



Interconnected Predictors of Employee Engagement: Gender Differences in Work-Life Balance and Life Satisfaction

Neha Singhal, *MA Psychology Student & Former Research Fellow, Immunology*

Department, ICGEB, New Delhi, India.

neha1176.sl@gmail.com

Abstract: The rapid and large-scale transition to remote work which was accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally reshaped the landscape of professional employment and prompted renewed scholarly interest in the antecedents and outcomes of employee well-being, across various industry sectors. This study investigated demographic influences and interrelationships among employee engagement, work-life balance, and life satisfaction in a sample of 84 working adults in remote work arrangement. A cross-sectional research design was employed, collecting data from working professionals from different industry domains using standardized Likert scales for all the key psychological variables. Independent samples t-tests revealed significant gender differences, with females outperforming males, across all outcomes. Pearson correlations demonstrated moderate to strong positive associations among variables. Multiple regression analyses confirmed bidirectional predictive relationships, with work-life balance and life satisfaction mutually explaining substantial variance in employee engagement, and vice versa. These mutual interconnectedness patterns highlight interchangeable psychosocial pathways to wellbeing outcomes. Findings underscore the need for targeted interventions addressing gender specific wellbeing challenges while recognizing the interconnected nature of organizational psychosocial constructs.

Keywords: *Remote Work Arrangements, Employee Engagement, Work-Family Balance, Life Satisfaction, Gender Differences,*

1. Introduction

“One of the secret benefits of using remote workers is that the work itself becomes the yardstick to judge someone's performance.”

Jason Fried, Founder of Basecamp

This performance-based shift redefines employee engagement in remote settings, not by face time, but by cognitive and emotional investment that fosters resilience, mission alignment, and motivation through digital interfaces alone, acting as the "glue" for distributed teams. Work-life balance (WLB) serves as a critical buffer against burnout, eliminating commutes but risking blurred boundaries from constant accessibility. Self-starters maintain equilibrium with structured routines and off-screen strategies to combat chronic stress. Ultimately, life satisfaction emerges as the key outcome, driven by the synergy of professional autonomy and personal harmony where work enhances rather than competes with life goals, making engagement and WLB pivotal predictors of retention and thriving in remote work.

Remote Work as a New Model Driven by Digital Tools and Pandemic Catalyst

Remote work has transformed from niche privilege to the "new normal," fundamentally reshaping the psychological contract with increased autonomy, agility, and impacts on culture, trust, and life satisfaction (Mahadevan et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2025).

COVID-19 acted as a global stress test, accelerating adoption by years and proving remote work's viability and productivity (Prasad et al., 2024). When supported by clear boundaries, structured communication, and organizational systems, it enhances life satisfaction and retention; without such support, it risks digital fatigue and burnout (Supriyadi et al., 2025; Song et al., 2021; Dong et al., 2025).

These findings underscore that remote work is not only a logistical change but a psychological one, with significant implications for engagement, work-life balance, and employees' subjective well-being

Theoretical Frameworks

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory (Bakker et al., 2022; Demerouti et al., 2001) dominates explanations of employee well-being and engagement in remote work. It categorizes work characteristics as job demands (e.g., workload, technostress, blurred boundaries) that deplete energy via a health-impairment process leading to burnout, or job resources (e.g., autonomy, flexibility, social support) that drive a motivational process fostering engagement and performance.

Complementing JD-R, Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) views individuals as striving to acquire and protect valued resources, such as self-efficacy, supervisor

support, and flexible arrangements, to sustain WLB and well-being in remote work (Pensar & Rousi, 2023).

Gender Differences in Remote Work

The gender dimension of remote work has attracted sustained scholarly attention, with substantial evidence indicating that men and women experience remote work differently across all key constructs reviewed here. From a structural perspective, gender roles, domestic responsibilities, and career advancement expectations create systematically different contexts for male and female remote workers, producing divergent patterns in work life balance, engagement, and satisfaction outcomes (Ramos & García-de-Diego, 2022). Gender differences in remote work significantly shape employee engagement, work-life balance, and life satisfaction, with women often facing amplified challenges due to the "double burden" of professional and domestic responsibilities. Studies show women report lower overall satisfaction and higher work-life imbalances during remote work compared to men (Shockley et al., 2020). For work life balance, remote setups benefit women through reduced commutes but heighten isolation and control from managers, leading to poorer recovery and well-being for mothers versus fathers (Chung et al., 2021).

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement, defined by Kahn (1990) as "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in which people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances."

In more recent literature, engagement has been defined as "an individual employee's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral state directed toward desired organizational outcomes" (Shuck and Wollard, 2009). This remains central to remote work outcomes, along with the definition of Rich et al. (2010), "Employee engagement is the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances."

Literature frequently cites that women often carry a disproportionate share of household responsibilities. In a 2026 survey, 75% of women reported that remote work acted as a "pressure release valve" for these duties, yet they also reported more difficulty than men in drawing clear boundaries (CoworkingCafe, 2026). Recent data from Gallup (2025) reveals that while fully remote workers report the highest levels of engagement globally (31%) compared to hybrid (23%) or on-site workers, they also experience the highest daily stress and loneliness. This suggests that the autonomy of remote work drives engagement, but the lack of social connection

creates a "well-being tax." Additionally, Hong et al. (2021) found online engagement mediates positive affect's spillover into psychological well-being among remote R&D professionals.

Work-Family Balance

Frone (2003) defined it as "a state in which an individual experiences minimal conflict and high facilitation between work and family roles", Greenhaus and Allen (2011) extend this literature, linking better work-life balance to higher well-being, life satisfaction, and reduced strain,

Work-family balance is defined as "the extent to which an individual feel that work resources meet family demands and family resources meet work demands, enabling effective participation in both roles". Recent literature expands on foundational definitions of work-family balance highlighting its dual-edged role in remote work as both enhancer and disruptor of life satisfaction. (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998).

Salirrosas et al. (2023) demonstrate positive work-family spillover mediates family-supportive supervision's impact on remote job satisfaction and WLB, emphasizing supervisory behaviors as key to life satisfaction gains. Orešković et al. (2023) across industries confirm high WLB and satisfaction in fully remote models, with minimal gender differences when flexibility aligns demands, while Indian post-pandemic analyses note nuanced productivity-well-being links favoring hybrid setups (Grover, 2022).

Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is defined as "a cognitive, judgmental process in which people assess the quality of their lives on the basis of their own unique set of criteria" (Pavot & Diener, 1993, p. 164), and as "a global judgment of life quality involving contentment and hedonic level of affect" (Veenhoven, 2015). These conceptualizations frame life satisfaction as a stable, evaluative construct central to subjective well-being in remote work contexts.

In contemporary remote work literature, Dahal et al. (2024) identify "familiarity" with remote work dynamics as a critical factor, with remote workers reporting lower satisfaction due to inexperience managing isolation, boundary-setting challenges, and unstructured home environments that disrupt work-life equilibrium.

Empirical studies illuminate remote work-life satisfaction mechanisms. Lu and Zhuang (2023) found bidirectional relationships where daily life satisfaction fluctuations predict subsequent work engagement increases ($b=0.29$) among teleworkers. Tian et al. (2021) showed enhanced satisfaction for women and married caregivers due to improved work-family balance from location flexibility reducing commute stress.

1.1 Purpose

The current study examined the interrelationships among employee engagement, work-family balance, and life satisfaction among remote workers (N=84), with a specific focus on gender (Female vs. Male) differences. Additionally, it investigates the predictive roles of work-family balance and life satisfaction on employee engagement, as well as the influence of employee engagement and work-family balance on life satisfaction.

1.2 Hypotheses

H₁: Employee engagement is positively associated with work-family balance among remote workers.

H₂: Employee engagement is positively associated with life satisfaction among remote workers.

H₂: Work-family balance is positively associated with life satisfaction among remote workers.

H₄: Gender has a significant effect on employee engagement, work-life balance, and life satisfaction among remote workers.

H₅: Work-life balance and life satisfaction predicts employee engagement among remote workers.

H₆: Employee engagement and work-life balance predicts life satisfaction among remote workers.

2. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative, correlational research design, surveying professionals working in remote arrangement at a single time point to understand the interrelationship between employee engagement, work-life balance and life satisfaction across genders. This design enabled the identification of significant relationships among the selected variables without manipulating any condition.

2.1 Sample

Data were collected from 84 full-time remote workers (42 males, 42 females) in structured urban Indian organizations using purposive-snowball sampling. Inclusion criteria ensured relevance to flexible work dynamics: (a) ≥ 6 months' remote work experience, (b) aged 20-60 years.

2.2 Measures

Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9 (UWES-9): The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9, developed by Schaufeli et al. (2006), is a 9-item tool assessing three dimensions of work

engagement: vigor, dedication, and absorption. Responses were measured on a 7-point Likert frequency scale (0 = Never, to 6 = Always/Every day). The scale demonstrates strong internal consistency ($\alpha = .85-.92$ across studies).

Work-Family Balance Scale (WFBS): The Work-Family Balance Scale, developed by Carlson et al. (2009), is a 6-item self-report measure assessing bidirectional work-family balance (e.g., "I am able to negotiate for myself what exactly is expected of me at work and in my family"). Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree), with higher scores indicating greater balance. Eigenvalues from factor analysis were 4.9 and 7.6% variance explained, Cronbach $\alpha = .93$.

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS): The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), developed by Diener et al. (1985), is a 5-item scale designed to measure global cognitive judgments of one's life satisfaction (not a measure of either positive or negative affect). Participants indicate agreement on a 7-point Likert scale that ranges from 7 (Strongly agree) to 1 (Strongly disagree). Scores are summed (range 5-35): 31-35 = Extremely satisfied to 5-9 = Extremely dissatisfied ($\alpha = .87$)

2.3 Procedure

A structured online Google Forms survey (8-10 minutes) with three sections targeted working professionals. Section 1 covered aims, consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Section 2 captured demographics (age, gender, work arrangement, family status) for screening/covariates. Section 3 administered randomized validated Likert scales for Employee Engagement, Work-Life Balance, and Life Satisfaction. Purposive-snowball recruitment used Telegram channels and professional networks.

3. Analysis of Data

The obtained data were analyzed using Jamovi software. A combination of Descriptive and Inferential statistics was used to interpret the results. Independent sample t-test, Pearson correlation and multiple regression analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses.

3.1 Results

Table 1: *N, Mean & Standard Deviation*

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Employee Engagement	84	34.1	10.0
Work-Life Balance	84	21.7	4.95
Life Satisfaction	84	21.6	6.90

Table 2a. Independent Samples t-Test Results Across Genders for Key Study Variables

Variable	Statistic	df	p	Mean Difference	SE Difference
Employee Engagement	$t = 3.63^a$	82.0	<.001	7.40	2.042
Work-Life Balance	$t = 3.89^a$	82.0	<.001	3.88	0.998
Life Satisfaction	$t = 3.68^a$	82.0	<.001	5.17	1.403

Note. $H_a: \mu_F \neq \mu_M$. ^aLevene's test significant ($p < .05$), indicating unequal variances; adjusted df reported.

Table 2b. Descriptive Statistics for Independent Samples t-Test

Variable	Group	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
Employee Engagement	F	42	37.8	36.5	6.85	1.057
	M	42	30.4	29.5	11.32	1.747
Work-Life Balance	F	42	23.6	24.0	3.32	0.512
	M	42	19.7	20.0	5.55	0.856
Life Satisfaction	F	42	24.2	24.5	5.20	0.802
	M	42	19.0	18.5	7.46	1.151

Note. F = Female; M = Male. SE = Standard error of the mean.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Matrix Among Study Variables ($N = 84$)

	Employee Engagement	Work-Life Balance	Life Satisfaction
Employee Engagement	—		
Work-Life Balance	.54***	—	
Life Satisfaction	.53***	.49***	—

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 4a. Multiple Regression Model Summary Predicting Employee Engagement ($N = 84$)

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p
1	.618	.383	.367	25.1	<.001

Table 4b. Multiple Regression Coefficients Predicting Employee Engagement ($N = 84$)

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p	β
(Intercept)	7.005	4.056	1.73	.088	
Work-Life Balance	0.735	0.203	3.62	<.001	.363
Life Satisfaction	0.515	0.145	3.54	<.001	.354

Table 5a. Multiple Regression Model Summary Predicting Life Satisfaction ($N = 84$)

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p
1	.584	.341	.325	20.9	<.001

Table 5b. Multiple Regression Coefficients Predicting Life Satisfaction ($N = 84$)

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p	β
(Intercept)	4.111	2.902	1.42	.160	
Work-Life Balance	0.399	0.149	2.68	.009	.286
Employee Engagement	0.260	0.074	3.54	<.001	.378

4. Discussion of Results

The present study examined demographic differences and interrelationships among employee engagement, work-life balance, and life satisfaction in a sample of 84 participants. Results revealed consistent patterns across group comparisons and predictive models, with females demonstrating superior psychosocial wellbeing compared to their counterparts.

Independent samples t-tests indicated significant gender differences across all outcomes, with females scoring higher on employee engagement ($M = 37.8$ vs. 30.4), work-life balance ($M = 23.6$ vs. 19.7), and life satisfaction ($M = 24.2$ vs. 19.0 ; $t > 3.63$, $p < .001$ in all cases). These effect sizes were moderate to large despite unequal variances (Levene's $p < .05$), and females exhibited lower variability (*Table 2a.* & *2b.*). These findings align with prior research documenting women's relational advantages in wellbeing (Brooks et al., 2024).

Pearson correlations confirmed moderate to strong positive associations among variables ($r = .49$ – $.54$, $p < .001$; Table 3), supporting their conceptualization as interconnected

wellbeing dimensions. Multiple regression analyses further elucidated these dynamics. Work-life balance and life satisfaction together explained 38% of variance in employee engagement ($R^2 = .383$, $F = 25.1$, $p < .001$), with comparable standardized effects ($\beta = .36$ and $.35$; Tables 6–7). Reciprocally, the same predictors accounted for 34% of life satisfaction variance ($R^2 = .341$, $F = 20.9$, $p < .001$; Tables 4–5), where employee engagement emerged as the stronger correlate ($\beta = .38$). These bidirectional relationships echo meta-analytic evidence of mutual reinforcement among psychosocial resources (Vorina, 2013).

Theoretically, these results extend organizational psychology frameworks by highlighting demographic moderators of core wellbeing constructs. Females' advantages may stem from stronger social support networks. The comparable predictive strengths across regressions demonstrate their mutual interdependence as each variable functions as both predictor and criterion in these wellbeing dynamics.

Practically, findings inform targeted interventions: gender-sensitive work-life policies and gender specific development programs could enhance organizational outcomes. Limitations include the cross-sectional design, which precludes causal inference among variables. Self-report measures may introduce common method bias. Equal sample sizes across groups limit generalizability to population distributions. Future longitudinal research should explore mediators such as coping efficacy and contextual moderators like organizational support. Diverse occupational samples would enhance external validity. Intervention studies could validate demographic-targeted wellbeing programs.

5. Conclusion

The present analyses confirm robust demographic moderators and mutual interdependencies among core wellbeing indicators. Females consistently demonstrated superior psychosocial outcomes, while bidirectional regressions revealed no single variable dominance and each serves as viable pathway to enhanced engagement and satisfaction. These findings advance organizational psychology by demonstrating mutual interconnectedness in wellbeing dynamics and practical implications for demographic-tailored interventions. Cross-sectional limitations necessitate longitudinal validation, particularly exploring mediators such as coping efficacy and organizational support. Ultimately, results advocate holistic approaches recognizing the interchangeable nature of psychosocial resources in fostering sustained employee wellbeing.

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