

The Impact of Work-Life Balance Policies on the Motivation of Entry-Level Employees of Apparel Industry in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how work-life balance (WLB) policies influence the motivation of entry-level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry. The apparel sector is one of the most significant contributors to the national economy and a major source of employment in Sri Lanka. Given the demanding nature of production work within this industry, it is important to understand how organizational practices affect employee motivation and workplace attitudes. Accordingly, this research evaluates how work-life balance practices, including flexible working schedules, leave provisions, and employee welfare initiatives, influence the motivation levels of operational-level employees. A quantitative research design was employed to achieve the study's objectives. Data were gathered using a



structured questionnaire administered to entry-level employees employed in selected apparel manufacturing organizations. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis to examine the relationships between work–life balance policies and employee motivation. The analysis reveals a significant positive relationship between supportive work–life balance practices, particularly flexibility policies, welfare policies, and leave provisions, and employee motivation. The findings indicate that organizations which effectively implement these dimensions are better able to enhance employee motivation, reduce turnover intentions, and improve overall organizational performance. Accordingly, the study highlights the need for management in the apparel sector to strengthen employee-focused human resource policies that integrate flexibility, welfare support, and adequate leave provisions in order to promote both employee well-being and organizational commitment.

Keywords: Work–Life Balance, Employee Motivation, Entry-Level Employees, Apparel Industry, Human Resource Management, Job Satisfaction.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, work–life balance has become a significant topic in human resource management and organizational behavior. Modern employees often face increasing pressure to balance professional responsibilities with personal and family commitments. As organizations become more competitive and work demands intensify, maintaining an appropriate balance between work and personal life is essential to sustaining employee well-being and motivation (Guest, 2002). Researchers have argued that organizations that support employees in managing work and personal responsibilities are more likely to achieve higher levels of employee satisfaction, engagement, and productivity (Greenhaus and Allen, 2011).

Work–life balance generally refers to the ability of individuals to effectively manage the demands of their work roles and personal lives. According to Guest (2017)), work–life balance refers to the extent to which employees can meet work and family obligations simultaneously without experiencing significant conflict between these roles. When

employees struggle to maintain this balance, they may experience stress, fatigue, and reduced motivation, which can negatively affect organizational performance. The apparel industry plays a crucial role in the economic development of Sri Lanka. It is one of the country's largest export-oriented sectors and employs a large portion of the workforce, particularly women and young individuals. Despite its economic importance, the apparel industry is characterized by labor-intensive operations, strict production targets, and long working hours. These conditions may create challenges for employees attempting to balance their work responsibilities with family and personal commitments (Gunatilaka et al., 2010).

Entry-level employees in the apparel industry are particularly vulnerable to work-life balance challenges. These employees often perform repetitive tasks in production lines under strict deadlines and may have limited control over their work schedules. As a result, they may experience work-family conflict, stress, and reduced job satisfaction. Previous research suggests that organizations can address these issues by implementing supportive work-life balance policies that enable employees to better manage their professional and personal responsibilities (Allen et al., 2013). Work-life balance policies generally include practices such as flexible working hours, employee welfare programs, and leave provisions. Flexible work arrangements allow employees to manage their work schedules more effectively, while welfare policies provide support services that enhance employee well-being. Leave provisions enable employees to address personal or family matters without compromising their job security. Such policies have been shown to improve employee motivation, organizational commitment, and overall job satisfaction (Kossek and Ozeki, 1998).

Although the importance of work-life balance policies has been widely recognized in organizational research, limited empirical studies have examined their impact on employee motivation within the Sri Lankan apparel sector (Rajapakshe, 2018; Wijesiri and Dissanayake, 2018; Jayasuriya and Manchanayake, 2020). Most existing studies have focused on developed economies or professional occupations, leaving a gap in understanding how work-life balance practices influence employees in labor-intensive industries in developing countries. Therefore, this study aims to examine the impact of

work–life balance policies on the motivation of entry-level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry. Specifically, the research focuses on three key dimensions of work–life balance policies: flexibility, welfare, and leave provisions. By analyzing the relationship between these policies and employee motivation, the study seeks to provide insights for organizational decision-makers and contribute to the broader literature on work–life balance and employee motivation.

This study addresses this gap by examining the impact of work–life balance policies on employee motivation among entry-level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry. Specifically, the study focuses on three key policy dimensions: flexibility policies, welfare policies, and leave provisions.

The main objective of this research is to investigate how these work–life balance policies impact employee motivation. The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the impact of flexibility policies on the motivation among entry-level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry?
2. What is the impact of welfare policies on the motivation among entry-level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry?
3. What is the impact of leave provisions on the motivation among entry-level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry?

Based on these research questions, the study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the impact of flexibility policies on employee motivation among entry-level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry.
2. To evaluate the impact of welfare policies on employee motivation among entry-level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry.
3. To analyze the impact between leave provisions and employee motivation among entry-level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry.

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to both academic knowledge and managerial practice. The findings will provide insights for human resource managers and

organizational decision makers regarding the effectiveness of work–life balance policies in enhancing employee motivation. Furthermore, the study contributes empirical evidence from the Sri Lankan context, which remains underrepresented in the work–life balance literature.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of Work–Life Balance

Work–life balance has become an increasingly important topic in human resource management and organizational behavior due to the growing complexity of modern work environments. Rapid technological change, globalization, and shifting workforce demographics have significantly altered how employees manage their professional and personal responsibilities. As a result, organizations have recognized the importance of developing policies that enable employees to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Work–life balance is generally defined as the ability of individuals to manage their work responsibilities alongside family and personal commitments without experiencing excessive stress or role conflict. Greenhaus and Allen (2011) describe work–life balance as the extent to which individuals are equally engaged in and satisfied with both their work and personal roles. Similarly, Clark (2000) explains that work–life balance involves the successful integration of work and family responsibilities, allowing individuals to function effectively in both domains.

The concept of work–life balance is closely linked to the idea of work–family conflict. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) defined work–family conflict as a form of inter-role conflict in which the demands of work and family roles are incompatible. When employees experience excessive work–family conflict, they may struggle to perform effectively in both areas of life. This conflict can lead to emotional exhaustion, job dissatisfaction, and decreased productivity. In recent years, organizations have increasingly recognized that employees' well-being plays a critical role in organizational performance. According to Guest (2002), organizations that promote work–life balance are more likely to experience higher levels of employee commitment and productivity. When employees feel that their

organizations support their personal and family responsibilities, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward their work.

Work–life balance has become particularly important in industries characterized by demanding work conditions and long working hours. In labor-intensive sectors such as manufacturing and apparel production, employees often face strict production targets and repetitive tasks. These conditions may create challenges for employees attempting to maintain a balance between work responsibilities and personal commitments. Previous studies have demonstrated that poor work–life balance can negatively affect both employee well-being and organizational outcomes. Employees who experience work–life imbalance often report higher levels of stress, burnout, and absenteeism (Allen et al., 2013). In contrast, organizations that implement supportive work–life balance policies can improve employee satisfaction, motivation, and retention.

2.2 Work–Life Balance Policies

Work–life balance policies refer to organizational initiatives designed to help employees manage their work and personal responsibilities more effectively. These policies aim to reduce work–family conflict and create supportive work environments that promote employee well-being. Organizations have increasingly adopted work–life balance policies in response to changing workforce expectations. According to Kossek et al. (2010), work–life balance policies are essential for maintaining employee well-being and improving organizational performance. Such policies demonstrate that organizations value their employees' personal needs and are committed to creating supportive work environments.

Common work–life balance policies include flexible working arrangements, welfare benefits, childcare support, and leave provisions. Flexible work arrangements allow employees to adjust their work schedules to accommodate personal needs, while welfare benefits provide support services that enhance employees' quality of life. Leave provisions enable employees to take time off for personal or family matters without risking their job security. Research has shown that organizations implementing effective work–life balance policies experience higher levels of employee satisfaction and engagement. Allen et al. (2013) found that employees with access to supportive work–life balance policies report lower work–family conflict and higher job satisfaction. Similarly, Beauregard and Henry

(2009) argue that work–life balance initiatives contribute to improved employee morale and organizational commitment.

Work–life balance policies also play an important role in employee retention. Organizations that provide supportive work environments are more likely to retain skilled employees and reduce turnover rates. According to Kossek and Ozeki (1998), employees who perceive that their organizations support their personal needs are more likely to remain loyal and motivated. In developing economies, the implementation of work–life balance policies is becoming increasingly important as organizations seek to improve productivity and competitiveness. In industries such as apparel manufacturing, where employees often face demanding work conditions, supportive policies can significantly enhance employee well-being and motivation.

Work–life balance is a multidimensional construct supported by organizational policies that address different aspects of employees' work and personal lives (Greenhaus and Allen, 2011; Kossek et al., 2011). In this study, flexibility policies, welfare policies, and leave provisions are adopted as three core dimensions. Flexibility policies enhance employees' control over work time and location, welfare policies provide organizational support to manage personal and family demands, and leave provisions offer formal mechanisms for rest and role relief (Guest, 2017; Beauregard and Henry, 2009). Together, these dimensions capture the structural, supportive, and recovery-based aspects of work–life balance .

2.3 Flexibility Policies

Flexible work arrangements are among the most widely implemented work–life balance policies in modern organizations. These policies allow employees to adjust their work schedules, locations, or work patterns to manage personal and professional responsibilities better. Flexible work arrangements may include flexible working hours, compressed workweeks, remote work opportunities, and shift adjustments. These arrangements provide employees with greater control over their work schedules and allow them to balance work responsibilities with personal commitments.

Hill et al. (2008) found that flexible working arrangements significantly reduce work–family conflict and improve employee satisfaction. Employees who have greater control over their work schedules are better able to manage family responsibilities and maintain higher levels of well-being. Similarly, Allen et al. (2013) report that flexible work arrangements contribute to improved employee motivation and organizational commitment. When employees perceive that their organizations trust them to manage their work schedules, they develop a stronger psychological attachment to their organizations. Flexible work policies are particularly important for employees who have family responsibilities. Studies have shown that employees with access to flexible work arrangements are less likely to experience work-related stress and burnout (Kossek and Michel, 2011). As a result, they are more likely to remain motivated and engaged in their work. In labor-intensive industries such as apparel manufacturing, flexible work policies may be more difficult to implement due to the nature of production processes. However, organizations can still provide some level of flexibility through shift scheduling, workload management, and supportive supervisory practices.

2.4 Welfare Policies

Employee welfare policies are organizational initiatives that aim to improve employees' well-being and quality of life. These policies include benefits such as healthcare services, transportation facilities, meal subsidies, childcare assistance, and employee assistance programs. Providing welfare benefits demonstrates that organizations care about their employees' well-being. According to Gupta (2021), organizations that invest in employee welfare programs experience higher levels of employee motivation and job satisfaction. Welfare policies help create supportive work environments where employees feel valued and respected.

Research has shown that welfare programs can significantly reduce workplace stress and improve employee morale. For example, organizations that provide healthcare benefits and counseling services help employees cope with personal and professional challenges more effectively (Deery and Jago, 2009). Welfare policies are particularly important in industries where employees face physically demanding work conditions. In the apparel industry, workers often perform repetitive tasks under strict production targets. Providing welfare

benefits such as transportation services, healthcare facilities, and meal programs can improve employees' working conditions and enhance their motivation. Employee welfare initiatives also contribute to building positive organizational cultures. When employees perceive that their organizations provide supportive benefits, they are more likely to develop trust and loyalty toward their employers. As a result, welfare policies play an important role in improving employee engagement and organizational performance.

2.5 Leave Provisions

Leave provisions are another important component of work–life balance policies. Leave policies allow employees to take time off from work for personal, family, or health-related reasons. Common types of leave include annual leave, medical leave, maternity leave, and emergency leave. Adequate leave provisions allow employees to manage personal responsibilities without experiencing excessive stress or job insecurity. According to Msuya and Kumar (2022), employees with access to supportive leave policies report higher job satisfaction and motivation. Leave policies also contribute to employee well-being by allowing employees to recover from work-related stress and maintain a healthy work–life balance. Organizations that provide flexible leave arrangements create supportive environments where employees feel comfortable addressing personal responsibilities. Research indicates that organizations offering supportive leave policies experience lower levels of absenteeism and higher employee retention rates (Allen et al., 2013). Employees who feel secure in taking leave when necessary are more likely to remain committed to their organizations. In the apparel industry, leave provisions can play an important role in supporting employees facing family responsibilities or health-related challenges. Providing accessible leave opportunities helps employees maintain a balance between work and personal life, which contributes to improved motivation and productivity.

2.6 Employee Motivation

Employee motivation refers to the internal and external forces that influence employees' willingness to perform their work tasks effectively. Motivated employees demonstrate higher levels of engagement, productivity, and organizational commitment. Several

theoretical frameworks explain employee motivation. Self-Determination Theory, developed by Deci and Ryan (1985), posits that human motivation is influenced by the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When employees feel that these needs are satisfied, they are more likely to demonstrate intrinsic motivation and commitment to their work.

Work–life balance policies can play an important role in satisfying these psychological needs. Flexible work arrangements enhance employees’ sense of autonomy, welfare policies contribute to feelings of support and relatedness, and leave provisions help employees manage stress and maintain well-being (Allen et al., 2013). Research has consistently shown that supportive organizational practices contribute to higher levels of employee motivation. According to Armstrong and Taylor (2020), organizations that invest in employee well-being and work–life balance initiatives experience improved productivity and employee engagement. Employee motivation is particularly important in labor-intensive industries such as apparel manufacturing, where employees perform repetitive tasks and work under strict production targets. In such environments, supportive policies can significantly influence employees’ attitudes toward their work.

2.7 Theoretical Background

This study is grounded in Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan (1985), which provides a well-established framework for explaining employee motivation in organizational settings. SDT posits that human motivation is influenced by the satisfaction of three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy refers to the extent to which individuals feel they have control over their actions and decisions, competence reflects the ability to perform tasks effectively, and relatedness represents the sense of belonging and connection with others. When these needs are fulfilled, individuals are more likely to experience intrinsic motivation, leading to higher levels of engagement, performance, and commitment (Deci and Ryan, 2000). In the context of work–life balance, SDT offers a meaningful explanation of how organizational policies influence employee motivation. Work–life balance policies can be viewed as organizational mechanisms that either support or constrain the fulfillment of employees’ psychological needs. Flexibility policies, for example, enhance employees’

sense of autonomy by allowing them to adjust their work schedules and manage personal responsibilities more effectively. Prior research has shown that flexible work arrangements reduce work–family conflict and contribute to improved job satisfaction and motivation (Allen et al., 2013). When employees are given greater control over their work, they are more likely to feel empowered and intrinsically motivated.

Welfare policies contribute primarily to the need for relatedness and, to some extent, competence. Organizational support mechanisms such as healthcare services, transportation facilities, and employee assistance programs signal that the organization values its employees' well-being. According to David E. Guest (2017), such supportive practices enhance employees' perceptions of organizational care, which strengthens emotional attachment and motivation. When employees feel supported by their organization, they are more likely to develop a sense of belonging, which positively influences their attitudes and behaviors at work. Leave provisions, on the other hand, play a critical role in supporting employees' psychological recovery and well-being. Access to adequate leave allows employees to rest, manage personal or family responsibilities, and reduce stress. Research suggests that supportive leave policies are associated with improved mental health, reduced burnout, and higher job satisfaction (Beauregard and Henry, 2009). From an SDT perspective, leave provisions help restore psychological resources, enabling employees to maintain their competence and overall functioning in the workplace.

The relevance of SDT is particularly evident in labor-intensive industries, such as Sri Lanka's apparel sector. Entry-level employees often work under strict production targets, long working hours, and limited job autonomy, which can hinder the satisfaction of their psychological needs. Under such conditions, motivation may become externally driven or diminish altogether. However, when organizations implement effective work–life balance policies, they create conditions that support autonomy, enhance well-being, and foster a sense of organizational support. As a result, employees are more likely to exhibit higher levels of motivation and engagement. Overall, Self-Determination Theory provides a strong theoretical foundation for understanding the relationship between work–life balance policies and employee motivation. By linking flexibility policies, welfare policies, and

leave provisions to employees' needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence, this study explains how organizational practices can influence employee motivation in a systematic and theoretically grounded manner.

Work–life balance plays a significant role in supporting or undermining these psychological needs. Policies that provide flexible work arrangements, supportive leave options, and reasonable working hours can strengthen employees' sense of autonomy and enhance their feeling of being valued by the organization. In Sri Lanka's apparel sector, many entry-level employees, particularly women, must balance work and family responsibilities, often shoulder additional household obligations. When organizations fail to support work–life balance, employees may experience stress, fatigue, and reduced engagement at work. Conversely, studies such as Ryan and Deci (2000) have shown that workplaces that promote autonomy and positive social relationships through supportive work–life balance practices tend to achieve higher levels of employee motivation and organizational commitment. Therefore, applying Self-Determination Theory in this context emphasizes the importance of designing work environments that meet employees' psychological needs to sustain motivation and enhance performance.

Based on the literature reviewed above, the following hypotheses are proposed:

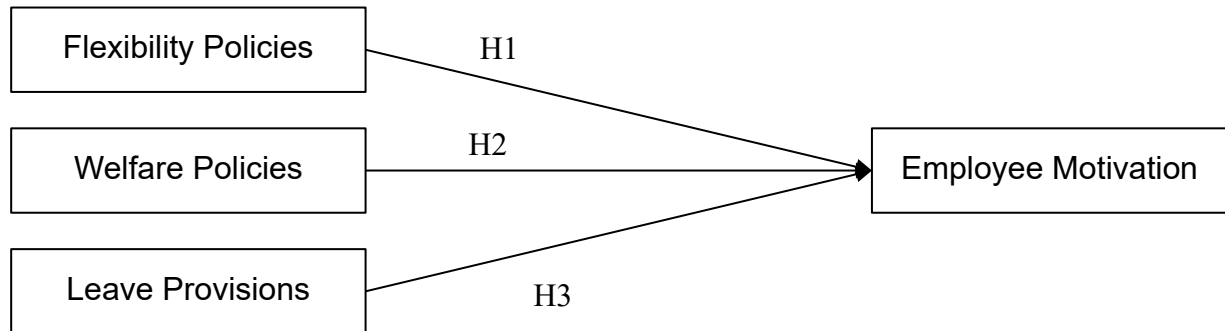
H1: Flexibility policies have a significant positive impact on the motivation of entry-level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry.

H2: Welfare policies have a significant positive impact on the motivation of entry-level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry.

H3: Leave provisions have a significant positive impact with the motivation of entry-level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry.

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

Work–Life Balance Policies



Source: Developed by the Author

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a quantitative research design to examine the impact of work–life balance policies on employee motivation in the Sri Lankan apparel industry. A quantitative approach was considered appropriate because the study's objective was to test specific hypotheses and identify measurable impacts among defined variables. The design allows the researcher to analyze patterns in employee perceptions and determine whether work–life balance policies significantly influence motivation.

The research design followed a deductive approach. The study began with existing theories and empirical findings related to work–life balance and employee motivation, from which specific hypotheses were developed. Data were then collected and analyzed to test these hypotheses. The research design was also informed by the research onion framework proposed by Saunders et al. (2019). This framework emphasizes the importance of aligning philosophical assumptions, research strategies, and data collection methods to ensure a systematic research process. In this study, the design incorporated a positivist philosophy, quantitative data collection methods, and statistical analysis techniques.

The positivist research philosophy guided the study. Positivism assumes that social phenomena can be studied objectively using measurable variables and empirical data. Within this philosophical perspective, reality is viewed as independent of the researcher

and can be understood through systematic observation and statistical analysis. Applying the positivist philosophy allowed the researcher to investigate the causal relationship between work–life balance policies and employee motivation. By collecting quantitative data from a sample of employees and analyzing it using statistical techniques, the study aimed to identify generalizable patterns in employee perceptions of workplace policies.

The target population of the study consisted of entry-level employees working in the Sri Lankan apparel industry. The apparel sector is one of the largest employers in the country, with a large workforce engaged in operations and production. Entry-level employees were defined as individuals occupying junior positions within apparel factories, particularly those involved in production or operational tasks. These employees typically have limited work experience and lower levels of decision-making authority. This group was selected because entry-level employees are more likely to experience work–life balance challenges due to rigid schedules and demanding workloads. Their perceptions provide valuable insights into how workplace policies influence motivation.

A sample of approximately 200 entry-level employees from the Sri Lankan apparel industry participated in the study. The respondents were selected from operational departments within apparel manufacturing companies. A stratified sampling approach was used to ensure that different employee groups were represented within the sample. Employees with less than three years of work experience and those holding non-supervisory positions were included in the study. The chosen sample size was considered sufficient for statistical analysis and hypothesis testing. It also allowed the researchers to identify general trends in employee perceptions within the apparel industry.

The data for this study were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to measure entry-level employees' perceptions of work–life balance policies and their influence on motivation in the Sri Lankan apparel industry. The questionnaire was developed based on established measurement approaches used in previous research on work–life balance and employee motivation, particularly the frameworks suggested by Maurya et al. (2015) and Khadil and Rathore (2018). These sources guided the construction of items that capture employees' experiences with flexibility, welfare support, and leave policies in organizational settings.

The questionnaire consisted of two main sections. The first section gathered demographic information about the respondents. This part included questions related to gender, age, educational qualifications, marital status, department, and years of experience in the apparel industry. Collecting this information helped describe the respondents' characteristics and provided context for interpreting the study's results. The second section of the questionnaire measured the study's main variables. It included statements related to four key constructs: flexibility policies, welfare policies, leave provisions, and employee motivation. These constructs were selected based on the research's conceptual framework and the study's objectives. Flexibility policies were measured by statements regarding work schedules, working hours, and the ability to balance work responsibilities with family obligations. Welfare policies were measured using items assessing employees' perceptions of organizational support, including assistance with personal and family responsibilities and supervisors' understanding of employees' personal concerns. Leave provisions were measured using questions assessing employees' access to leave and their ability to manage personal or family situations without workplace constraints. Employee motivation was measured using statements that reflected employees' levels of engagement, commitment, and willingness to perform effectively at work.

All statements in this section were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to agree strongly. This scaling method allowed respondents to indicate the degree to which they agreed with each statement, yielding quantitative data for statistical analysis. The use of a standardized Likert scale also ensured consistency across responses and facilitated the application of statistical techniques such as correlation and regression analysis. The structured format of the questionnaire ensured that the data collected were comprehensive, consistent, and aligned with the research objectives. By combining demographic information with detailed perceptions of work-life balance policies and motivation, the questionnaire served as a reliable instrument for examining the impact of organizational policies and employee motivation in the Sri Lankan apparel industry.

The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS statistical software. Several statistical techniques were employed to examine the relationships between variables. First,

descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and to provide an overview of employees' perceptions of work–life balance policies. Second, reliability analysis was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales. Cronbach's alpha values were calculated to determine whether the questionnaire items reliably measured the intended constructs. Third, correlation analysis was used to examine the relationships between work–life balance policies and employee motivation. Finally, multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which flexibility policies, welfare policies, and leave provisions influence employee motivation. This technique allowed the researcher to identify the relative contribution of each policy dimension. Ethical considerations were carefully addressed throughout the research process. Participation in the study was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the research before completing the questionnaire. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by ensuring that no personal identification information was collected. The responses were used solely for academic purposes and stored securely to prevent unauthorized access.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Overview of Respondents

The sample consisted of 200 entry-level employees working in apparel manufacturing companies. The demographic profile of the respondents indicated that the majority of employees were female workers engaged in production-related roles. The apparel industry in Sri Lanka is known for employing a large number of young female workers, a pattern reflected in the sample distribution. Understanding the demographic characteristics of the respondents provided useful context for interpreting the study's findings.

Table 4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	54	27

	Female	146	73
Age	Below 20	64	32
	21–25	66	33
	26–30	60	30
	Above 30	10	5
Educational Level	Below G.C.E. O/L	57	28.5
	G.C.E. O/L Passed	69	34.5
	G.C.E. A/L Passed	51	25.5
	Diploma/Certificate	20	10
	Degree or Higher	3	1.5
Marital Status	Married	111	55.5
	Unmarried	89	44.5
Department	Sewing	37	18.5
	Cutting	32	16
	Finishing	32	16
	Quality Control	28	14
	Packing	39	19.5
	Other	32	16
Years of Experience	Less than 1 year	100	50
	1–2 years	94	47
	More than 2 years	6	3

Source: Developed by the researcher based on SPSS output.

Table 4.1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents included in the study. The sample consisted of 200 entry-level employees working in the Sri Lankan apparel industry. The results show that the majority of respondents were female employees, representing 73 percent of the sample, while male respondents accounted for 27 percent. This reflects the common employment pattern in the apparel industry, where women make up a large share of the workforce.

Regarding age distribution, most respondents were young employees. The largest group was aged 21 to 25, accounting for 33 percent of the sample, followed closely by respondents under 20 (32 percent). Employees aged between 26 and 30 years accounted for 30 percent, while only 5 percent were over 30 years of age. This distribution confirms that the apparel sector largely employs young entry-level workers.

In terms of educational background, the majority of respondents had basic educational qualifications. About 34.5 percent had passed the G.C.E. O/L examination, while 28.5 percent had education below the G.C.E. O/L level. Approximately 25.5 percent had completed G.C.E. A/L. A smaller proportion of respondents held diploma or certificate qualifications (10 percent), while only 1.5 percent possessed a degree or higher qualification.

The marital status distribution shows that 55.5 percent of respondents were married, while 44.5 percent were unmarried. The departmental distribution of respondents indicates that employees were relatively evenly spread across several operational departments, including sewing, cutting, finishing, quality control, packing, and other departments. Packing accounted for the highest share at 19.5 percent, followed by sewing at 18.5 percent.

Finally, the distribution of years of experience indicates that most employees have limited work experience. Half of the respondents had less than one year of experience, while 47 percent had between one and two years. Only a small proportion of respondents (3 percent) had more than two years of experience. This confirms that the sample primarily consisted of entry-level employees within the apparel industry.

4.2 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to evaluate the perceptions of the entry-level workforce in the Sri Lankan apparel industry. Descriptive analysis focused on the flexibility policies, welfare policies, leave provisions, and motivation level of the employees in the apparel industry. Descriptive analysis provides an overview by highlighting key characteristics and variations in the data, forming the foundation for inferential statistical analysis.

Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness
Flexibility Policies	200	1.17	5.00	3.7778	.85459	.730	-1.156
Welfare Policies	200	1.50	5.00	4.2325	.73092	.534	-1.328
Leave Provisions	200	1.00	5.00	3.8235	.73176	.535	-.848
Employee Motivation	200	1.00	5.00	3.8460	.79108	.626	-.957

Source: Developed by the researcher based on SPSS output

4.3 Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales used in the questionnaire. The reliability of the collected data was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which is widely used in social science research to assess the internal consistency of survey instruments. A Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.70 is

generally considered acceptable and indicates that the measurement items reliably capture the underlying construct.

The results of the reliability analysis demonstrate that all variables in the study achieved satisfactory levels of internal consistency. Welfare policies had the highest reliability, indicating excellent consistency among the items used to measure this construct. Flexibility policies and leave provisions also showed very strong reliability values, suggesting that the items used to measure these variables consistently reflected employees' perceptions. Employee motivation likewise demonstrated a reliable level of internal consistency.

Overall, the reliability results confirm that the questionnaire items used in this study were appropriate for measuring the constructs under investigation. The high reliability values indicate that the participants' responses were consistent and suitable for further statistical analysis.

Table 4.3 Reliability Analysis

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
Flexibility Policies	0.880
Welfare Policies	0.919
Leave Provisions	0.877
Employee Motivation	0.830

Source: Developed by the researcher based on SPSS output

4.4 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between work-life balance policies and employee motivation among entry-level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to measure the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables. The correlation coefficient ranges from -1 to +1. A value close to +1 indicates a strong positive relationship, a value close to -1 indicates a strong negative relationship, and a value near zero indicates no relationship between variables.

The results of the correlation analysis reveal that all independent variables are positively correlated with employee motivation. Flexibility policies showed the strongest correlation with employee motivation, indicating that greater flexibility in work schedules and arrangements significantly boosts motivation. This finding supports previous research suggesting that flexible work arrangements enhance employee motivation, retention, and job satisfaction. Leave provisions also showed a strong positive relationship with employee motivation. Employees with access to supportive leave policies appear to be more motivated, as these policies allow them to manage personal responsibilities without compromising their work commitments. Previous studies have similarly reported that adequate leave provisions contribute to improved employee well-being and work performance.

Welfare policies exhibited a moderately strong positive relationship with employee motivation. Organizational support through welfare benefits, such as healthcare services and employee assistance programs, enhances employees' morale and encourages greater engagement in their work. In addition to the relationships between the independent variables and employee motivation, the results also indicate significant relationships among the independent variables themselves. Flexibility policies were moderately correlated with both welfare policies and leave provisions, while welfare policies and leave provisions demonstrated a relatively stronger association. These relationships suggest that organizations that implement supportive policies in one area of work–life balance are likely to provide similar support in other areas as well.

Overall, the correlation analysis highlights the importance of comprehensive work–life balance policies in improving employee motivation and well-being within the apparel industry.

Table 4.4 Correlation Analysis

Variables	Flexibility Policies	Welfare Policies	Leave Provisions	Employee Motivation
Flexibility Policies	1	0.532	0.662	0.923
Welfare Policies	0.532	1	0.690	0.694
Leave Provisions	0.662	0.690	1	0.793
Employee Motivation	0.923	0.694	0.793	1

Source: Developed by the researcher based on SPSS output

4.5 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis Testing is a statistical method used to determine whether the results gathered from a sample provide sufficient evidence to draw conclusions about the whole population. In this study, hypothesis testing was used to examine the impact between work–life balance practices and employee motivation among entry-level workers in Sri Lanka's apparel industry. The hypothesis testing aimed to determine whether flexibility policies, welfare policies, and leave provisions have a statistically significant positive impact on employee motivation. By using multiple linear regression analysis, the hypotheses were tested. A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was used to determine whether to reject or accept the null hypotheses. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the impact between work–life balance policies and employee motivation. The ANOVA results indicated that the regression model was statistically significant. The F-statistic was 699.368 with a p-value of 0.000, indicating that the model explained employee motivation well. This result suggests that the independent variables collectively explain a substantial portion of the variation in employee motivation.

Table 4.5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.956	0.915	0.913	0.23299
Predictors: (Constant), Leave Provisions, Flexibility Policies, Welfare Policies				

Source: Developed by the researcher based on the SPSS output

Table 4.6: Anova

ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	113.897	3	37.966	699.368	0.000
Residual	10.640	169	0.54		
Total	124.537	199			

Source: Developed by the researcher based on the SPSS output

4.5.1 Impact of Flexibility Policies

The regression analysis revealed that flexibility policies have a strong positive impact on employee motivation. The standardized beta coefficient for flexibility policies was 0.696, indicating a strong positive impact between flexible work arrangements and employee motivation. The associated p-value was 0.000, confirming that the impact was statistically significant.

These results indicate that employees who experience greater flexibility in their work schedules tend to demonstrate higher levels of motivation. Flexible work arrangements allow employees to manage personal responsibilities more effectively while maintaining productivity at work. This increased control over work schedules enhances employees' sense of autonomy, which is a key factor influencing motivation according to Self-Determination Theory. The findings are consistent with previous research suggesting that flexible working arrangements contribute to improved employee engagement and motivation.

4.5.2 Impact of Welfare Policies

The analysis also examined the impact of welfare policies on employee motivation. The regression results indicated a positive impact between welfare policies and employee motivation, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.095. The p-value of 0.001 confirmed that this impact was statistically significant. Although the effect of welfare policies was smaller than that of flexibility policies, the findings suggest that welfare initiatives still play an important role in enhancing employee motivation. Welfare benefits such as healthcare services, transportation facilities, and employee assistance programs help create supportive work environments. These benefits contribute to employees' sense of security and well-being, which in turn influences their attitudes toward work. The results support previous studies that emphasize the importance of employee welfare initiatives in improving job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

4.5.3 Impact of Leave Provisions

Leave provisions also demonstrated a significant positive impact with employee motivation. The standardized beta coefficient for leave provisions was 0.266 with a p-value of 0.000, indicating a statistically significant moderate effect. This result suggests that employees who have access to supportive leave policies are more likely to remain motivated in their jobs. Leave policies allow employees to address personal responsibilities without experiencing excessive stress or fear of negative consequences. As a result, employees feel more valued by their organizations and are more willing to contribute their efforts to organizational goals.

Table 4.7 Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	% 95 Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Constant	-0.123	.102		-1.204	0.230	-0.324	0.078
Flexibility Policies	0.644	0.026	0.696	24.724	0.000	0.593	0.695
Welfare Policies	0.103	0.032	0.095	3.271	0.001	0.041	0.165
Leave Provisions	0.287	0.036	0.266	8.075	0.000	0.217	0.358

Source: Developed by the researcher based on the SPSS output

4.6 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study confirm that work–life balance policies play a significant role in shaping motivation among entry-level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry. The regression results demonstrate that all three policy dimensions have a positive and statistically significant impact on employee motivation, with flexibility policies emerging as the strongest predictor. The strong impact of flexibility policies is consistent with prior research, which suggests that flexible work arrangements enhance employee autonomy and reduce work–family conflict (Allen et al., 2013; Hill et al., 2008). According to Self-Determination Theory, increased autonomy leads to higher intrinsic motivation, which explains why flexibility has the strongest effect in this study. In the apparel industry, where employees operate under strict schedules, even limited flexibility can significantly improve their ability to manage personal responsibilities, thereby enhancing motivation.

Leave provisions were found to have a moderate but significant impact on employee motivation. This finding aligns with the work of Beauregard and Henry (2009), who argue

that access to leave reduces stress and improves employee well-being. The result suggests that employees value the ability to temporarily disengage from work to address personal or family needs without negative consequences. In labor-intensive environments such as apparel manufacturing, where employees face long working hours, leave provisions play a critical role in maintaining both physical and psychological well-being. Welfare policies also had a positive and significant impact on employee motivation, although the effect size was smaller than that of flexibility and leave provisions. This result is consistent with Guest (2017), who highlights that welfare initiatives enhance employee well-being and perceptions of organizational support. However, the relatively lower impact suggests that employees may prioritize immediate control over work schedules and time off over indirect support mechanisms. In the Sri Lankan apparel sector, welfare policies continue to contribute by reducing external stressors and improving overall working conditions.

Overall, the findings support the argument that work–life balance policies function through different mechanisms. Flexibility enhances autonomy, leave provisions support recovery, and welfare policies provide organizational support. These results reinforce the relevance of Self-Determination Theory in explaining employee motivation, as policies that satisfy autonomy and well-being needs lead to higher motivation levels.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of work–life balance policies on the motivation of entry-level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry. The research focused on three main policy dimensions: flexibility policies, welfare policies, and leave provisions. These variables were examined to understand how organizational support mechanisms contribute to improving employee motivation in a labor-intensive industrial environment.

The findings of the study indicate that work–life balance policies play a significant role in shaping employee motivation. Statistical analysis revealed that all three policy dimensions positively influence motivation among entry-level employees. Flexibility policies demonstrated the strongest effect, suggesting that employees highly value the ability to manage their working schedules and personal responsibilities more effectively. When

employees are provided with greater flexibility in their work arrangements, they experience a stronger sense of control over their work environment, which enhances their motivation and engagement.

The results also show that welfare policies contribute positively to employee motivation. Although the impact of welfare initiatives was smaller compared with flexibility policies, supportive welfare practices such as employee benefits, workplace support services, and organizational care for employee well-being create a positive work environment that encourages employees to remain committed and motivated. Leave provisions were also found to have a significant positive effect on employee motivation. Employees who have access to supportive leave policies feel more secure and supported by their organizations. Such policies reduce work-related stress and allow employees to address personal responsibilities without fear of negative consequences, thereby strengthening their motivation and commitment to work.

Overall, the findings highlight that effective work–life balance policies contribute to a supportive work environment, enhancing employee motivation. In industries such as apparel manufacturing, where employees often experience demanding work conditions, implementing well-designed work–life balance initiatives can improve employee satisfaction, productivity, and organizational performance.

5.1 Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study offers several important theoretical and practical implications that are directly grounded in the empirical findings. From a theoretical perspective, the results extend the application of Self-Determination Theory by demonstrating how specific dimensions of work–life balance policies influence employee motivation in a labor-intensive, developing country context (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Ryan and Deci, 2000). The findings show that flexibility policies have the strongest positive impact on employee motivation, followed by leave provisions and welfare policies. This pattern supports the argument that autonomy plays a dominant role in shaping motivation, as flexibility enhances employees' control over their work schedules (Allen et al., 2013). At the same time, the significant effects of leave provisions and welfare policies confirm that recovery and organizational support also contribute to motivation by addressing employees' well-being and relatedness needs

(Beauregard and Henry, 2009; Guest, 2017). By empirically validating these differentiated effects, the study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that work–life balance is not a single construct but a multidimensional framework with varying levels of influence on motivation (Greenhaus and Allen, 2011).

From a managerial perspective, based on the findings, organizations in the Sri Lankan apparel industry should strengthen work–life balance policies by adopting an integrated approach that combines flexible policies, welfare policies, and leave provisions to enhance employee motivation. Management should prioritize flexible work arrangements such as shift adjustments and reasonable working hours to improve employees' control over their work schedules, while also expanding welfare initiatives, including transportation, healthcare, and employee support services, to reduce external stressors. In addition, organizations must ensure that leave policies are clearly communicated and easily accessible so that employees can address personal and family responsibilities without fear of negative consequences. By aligning these policies within a supportive human resource framework, organizations can improve employee well-being, reduce turnover intentions, and achieve higher levels of organizational performance.

5.2 Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite the study's contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study focused specifically on entry-level employees within the Sri Lankan apparel industry. Although this focus provided valuable insights into a particular workforce segment, the findings may not be fully generalizable to employees in other industries or organizational contexts. Different sectors may have distinct work environments and policy practices that influence employee motivation in different ways. Second, the study relied on self-reported questionnaire data collected from employees. Self-reported responses may be influenced by personal perceptions or response bias. Although efforts were made to ensure anonymity and encourage honest responses, the possibility of bias cannot be eliminated. Third, the research examined only three dimensions of work–life balance policies: flexibility, welfare, and leave provisions. While these variables represent important organizational practices, other factors such as organizational culture, leadership support, compensation systems, and career development opportunities may also influence employee motivation.

Future research could extend this study by examining additional variables related to employee motivation and workplace policies. Researchers may explore how organizational culture, leadership style, or employee engagement practices interact with work–life balance initiatives to influence motivation. Further studies could also investigate the impact of work–life balance policies across industries such as banking, information technology, and the service sector. Comparative studies across industries or countries may provide deeper insights into how cultural and organizational contexts influence the effectiveness of work–life balance practices.

In addition, future research could incorporate qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus group discussions, to gain deeper insights into employees’ experiences and perceptions of work–life balance policies. Such approaches may provide richer contextual understanding that complements quantitative findings. By addressing these limitations and exploring new research directions, future studies can continue to expand knowledge on work–life balance practices and their impact on employee motivation and organizational performance.

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