting hypothesis H2. The effect of WLB on well-being was also significant ($\beta = 0.62$, $t = 11.84$, $p = 0.00$), validating hypothesis H3. Furthermore, WLB mediates the link between work culture and well-being ($\beta = 0.13$, $t = 2.42$, $p = 0.01$), confirming hypothesis H4.

Moreover, even after accounting for the mediator, the direct relationship among work culture and well-being remained significant ($\beta = 0.13$, $t = 2.42$, $p = 0.01$), indicating a partial mediation effect of WLB on this relationship. The indirect effect was evaluated using the Sobel test and a 5,000-sample bias-corrected bootstrap in PROCESS, providing a 95% confidence interval. The mediating role of WLB in the relationship between work culture and well-being was confirmed by a p-value of less than 0.05

($z = 7.31$, $p < 0.000$). The bootstrapping results supported these findings, as the confidence intervals for the indirect effects did not include zero (0.287 to 0.555). The detailed results of the direct and mediated effects are presented in Table 2.

Moderating Role of Gender

To examine the moderated mediation hypothesis, we employed the PROCESS macro (Model 7). The initial moderated mediation model (H5b) evaluated the conditional indirect effect of work culture on well-being via WLB, contingent on gender (comparing women and men). The conditional indirect effect and direct effect results are detailed in Table 3. As per Table 3, gender did not significantly affect how work culture relates to WLB. The first-order moderation effect, represented by the interaction term of work culture and gender, was not significant ($b = -0.13$, $SE = 0.14$, $t = -0.93$, $p = 0.35$). Similarly, the index of moderated mediation was not significant (index = -0.08, boot SE = 0.10, 95 percent CI [-0.30, 0.11], (shown in Table 3), leading to the rejection of the proposed moderated mediation model (H5b). These results indicate that the mediating role of WLB in the relationship between work culture and well-being does not differ by gender.

The effect of gender as a moderator (H5a) on the relationship between work culture and WLB is visualized in Fig. 2. It shows that the impact of work culture on WLB is similar for both men and women, thus rejecting H5a. The positive effect of work culture on WLB was not greater for women than for men. This indicates that both men and women employees derive similar benefits from positive work culture in terms of WLB.

Table 3: Moderated Mediation Results for Work Culture, Work-Life Balance, and Employee Well-Being

Variable	Outcome Variable: WLB (M)					Outcome Variable: Well-being (Y)				
	β	SE	t	P	LICI, ULCI 95%	β	SE	t	p	LICI, ULCI 95%
Work culture	.86	.23	3.69	.00	0.40,1.33	.13	.055	2.42	.01	0.02,0.24
Gender	.05	.08	.70	.48	-0.10,0.21					
Work culture $\times$ gender	-.13	.14	-.93	.35	-0.41,0.14					
WLB						.62	.053	11.84	.00	0.52,0.73
R ₂	.41									
F	29.31									
Conditional indirect effect	Gender	Effect (β)		SE	LICI, ULCI 95%					
	Men	.46	.09	0.29,0.65						
	Women	.37	.08	0.22,0.54						
Moderation mediation index		-.08	.10	-0.30,0.11						

Source: The authors

Notes: All values are unstandardized. Model 7 of the PROCESS macro is used

Discussion

This study looks at how work culture affects employee well-being through WLB and whether gender changes this effect, conducted through PROCESS macro to provide strong statistical support.

Direct Effects and Mediation

The findings highlight the significant impact of work culture on employee well-being ($\beta = 0.54$, $t = 8.93$, $p = 0.00$), consistent with the existing literature. A positive work culture enhances well-being by promoting job satisfaction, reducing stress, and supporting WLB.

This is further explained by the SDT, a supportive work culture meets employees' basic psychological needs, which boosts their well-being and motivation, creating a positive relationship between employees and the organization. The study's findings are consistent with the results of Broccoli et al. (2022) and Peiris & Wanigasekara (2023) found that work culture significantly and positively influences employee well-being.

Work culture also positively influenced WLB ($\beta = 0.65$, $t = 9.32$, $p = 0.00$). This indicates that organizations with a supportive work culture tend to have employees who experience better WLB, likely due to flexible work arrangements, considerate management practices, and supportive policies for personal lives. This can be confirmed by

Additionally, the findings suggest partial mediation, as work culture continues to directly influence well-being even after accounting for the mediator ($\beta = 0.13$, $t = 2.42$, $p = 0.00$).

the POS theory, which posits that when employees receive organizational support, they tend to achieve greater job satisfaction and improved work-life balance, as they perceive the organization values their well-being and contributions. The study findings align with previous empirical research. Broccoli et al. (2022) and Peiris & Wanigasekara (2023) identified that work culture significantly positively impacts the WLB of workers. Similarly, Nabawanuka and Ekmekcioglu (2022) found that perceived supervisor support improves work-life balance.

Furthermore, the significant effect of WLB on well-being ($\beta = 0.62$, $t = 11.84$, $p = 0.00$) suggests that higher levels of WLB lead to higher levels of well-being. This relationship is well-supported in research, indicating that WLB reduces stress, enhances job satisfaction, and contributes to overall life satisfaction. This finding aligns with SDT, as when employees can successfully manage their work and personal lives, supported by organizational policies, they fulfill these needs. This fulfillment fosters a sense of control, achievement, and positive connections at work, ultimately enhancing their well-being. Thus, according to SDT, promoting WLB supports these fundamental human needs, leading to improved employee well-being. Similarly, Haar & Bardoel (2008); Hosie & Sevastos (2010), and Peiris & Wanigasekara (2023) have reported similar findings.

This suggests that work culture enhances employee well-being in two ways.



First, it has a direct positive impact, meaning that elements like supportive management, flexibility, and a positive work environment contribute to well-being independently of WLB.

Second, work culture affects well-being indirectly through WLB; a supportive work culture helps employees maintain better WLB, which then improves their overall well-being

The partial mediation may arise due to the intrinsic aspects of work culture, such as supportive management, career growth opportunities, and stress management, which directly influence employee well-being (Casper & Harris, 2008). Additionally, the high demands of the banking sector often require these work culture elements to enhance well-being beyond just WLB (Kumar & Zainuddin, 2020). Finally, supervisor support and organizational commitment may further contribute directly to well-being, even when WLB is considered as a mediator (Stiglbauer, & Bauer, 2017). The significance of the mediating role of WLB was further supported by the Sobel test ($z = 7.31, p < 0.000$) and bootstrapping results, which provided a 95% confidence interval (0.287 to 0.555) that did not include zero. This statistical evidence underscores the crucial role of WLB in enhancing employee well-being within a positive work culture. This finding is mainly explained by SDT and supported by POS theory. SDT shows that a supportive work culture meets employees' needs for independence, skills, and relationships, improving their well-being. POS theory adds that support, recognition, and belonging also boost well-being. Overall, a positive work culture improves well-being directly and through better work-life balance. These results are consistent with the study by Stankevicien et al. (2021) and Peiris & Wanigasekara (2023).

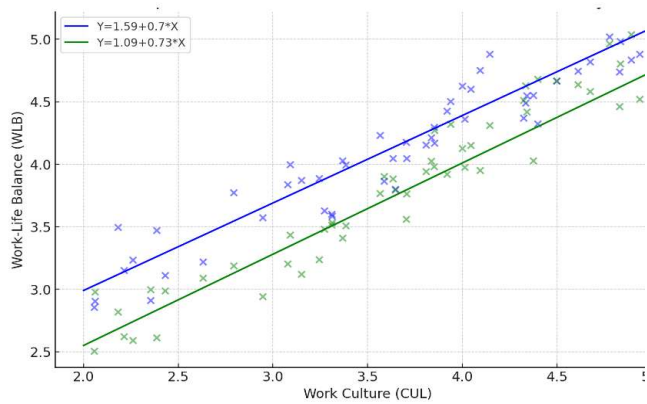


Fig. 2 Gender Moderates the Relationship between Work Culture and WLB

Source: The authors

Note: Blue line indicates men and green line indicates women



Moderated Mediation by Gender

The study also investigated whether gender moderates the indirect effect of work culture on well-being through WLB. The moderated mediation analysis using the PROCESS macro (Model 7) found that gender does not significantly moderate the relationship between work culture and WLB. The interaction term of work culture by gender was not significant ($b = -0.13$, $SE = 0.14$, $t = -0.9$, $p = 0.352$), and the moderated mediation index was also not significant (index = -0.08 , boot $SE = 0.10$, 95 percent CI $[-0.30, 0.11]$).

This suggests that the positive effects of work culture on well-being, mediated by WLB, are similar for both men and women. The hypothesis that the effect of work culture on WLB would be stronger for women (H5a) was also rejected. Fig. 2 further illustrates that both men and employees benefit equally from a positive work culture in terms of WLB. The results can be confirmed through the slopes of the two lines, which show no significant difference (men= 0.7 , = 0.73). This non-significant moderation effect offers an important insight by challenging the commonly held assumption that gender necessarily conditions the relationship between work culture and WLB.

The social role theory proposes that societal norms and expectations regarding individuals' roles are shaped by their gender influence behavior and perceptions (Eagl & Wood, 2012). Traditionally, men and women take on different roles at work and in family life which could affect how they perceive and respond to work culture and WLB initiatives. This is contrary to the study findings. In contemporary workplaces, there is a growing movement towards

gender equality and the breaking down of traditional gender roles. Organizations increasingly promote diversity and inclusion, aiming to create environments where both men and can thrive equally (Andrade, 2022). This evolving organizational context may explain why gender did not significantly moderate the indirect relationship between work culture and well-being through WLB.

In the banking sector, traditional gender expectations still influence workplace dynamics, affecting career progression, leadership opportunities, and WLB. Societal norms may create biases where men are expected to prioritize career advancement, while are often assumed to need greater flexibility for caregiving responsibilities, resulting in gendered career paths and potential stigma for both groups. The current findings suggest that such gendered patterns may be weakening, with work culture exerting a comparable influence on WLB for both men and women.

Conclusion

This study investigates the mediating effect of WLB on the relationship between organizational culture and employee well-being, while also examining whether gender moderates these relationships. Data were collected from a sample of 286 middle-level employees in Sri Lankan banks using a structured questionnaire and analyzed with the PROCESS macro in SPSS. Theoretically, this study addresses a critical gap by establishing the link between work culture, employee well-being, and the mediating role of WLB, grounded in SDT and POS theories.

Further, the study aims to reveal the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between organizational culture and employee well-being through WLB. As per the study, gender does not significantly moderate this relationship which suggests both men and banking professionals benefit equally from a supportive work culture and effective WLB policies. This challenge's traditional social role theory, which suggests that societal roles and expectations based on gender would influence how employees perceive and benefit from work culture and WLB initiatives. The lack of significant gender differences indicates a shift toward more gender-neutral workplace practices and perceptions, reflecting broader societal trends toward gender equality.

Banks are encouraged to introduce flexible scheduling systems that allow employees greater control over their working hours, thereby supporting WLB for both men and women. In addition, implementing equitable parental leave policies for all genders can help normalize caregiving responsibilities and reduce gender-based stigma. Furthermore, supervisor training programs focused on employee well-being and supportive leadership behaviors can strengthen perceptions of organizational support, reinforcing a positive work culture that enhances WLB and employee well-being.

Implications

The findings carry several implications in understanding the relationship between work culture, WLB, and well-being across genders. Firstly, the confirmation of the partial mediation of WLB on the relationship between work

culture and well-being underscores the importance of organizational policies and practices that support WLB. To support employee well-being, companies should give priority to and enhance programs like remote work, time off flexibility, and policies that support family life. For organizations aiming to enhance employee well-being, fostering a positive work culture is paramount. Policies and practices that promote a supportive work environment can lead to better work-life balance and, consequently, higher well-being among employees.

Secondly, the non-significant moderation of gender in the relationship between work culture, WLB, and well-being highlights a shift towards gender-neutral approaches in the workplace. This suggests that while traditional gender roles have historically influenced perceptions and behaviors, contemporary workplaces are evolving towards more equitable environments where both men and benefit similarly from supportive work cultures. The lack of gender differences in the mediating effect of WLB suggests that efforts focused on enhancing workplace culture and WLB are likely to be effective across the board, regardless of gender. This supports the notion of implementing universal policies rather than gender-specific ones.

Future Directions

Future studies may use longitudinal designs to investigate how evolving work cultures and organizational policies over time influence WLB and



employee well-being outcomes. Furthermore, qualitative studies could offer deeper insights into individual experiences and perceptions of work culture and WLB, offering a richer understanding of how these factors intersect with gender dynamics. Additionally, rather than focusing on a single moderator, future studies could consider intersectional factors, such as marital status, parental status, and seniority level, to better understand how WLB may differ among employees.

Given the global shift towards remote and hybrid work models, future research should also explore how these emerging work arrangements shape perceptions of work culture, WLB, and well-being across diverse demographic groups.

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Appendix A

Literature Table

Study	IV	DV	Mediator/ Moderator	Theory	Context	Findings
<i>Work culture and Well-being</i>						
Dike et al. (2024)	Culture	Well-being (Institutional Well-being)	No	No	Administrative department workers in education sector	Making the organizational culture better may increase employees' well-being
Santos (2012)	Culture	Employee Well-being	No	No	Retail staff of a large supermarket chain.	Strong work relationships and matching work goals significantly contributed to well-being
Mauno (2010)	Work-Family culture	Employee well-being	No	POS theory, social support Theory	Finnish health care workers.	Work-family conflict (WFC) consisted of two dimensions: negative (work-family barriers) and positive (work-family support). The positive facet, work-family support, was the only one to show a delayed negative impact on work-family conflict
<i>Work culture and WLB</i>						



Groner (2018)	Culture	WLB	No	No	Seven organization s across Maryland	No significant relationship between the organizational leadership culture and WLB
Clark (2001)	Work culture (tempo ral flexibili ty, supporti ve supervis ion, operatio nal flexibili ty)	Work family conflict (role conflict, satisfaction with work, employee citizenship, satisfaction with home life and family cohesion)	No	No	Individuals in a wide variety of family situations and workplaces	Flexibility of the work itself was associated with increased work satisfaction and increased family well-being. Supportive supervision was associated only with increased employee citizenship. Work/family balance was lower when employees had a large number of children and supportive supervision
Kumar i and Selvi (2014)	WLB (work- family conflict and family- work conflict)	Well- being (Family satisfaction , work satisfaction and psychologi cal distress.)	No	No	Employees in telecommun ication industry	Work-family conflict and Family-work conflict negatively correlated with family satisfaction. Work-family conflict negatively correlated with work satisfaction. Work-family conflict positively correlated with psychological distress. Family-work conflict not significantly correlated with work satisfaction and psychological distress.
<i>WLB and Well-being</i>						
Issaha ku et al. (2020)	WLB	Psychologi cal well being	No	No	University lecturers and administrati ve staff	Work life balance of employees significantly impacts on employees' well being. The study found that there was a statistically significant difference in the work life balance of male and female participants with females having more difficulty with their work-life balance issues

Rahim et al. (2020)	WLB	Career satisfaction and psychological well-being	Supervisor support and Family support (Moderating variables)	Work family boarder theory Social exchange theory	Academic, academic support, and operational staff of a Malaysian ODL university.	WLB of this institution's employees influenced their career satisfaction and psychological well-being. Besides that, supervisor support and family support were found not to moderate the relationship between WLB and individual well-being.
<i>Work Culture and Employees' Well-being with mediating effect of WLB</i>						
Stankevičienė et al. (2021)	Culture	Employee well-being	WLB	No	Employees employed by business and public sector organizations in Lithuania	All the components of work culture were important factors in defining employee well-being, had a strong direct impact on well-being and affected WLB. The direct effect of work culture on well-being was much stronger than the one moderated by an indirect effect of WLB.
<i>Work Culture and Employees' Well-being with moderating effect of Gender</i>						
Beauregard (2011)	Work home culture	Employee Well-being	Gender (mediator and moderator)	Public sector employees in UK	NO	Organization's support for work from home issues has a significant impact on employees' well-being. This effect takes place indirectly for, by influencing their level of work home interferences, and operates both directly and indirectly.

Appendix B

Hypothesis	Relationship Proposed	Key Variables Involved	Underlying Theory
H1	Positive Impact	Work Culture → Employee Well-Being	SDT: Supportive work environments improve employee well-being by fulfillment need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness.
H2	Positive Impact	Work Culture → Work-Life Balance	POS Theory: Supportive culture enhances employees' perception of support, improving WLB.
H3	Positive Impact	WLB → Employee Well-Being	SDT: WLB allows for the satisfaction of basic psychological needs.
H4	Mediation	Work Culture → WLB → Employee Well-Being	SDT & POS Theory: SDT suggests that a supportive work culture enhances work–life balance, allowing employees’ basic psychological needs to be met and thereby improving well-being. POS complements this by explaining that employees perceive these supportive practices as organizational care, which further strengthens the mediating role of WLB.
H5a	Moderation	Gender moderates the positive impact of Work Culture → WLB (Stronger effect for women)	Social Role Theory: Women often carry greater family responsibilities, so supportive work culture has a stronger positive impact on their WLB.
H5b	Moderated Mediation	Gender moderates the indirect effect of Work Culture →WLB → Well-Being	Social Role Theory: Gender influences how the entire mediating pathway operates, with societal role expectations shaping the impact of work culture on well-being through WLB.



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