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THE EFFECT OF WORK LIFE BALANCE ON THE HAPPINESS OF OFFICE WORKERS IN HANOI AND THE ROLE OF INTERMEDIATE WORK SATISFACTION

Nguyen Thi Mo^{1*}, Do Ba Hieu², Ngo Thuy Trang³, Vu Tri Duc⁴, Le Luu Ly⁵

^{1*}Faculty of Business Administration, Phenikaa University, Duong Noi, Hanoi, Vietnam.

e-mail: mo.nguyenthi@phenikaa-uni.edu.vn,

orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-6120-3636>

²Faculty of Business Administration, Phenikaa University, Duong Noi, Hanoi, Vietnam.

e-mail: 22011958@st.phenikaa-uni.edu.vn,

orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-9547-7607>

³Faculty of Business Administration, Phenikaa University, Duong Noi, Hanoi, Vietnam.

e-mail: 23012073@st.phenikaa-uni.edu.vn,

orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-9468-7518>

⁴Faculty of Business Administration, Phenikaa University, Duong Noi, Hanoi, Vietnam.

e-mail: 23013303@st.phenikaa-uni.edu.vn,

orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-6238-4212>

⁵Faculty of Business Administration, Phenikaa University, Duong Noi, Hanoi, Vietnam.

e-mail: 23012062@st.phenikaa-uni.edu.vn,

orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-9255-9622>

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SUMMARY

This empirical study investigates the impact of work-life balance on the happiness of office workers in Hanoi's inner city, while also evaluating job satisfaction as a mediating variable in this relationship. In light of the digital revolution, escalating work pressures, and the blurring boundaries between professional and personal life, it is crucial to understand these psychological mechanisms within modern human resource management. The study employed a mixed-methods research design. To validate the measurement scales and preliminary questionnaire, ten semi-structured interviews were conducted, and qualitative data from these interviews were utilized. Then, quantitative survey data was gathered from a valid sample of 462 office workers in Hanoi. Data processing was conducted using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) in SPSS and structural model validation via partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS. Empirical testing revealed that work-life balance has a positive and significant impact on both job satisfaction ($\beta=0.521$, $p<0.001$) and employee happiness ($\beta=0.218$, $p<0.001$). Furthermore, job satisfaction exerts a significant positive direct influence on employee happiness ($\beta=0.377$, $p<0.001$) and also mediates the relationship between work-life balance and employee happiness ($\beta=0.196$, $p<0.001$). The structural model explains 27.1% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2=0.271$), and 27.6% of the variance in employee happiness ($R^2=0.276$). The organizational leaders and human resource practitioners should emphasize the policies of the work life which are substantive and improve managerial competence. Job satisfaction can act as a critical operational link, moving from good working conditions to workforce health, employee engagement, and staff retention in the ongoing fight for talent in urban markets.

Key words: *work-life balance, job satisfaction, employee happiness, office worker, PLS-SEM, organizational behavior, subjective well-being.*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, work-life balance has emerged as a significant area of study within human resource management and organizational behavior. Fundamentally, work-life balance is a harmonious system that enables employees to reconcile their professional obligations with personal needs, thereby reducing role conflict and psychological stress. A strong link exists between work-life balance, positive employee experiences, and organizational commitment. This imbalance will often result in a state of chronic fatigue, burnout and poor mental health among employees while at work. [1]

Work-life balance is a new issue that is becoming more and more important in Vietnam's rapidly changing socio-economic environment [2][3]. The increasing pace of digital transformation, heavy workloads, and flexible working arrangements after the pandemic have made it difficult to differentiate between work and leisure, especially among those that work in cities [2][3]. As an office professional, you are constantly constantly asked to meet tight deadlines, coordinate with others and work long hours, making it challenging to maintain harmony. These concerns are reinforced by recent survey data showing that 42% of workers in Vietnam are suffering from stress and workplace fatigue on an on-going basis [2]. There are also empirical data on significant levels of occupational burnout within the local workforce [4]. Organizational level, reports indicated that enterprises had high rates of employee turnover, which is something that they freely do, in Vietnamese companies [5]. The numbers show that work-life balance isn't solely about improving employee wellbeing, it's about a key driver of human capital stability.

While studies in academic literature recognize that there is a relationship between work-life balance and attitudes and behaviors of the employees, most of the literature focuses on bivariate relationships, such as work-life balance directly affecting job satisfaction [6] or work-life balance directly affecting employee happiness [7]. Empirical research that looks at these constructs together in a single conceptual framework is rare, especially in the context of the developing economies of Southeast Asia. Furthermore, there is very limited empirical focus on the experience of inner city office workers in Hanoi, who are facing high urbanization pressure, a long commute and are faced with multiple role expectations.

Research Significance and Questions

Theoretically, the knowledge of these psychological mechanisms is important, and, practically, the knowledge of these psychological mechanisms is important. It explains, theoretically, the connection between external factors (situation, environment) and internal factors (well-being, satisfaction, etc.) based on cognitive evaluations, such as job satisfaction. In reality, today's companies need to have durable employees who can remain committed for the long term. Therefore, this study asks three main research questions:

1. *RQ1*: What are the direct effects of work-life balance on job satisfaction and employee happiness for inner city office workers in Hanoi?
2. *RQ2*: What does job satisfaction directly affect in terms of employee happiness in this operational context?
3. *RQ3*: Is job satisfaction an intermediate mediator between WLB and employees' happiness?

Research Objectives

This investigation sets out three main objectives to answer the three research questions:

- To assess the immediate impact of work-life balance, job satisfaction, and employee happiness on a few specific structural links.
- To examine the indirect mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between work-life balance and employees happiness.

- To articulate governance implications and management strategies for organizational leaders to improve well-being and attract and keep talent in urban settings.

Contributions

The purpose of this study was to make three main contributions to the literature:

1. It integrates the theories of Conservation of Resources (COR) and Role Theory in an integrative PLS-SEM framework to test the relationship between Resource Conservation and subjective well-being in the context of an emerging market.
2. It offers a practical empirical understanding of inner-city Hanoi office workers, who are a high stress group of people in the midst of a fast-changing digital workplace.
3. It uses multi-stage approach to validate the measurement by conducting both qualitative expert validation (10 semi-structured interviews) and quantitative measurement in the form of structural equation modeling (462 valid responses to questionnaires).

The rest of this manuscript is structured into five sections: Section 2 covers the review of the relevant theoretical frameworks, literature and research hypotheses. In Section 3, the research design, measurement scales, qualitative pre-testing measures, and quantitative data collection measures are delineated. The statistical results, scale reliability tests, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and PLS-SEM structural evaluations are provided in Section 4. This section covers managerial governance aspects, research gaps and practical implications. The conclusion with future work is provided in section 6.

RESEARCH OVERVIEW AND THEORETICAL BASIS

Theoretical Basis of Work-Life Balance (WLB)

In this study, work-life balance is considered as a whole idea that reflects how office workers feel about the balance between their work and personal lives. The research looks at how this overall balance affects job satisfaction and happiness at work, instead of breaking it down into separate parts. Simultaneously, employing overall variables helps maintain consistency across the theoretical foundation, measurement scale, and research model of the study.

Theoretical Basis of Job Satisfaction (JS)

Job satisfaction is a key idea in how organizations and employers manage people. It shows what employees feel about their jobs. It's not just about how someone feels personally, but also about how well their job meets their needs, what they expect, and what they value. Many studies show that being satisfied with your job is closely connected to how motivated you are, how well you do your work, how involved you are with the company, and how happy you are overall.

Within the scope of this study, job satisfaction is understood as an employee's positive perception of their current job, which is formed from the overall evaluation of their job content, working conditions, working environment, and professional experience. This approach inherits foundational definitions and draws on establishing views that treat job satisfaction as a state that is both emotional and cognitive [14][15].

Theoretical Basis of Employee Happiness (HP)

Employee well-being is becoming more important in the field of HRM and how organizations behave. It's not just about feeling happy for a short time. Many experts think it's a positive feeling that stays with a person, showing both their emotions and how they feel about their job. New research shows that being happy at work is connected to how much employees engage with their jobs, how well they perform, and how likely they are to stay with the company.

From the foundation of subjective well-being theory, happiness is considered to be personal perceptions and experiences of positive and negative emotional reactions, as well as overall and area-specific

cognitive assessments of life satisfaction [16]. Inheriting this approach, happiness is conceptualized as a form of subjective well-being, including emotional assessments and cognitive judgments about life experiences [17]. Thus, happiness is not only about feeling happy but also about the positive evaluation of one's living and working state.

Within the scope of this study, employee happiness is understood as the positive psychological state of employees during the work process, which is formed from a combination of positive emotions and an individual's favorable appreciation of professional experience. This approach inherits the view of subjective well-being, while also absorbing recent studies that view happiness at work as a composite assessment of both emotional and cognitive aspects of work experience. Based on this, the study treats employee happiness as a dependent variable shaped by work-life balance and job satisfaction. Based on a review of prior research, the author clarifies the following relationships.

** The relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction*

Role Theory describes how most people find a good balance between personal life, which helps reduce conflicts between various roles and has a positive impact on work. It also explains resource conservation and suggests the WLF for all employees to save time, energy, and emotions.

Previous studies also support this part of the impact. Research shows that having a good balance between work and personal life helps employees in small and medium-sized companies feel more satisfied with their jobs [9]. Also, job satisfaction is seen as an important part of how work-life balance affects other things [18]. In Vietnam, workers who feel they have a better work-life balance are more likely to have a positive view of their job and are more satisfied with their work experience [19]. Overall, the findings from this study suggest a consistent relationship, as the sources reviewed do not show any strong evidence that the two factors have an opposite effect. Based on these points, the study suggests the following hypothesis:

H1: Work-Life balance has a positive effect on office workers' job satisfaction

The Relationship between Work-Life Balance and Employee Happiness

Theoretically, work-life balance can directly impact employee happiness by reducing role conflict and conserving personal resources. When work doesn't overwhelm their personal lives, workers tend to be less stressed, recover energy better, and maintain a more positive emotional state. Therefore, the happiness of employees is influenced not only by the characteristics of the job, but also by the level of harmony they achieve between work and non-work areas.

Prior research has also offered significant support for this dimension. Among married women in Singapore, work-life balance is positively linked to life satisfaction [20]. Research indicates that work-life balance continues to have a significant direct impact on the psychological well-being of IT professionals [21]. In Vietnam, work-life balance significantly enhances employee happiness, a finding further underscored by research in Hanoi showing that flexible work arrangements amplify this positive impact [7][22]. Therefore, based on both international and domestic evidence, the relationship between work-life balance and workers' well-being is consistently positive, with higher levels of balance corresponding to greater happiness. Based on this, the study puts forward the hypothesis:

H2: Work-life balance has a positive effect on the happiness of office workers

The Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Employee Happiness

Job satisfaction reflects the level of positive evaluation of the employee's current job, while employee happiness reflects a broader positive psychological state during the work process. In terms of content, these two concepts have a certain closeness but are not uniform. If job satisfaction is more about job evaluation, employee happiness is more broad, including positive emotions, a pleasant state of being, and a favorable appreciation of the professional experience. So, when employees are more satisfied with

their work, they have the basis to maintain a higher level of happiness during the work process.

Prior research findings also corroborate this aspect of the impact. Research indicates that job satisfaction is significantly and positively linked to workers' subjective well-being [23]. Higher job satisfaction can result in greater happiness for employees. More recent research has established a strong connection between job and life satisfaction, indicating that higher job satisfaction leads to improved well-being and quality of life. The following hypothesis should be followed by:

H3: Job Satisfaction has a positive effect on the happiness of office workers

Intermediate Role of Job Satisfaction

Based on H1 and H3, it can be argued that work-life balance not only directly influences employee happiness but also indirectly affects it through job satisfaction. Specifically, when employees perceive harmony between their work and personal lives, they are less likely to experience role conflicts or waste resources, leading to greater job satisfaction. As job satisfaction rises, employees are more likely to maintain a positive psychological state and feel happier throughout their work.

While not many studies directly look at how job satisfaction connects work-life balance to happiness, previous research shows that job satisfaction is an important link between work-life balance and other good results. Specifically, job satisfaction helps explain the connection between work-life balance and how committed employees are [18]. It also partly explains how WLB should affect JP [9]. On the other hand, job satisfaction is linked to higher levels of happiness and well-being among employees [23]. By putting together these findings, it makes sense to say that job satisfaction acts as a mental process that helps work-life balance affect employee happiness. The following hypothesis analysis by above criteria:

H4: Job satisfaction plays an intermediate role in the relationship between work-life balance and the happiness of office workers

RESEARCH METHODS AND MODELS

From the all types of hypotheses mentioned the proposed model should incorporate with the various types of primary variables. WLB should consider as the independent variable, JS acts as a intermediate variables, EH consider as the dependent variables. This model directly influence the both types of job satisfaction and EH.

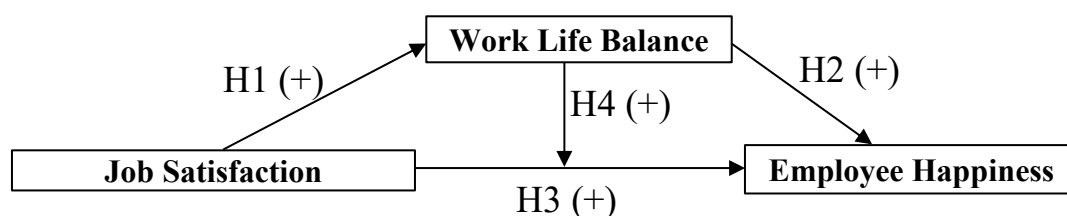


Figure 1. The proposed research group model

Source: Proposed Authors

From figure 1 above, it is clear that the study looks at how WLB affects employee happiness directly, and also looks at how it influences happiness indirectly through job satisfaction. This method matches the research aim of understanding how work-life balance influences the happiness of office workers in the inner city of Hanoi.

The data after collection is processed in two stages. The first stage uses SPSS to statistically describe the research sample, evaluate the reliability of the scale, analyze the discovery factor, and analyze the correlation between variables. The second phase uses SmartPLS to validate measurement models, structural models, and intermediate roles of job satisfaction.

Interview method should be followed by qualitative research 10 people, including 03 experts or lecturers, 03 managers and 04 office workers. The selection of these target groups is to ensure that the research can approach the problem from a variety of perspectives. If the expert team helps to review the validity of the model and the content of the scale from an academic perspective, the management team and support staff reflect the practicality of the model in the context of office work.

Qualitative research is carried out to achieve three main objectives.

Firstly, review the appropriateness of the research model in the context of office workers in the inner city of Hanoi.

Second, clarify the relationships among the model's variables, particularly JS should be influenced thorough the WLB and EH. Third, revise the statements in the preliminary questionnaire to ensure the content is clear, easy to understand, and appropriate for the survey participants. Based on this, the questionnaire was formally completed prior to conducting the quantitative survey.

Interview participants are selected according to the method of selecting a deliberate sample. To ensure that the information obtained is multi-dimensional, the project selects three groups of subjects, including: experts or lecturers with knowledge of human resource management, organizational behavior or research methods; managers who are directly managing or supervising office staff; and office staff working in the inner city of Hanoi.

The selection of these three groups aims to collect both academic perspectives, management perspectives and practical experiences from employees. The team of experts and trainers assisted in reviewing the model, the content of the questionnaire and the measurement statements. The management team provides more practical perspectives on the working environment, work pressure, and job satisfaction. The office staff team helps to assess the ease of understanding and relevance of the questions to the main survey subject.

This stage is carried out with 10 participants, including 03 experts or lecturers, 03 managers and 04 office staff. The selection criteria include: having knowledge or experience related to the survey content; willingness to participate in exchanges; and is capable of providing information for model review, questionnaire adjustments and completion of survey tools.

The project uses semi-structured in-depth interviews to collect information for the qualitative phase. This form allows both to stick to the content to be exploited and create conditions for participants to share their views and experiences flexibly.

Interviews are conducted in person or online depending on access conditions. Each interview lasts about 25 to 40 minutes. In the process of exchange, information is recorded for synthesis and analysis. Recording is only done with the consent of the participants. To ensure security, participants are encrypted by each group of objects. Specifically, the group of experts or lecturers is symbolized as CG, the group of managers is symbolized as QL and the group of office workers is symbolized as NV. This encoding facilitates the process of synthesizing and presenting the results.

Qualitative results are used as a basis for reviewing and correcting measurement statements before conducting a formal survey. From the collected opinions, the project reviewed the contents that are still duplicate, difficult to understand or not close to the survey context to adjust them more appropriately. The correction at this stage mainly focuses on the wording of the question, ensuring that the content is clear, easy to understand and consistent in meaning. In addition, the interview opinions also contribute to strengthening the basis for retaining variables in the model, especially the variable of job satisfaction as an intermediary. After this step, the questionnaire is officially finalized and used for the quantitative survey phase.

After completing the qualitative research step, the study conducts a formal quantitative survey using a structured questionnaire as shown in table 1. The survey subjects are office workers working in the inner

city of Hanoi. The form of data collection is implemented through direct surveys combined with online surveys, in order to increase the ability to reach respondents and improve the rate of ticket recall.

Survey questionnaires are constructed using selected and modified scales. Structurally, the questionnaire comprises two primary sections. The first section contains the respondents' personal information, which is used to describe the research sample. The second section comprises the primary survey content, featuring the measurement items for the variables within the research model. This design serves to gather background information on survey participants while ensuring adequate data for verifying research hypotheses.

Table 1. Synthesis of the scale of research variables

Concept	Code	Observed Variable	References
Work life balance (WLB)	WLB1	I have enough time to complete my professional duties as well as my family and personal responsibilities.	[8]
	WLB2	I feel that I can balance the energy devoted to work and personal life, without feeling exhausted when I return home.	[8]
	WLB3	Work related stress does not negatively affect my personal life, and vice versa.	[8]
	WLB4	I am happy to allocate the time with work and life	[6][9]
	WLB5	My organization has policies that help employees balance work and life.	[10][11][12][13]
	WLB6	My supervisor is always understanding and flexible when I face personal difficulties.	[10][11][12][13]
	WLB7	I receive support from my colleagues when necessary.	[10][11][12][13]
	WLB8	I am encouraged to use my annual leave to restore my energy.	Proposed by the authors
Job satisfaction (JS)	JS1	I am satisfied with my current salary and welfare benefits compared with the effort I put into my work.	[6][8]
	JS2	I am always satisfied with support through various opportunities related to promotion and career development within an organization.	[6][8]
	JS3	I am satisfied with analysis the managerial competence with the direct supervisor.	[6][8]
	JS4	I feel comfortable and satisfied with my relationships with colleagues in the company.	[6][8]
	JS5	I genuinely enjoy the work that I am doing.	[6][8]
	JS6	I am happy to analysi the company recongnition and evaluate the various abilities.	Proposed by the authors
Happiness (HP)	HP1	I often feel happy and enthusiastic when working.	[7]
	HP2	I feel mentally comfortable and rarely feel anxious at the workplace.	[7]
	HP3	My current job gives me a sense of meaning and value in life.	[7]
	HP4	I am free to express my abilities and develop myself to the fullest in this job.	[7]
	HP5	I feel that I am a happy person working in this organization.	[7]
	HP6	I feel attached to the company and consider it my second home.	Proposed by the authors

Source: Group of authors with adjustments and suggestions

TESTING THE REGRESSION MODEL AND DISCUSSING THE RESULTS

Statistics Describing the Research Sample

In order to clarify the characteristics of the survey subjects, the study conducted statistics describing the sample according to the main demographic criteria. At the same time, before going into further analysis

steps, the study also synthesizes the results of collecting and screening surveys to ensure the transparency of the input data.

Table 2. Survey questionnaire collection and filtering results

Contents	Quantity
Number of votes issued	500
Number of votes received	478
Invalid votes	16
Valid votes	462

Source: Compiled author

From table 2, it can be seen that out of a total of 500 survey votes issued, the study collected 478 votes, corresponding to a recovery rate of 95.6%. After the screening process, 16 invalid votes were disqualified, and the remaining 462 votes were used for analysis. This sample size meets the requirements of quantitative research in the field of social sciences, and is eligible to conduct both preliminary analyses using statistical software and model validation using structural modeling software.

Table 3. Statistics describing the study sample

Criteria	Groups	Frequency	Rate (%)
Gender	Male	196	42,42
	Female	266	57,58
Age	18-25 years	164	35,50
	25-34 years	172	37,23
	35-44 years	96	20,78
	Over 45 years	30	6,49
Marital Status	Single	238	51,52
	Married	224	48,48
Education	Intermediate/ College	77	16,67
	Undergraduate	319	69,05
	Postgraduate	66	14,29
Seniority	Less than 1 year	158	34,20
	From 1 to less than 3 years	164	35,50
	From 3 to less than 5 years	95	20,56
	Over 5 years	45	9,74
	Total	462	100,00

Source: The author compiled from the results of data processing using SPSS.

The results from table 3 show that the research sample has a relatively diverse structure but still focuses on young office workers. In terms of gender, women accounted for 57.58%, higher than men with 42.42%. The difference is not too large, but it still reflects some of the common characteristics in many office positions today, where female employees often account for a high proportion.

In terms of age, the group from 25 to 34 years old accounted for the highest rate with 37.23%, followed by the group from 18 to 25 years old with 35.50%. Thus, these two groups alone accounted for 72.73% of the total sample. That structure shows that the survey sample is clearly skewed towards young and near-young workers. This is also a group that is often affected by work pressure, work progress and conflicts between professional roles and personal life.

In terms of marital status, the rate of single and married is quite balanced, at 51.52% and 48.48%, respectively. This distribution facilitates reflection of the diversity of workers' experiences, as work-life balance needs can often differ between single and married people.

For educational level, the group with a university degree accounted for the highest rate with 69.05%, while the intermediate/college group accounted for 16.67% and the postgraduate group accounted for 14.29%. The distribution reasonably reflects the educational characteristics of the group of office workers in the survey sample, in which university degrees hold the leading position.

In terms of seniority, the group of less than 1 year accounted for 34.20%, while the group from 1 to less than 3 years accounted for 35.50%. Thus, the two groups with less than 3 years of seniority alone accounted for 69.70% of the total sample. The sample workforce is predominantly young and remains in the early or middle phases of career establishment.

Table 4. Statistics describing the study variables

Variable	Number of Observations	Minimum value	Greatest Value	Average Value	Standard Deviation
WLB mean	462	1,13	5,00	3,064	0,925
JS mean	462	1,00	5,00	3,119	0,984
HP mean	462	1,00	5,00	3,095	0,959

Source: The author compiled from the results of data processing using SPSS.

The descriptive statistical results from table 4 show that the average of the three study variables is greater than the average of the 5-point Likert scale. Specifically, the job satisfaction variable had the highest average value, reaching 3,119; followed by employee happiness with 3,095; and work-life balance with 3,064. The standard deviation of the variables ranged from 0.9250 to 0.9842, indicating that the data was moderately dispersed, not too focused on a certain evaluation level. Respondents tend to rate the surveyed content at a decent average.

Results of Scale Reliability Inspection

Before testing the research model, the project evaluated the reliability of the scales using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. This test aims to determine the level of intrinsic consistency between the observed variables on the same scale, thereby ensuring that the variables used in the subsequent analysis actually reflect the same conceptual structure. The results are presented in table 5.

Table 5. Scale reliability test results

Scale	Variable observation	Variable-to-sum correlation coefficient	Cronbach's Alpha if variable type
Work-Life Balance (WLB) - Cronbach's Alpha (CA) = 0.870			
	WLB1	0,627	0,853
	WLB2	0,606	0,856
	WLB3	0,577	0,859
	WLB4	0,668	0,849
	WLB5	0,683	0,847
	WLB6	0,581	0,858
	WLB7	0,605	0,856
	WLB8	0,642	0,852
Job Satisfaction (JS) - CA = 0.8550			
	JS1	0,651	0,836
	JS2	0,689	0,822
	JS3	0,622	0,835
	JS4	0,612	0,837
	JS5	0,0644	0,827
	JS6	0,579	0,809
Employee Happiness (HP) - CA = 0.831			
	HP1	0,579	0,809
	HP2	0,654	0,793
	HP3	0,526	0,807
	HP4	0,661	0,819
	HP5	0,606	0,792
	HP6		0,803

Source: The author compiled from the results of data processing using SPSS.

The reliability test results indicate that all three scales are satisfactory. Specifically, the Cronbach's

Alpha coefficients were 0. 870 for the work-life balance scale, 0. 855 for the job satisfaction scale, and 0. 831 for the employee happiness scale. Simultaneously, every observed variable exhibits a total variable correlation coefficient exceeding 0. 3, with values spanning from 0. 526 to 0. 689. Furthermore, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for each variable type is consistently lower than the overall Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for each scale. There are no observational variables that degrade the reliability of the scale, so all variables are retained for further analysis of the discovery factor.

Discovery Factor Analysis (EFA)

Table 6. KMO and bartlett inspection results

Criteria	Values
SME	0,937
Chi-square value	3590,293
Freedom Tier	190
Sig Significance Level.	0,0000

Source: The author compiled from the results of data processing using SPSS

The KMO and Bartlett test results from table 6 show that the data work well for EFA analysis. The KMO score is 0.937, which is above the minimum of 0.5, meaning the data is very good for this type of analysis. The Bartlett test gives a significance value of 0.000, which is lower than 0.05, showing that all the variables are related in a linear way. Because of this, the data is fully ready to move forward with the exploratory factor analysis.

Table 7. Total variance extracted

Factors	Unique Value	Extraction Variance Ratio (%)	Cumulative Variance Rate (%)
Factor 1	7,118	35,589	35,589
Factor 2	2,216	11,078	46,667
Factor 3	1,680	8,398	55,065

Source: The author compiled from the results of data processing using SPSS

Table 8. Factor rotation matrix

Variable observation	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
WLB5	0,740		
WLB4	0,711		
WLB6	0,707		
WLB8	0,698		
WLB1	0,693		
WLB3	0,681		
WLB7	0,644		
WLB2	0,641		
JS3		0,763	
JS6		0,727	
JS4		0,704	
JS2		0,699	
JS5		0,699	
JS1		0,684	
HP5			0,764
HP2			0,734
HP6			0,698
HP4			0,681
HP1			0,677
HP3			0,633

Source: The author compiled from the results of data processing using SPSS

The results of the analysis from table 7 and table 8 show that the discovery factor show that the three factors extracted at a specific value greater than 1. The total variance of the extraction reached 55.065%, which means that these three factors explained 55.065% of the variation of the entire data, exceeding the 50% threshold and therefore considered satisfactory. The rotation matrix results indicate that all observed variables exhibit factor loadings exceeding 0. 5 and clearly cluster into three distinct factor groups.. Specifically, the variables WLB1 to WLB8 focus on one factor; the JS1 to JS6 variables focus on the second factor; and the HP1 to HP6 variables focus on the third factor. There is no significant cross-loading between the factors. Affirm that the scale structure of the research model is appropriate and that the observed variables are retained for further analysis steps.

Correlation Analysis

After confirming the scale structure, the study went on to examine the linear relationship between the composite variables in the model through the Pearson correlation matrix given in table 9.

Table 9. Correlation matrix between study variables

Variable	WLB mean	JS mean	HP mean
WLB mean	1,000		
JS mean	0,512**	1,000	
HP mean	0,404**	0,485**	1,000

Notes: ** is statistically significant at 1%; number of observations $N = 462$.

Source: The author compiled from the results of data processing using SPSS

Pearson's correlation analysis shows a positive correlation with job satisfaction (coefficient: 0. 512) and is also positively associated with employee happiness (coefficient: 0. 404).In addition, job satisfaction is also positively correlated with employee happiness by a factor of 0.485. These results initially suggest that the relationships in the study model are suitable for further testing by regression and structural modeling.

Results of Model Verification

After completing the preliminary evaluation steps using SPSS, the study continued to use the partially least squared linear structure model (PLS-SEM) method to validate the research model. First of all, the measurement model is evaluated through criteria including intrinsic reliability, convergence value, and differential value.

Table 10. Results of evaluation of the reliability and convergence value of the scale

Latent variables	Coefficient CA	Aggregate Reliability (CR)	Mean Extraction Variance (AVE)
WLB	0,870	0,898	0,524
JS	0,855	0,892	0,580
HP	0,831	0,877	0,543

Source: The author compiled from the results of data processing using SmartPLS and SPSS.

As shown in table 10, The reliability and validity test shows that all the latent variables have reliable measurement. The CR values of Work-Life Balance (WLB), Job Satisfaction (JS), and Health Perception (HP) are 0.898, 0.892, and 0.877, respectively, higher than the required level of 0.70, thereby indicating good internal consistency. The AVE values fall between 0.524 and 0.580, which is higher than the required level of 0.50, indicating good convergent validity. Hence, all constructs have adequate reliability and validity for structural modeling.

As shown in table 11, all HTMT values in the test results fall below the 0. 85 threshold. Specifically, the HT value between WLB and JS is 0. 594, between WLB and HP is 0. 475, and between JS and HP is 0.

575. This demonstrates that the model's latent variables exhibit distinct differences, indicating that the model successfully achieves discriminative separation. Thus, based on the criteria of reliability, convergence value, and differential value, it can be confirmed that the measurement model of the study is satisfactory.

Table 11. Results of assessment of differentiated values according to the HTMT index

Research Variable	WLB	JS	HP
WLB			
JS	0,594		
HP	0,475	0,575	

Source: The author compiled from the results of data processing using SmartPLS and SPSS.

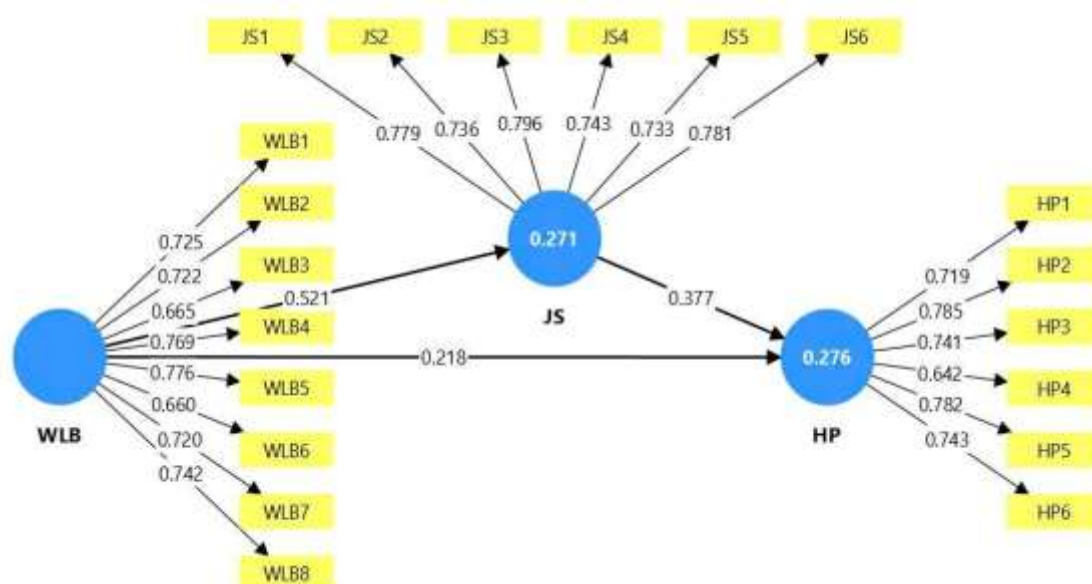


Figure 2. Structural model results

Source: The author summarized from the results of data processing using SmartPLS software

After the measurement model is confirmed to be suitable, the study conducts an estimation of the structural model using the PLS-SEM method. The general results of the model are shown in figure 2, which presents the path coefficients between the latent variables and the deterministic coefficients of endogenous variables. This figure 2 serves as a visual illustration of the entire model before going into detailed analysis in the next section. The criteria used include path coefficient, determination coefficient, multi-community verification, and model suitability.

Table 12. Results of verification of direct links in the model

Relations	Path Factor	Standard Deviation	Value t	Significance
WLB -> JS	0,521	0,033	15,580	0,000
JS -> HP	0,377	0,043	8,670	0,000
WLB -> HP	0,218	0,047	4,628	0,000

Source: The author summarized from the results of data processing using SmartPLS software

Table 12 shows that the strongest relationship in the model is from WLB to JS, with a path factor of 0.521. This is a fairly obvious level of impact. When employees feel that work is not overwhelming their personal lives, the first reaction appears to be that they feel more comfortable with their work, are less stressed, and evaluate work in a more positive way.

The path from job satisfaction to employee happiness reached 0.377. This level is lower than the first

relationship but still quite significant. Job satisfaction is not just a mere state of evaluation, but also a psychological foundation that is relatively close to happiness at work.

Meanwhile, the direct path from work-life balance to employee happiness reached 0.218, significantly lower than the other two relationships but still statistically significant. This implies that work-life balance has a direct effect on happiness, but that influence is not as strong as the path through job satisfaction.

For the structural model, the determination coefficients of endogenous variables are presented in table 13.

Table 13. Determination coefficients of endogenous variables

Endogenous variables	Determination coefficient
Job satisfaction	0,271
Employee happiness	0,276

Source: The author summarized from the results of data processing using SmartPLS software

The results showed that work-life balance explained 27.1% of the variation in job satisfaction. At the same time, work-life balance along with job satisfaction explains 27.6% of the variability in employee happiness. This explanation is not too high, but it is perfectly acceptable in the study of organizational behavior, where psychological variables such as satisfaction or happiness are often influenced simultaneously by many factors other than the current model.

Table 14. Results of intermediary role inspection

Effects	Coefficient	Standard Deviation	Value t	Significance	95% Confidence Interval
WLB -> JS -> HP	0,196	0,025	7,738	0,000	[0,151; 0,250]

Source: The author summarized from the results of data processing using SmartPLS software

Table 15. Total effect results

Effects	Coefficient	Standard Deviation	Value t	Significance
WLB -> HP	0,415	0,039	10,734	0,000

Source: The author summarized from the results of data processing using SmartPLS software

Table 14 and table 15 describes the Results from mediation analysis show that there is a significant mediation of Job Satisfaction (JS) on the effect of Work-Life Balance (WLB) on Health Perception (HP). The indirect effect of the WLB → JS → HP is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.196$, $t = 7.738$, $p < 0.001$) with 95% confidence interval [0.151, 0.250]. Also, the total effect of WLB on HP is significant and positive ($\beta = 0.415$, $t = 10.734$, $p < 0.001$). These results indicate that improvement in work-life balance has a direct effect on health perception.

GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

First, companies must implement meaningful solutions to genuinely support work-life balance. The study's findings indicate that work-life balance is the most influential factor on job satisfaction and directly impacts employee happiness. Therefore, this should be considered a governance priority and not just a formal policy. In fact, many businesses still mention work-life balance as a slogan, but have not turned it into specific management mechanisms. What businesses need to do is not only to encourage employees to have a better balance, but to create the conditions for that balance to become feasible in their daily working lives.

Second, businesses need to see job satisfaction as a central lever to improve employee happiness.

The study's findings indicate that job satisfaction is shaped not only by work-life balance but also

significantly influences employee happiness. Simultaneously, this variable also serves as an intermediate factor within the model. That means that if businesses want to improve employee happiness, they can't just facilitate work-life balance. More importantly, that balance must be transformed into a positive work experience. In other words, job satisfaction is the link that helps turn favorable conditions into a more lasting state of happiness.

At the observational variable level, the model results showed that the variable with the highest load factor on the job satisfaction scale was JS3, with the content: *"I am satisfied with the support and management capacity of my direct superior."* This shows that in the job satisfaction structure of the surveyed employee group, the direct management factor is a prominent factor. In other words, employees not only measure their work through tasks or income, but also through how they are guided, supported, and interacted with their superiors every day.

The results of the study show that employee happiness is not only directly affected by work-life balance, but also quite clearly affected by job satisfaction. That suggests that happiness in the workplace is the result of both working conditions and positive psychological experiences within the organization. Therefore, an important management implication is that businesses need to proactively build a positive working environment where employees feel respected, supported and can maintain a stable mental state during the working process.

From the results of the study, it can be deduced that if businesses want to improve employee happiness, they need to impact all three floors simultaneously. The first layer is the background condition, that is, helping employees maintain a reasonable balance between work and personal life. The second layer is work experience, which makes employees feel more satisfied with the work they are doing. The third tier is the work environment, where positive emotions are nurtured and maintained through support, recognition, and management quality. These three floors are closely interconnected. If only one aspect is improved but the other two are ignored, the governance efficiency will be difficult to sustain. Conversely, when businesses simultaneously improve their balance, satisfaction and work environment, the ability to improve employee happiness will become more pronounced and stable in the long term.

CONCLUSION

The empirical validation of the structural model confirms that work life balance, job satisfaction, and employee happiness share statistically significant direct and indirect relationships within urban enterprise settings. Specifically, work life balance exerts the strongest direct positive impact on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.521, p < 0.001$), emphasizing that role harmony serves as a foundational prerequisite for positive workplace evaluations. Moreover, job satisfaction directly boosts employee happiness ($\beta = 0.377, p < 0.001$), and work-life balance also exerts a significant direct influence on employee happiness ($\beta = 0.218, p < 0.001$). Crucially, mediation analysis reveals that job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between work life balance and employee happiness, generating a statistically significant indirect effect ($\beta = 0.196, p < 0.001$). The combined model accounts for 27.1% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.271$) and 27.6% of the variance in employee happiness ($R^2 = 0.276$). These findings indicate that work-life balance affects employee well-being both directly and indirectly via cognitive job evaluation mechanisms. Consequently, organizational leaders must construct multi-tiered human resource strategies that combine workload flexibility, supportive direct supervision, and positive psychological workplace environments. To build upon these insights, future research should expand in several directions. Longitudinal or experimental study designs could be implemented to capture causal dynamics over time. Additionally, expanding the geographic and sector scope beyond inner-city Hanoi office workers to include manufacturing, remote tech sectors, or secondary urban hubs would enhance cross-contextual generalizability. Finally, integrating potential moderating variables such as digital literacy, organizational culture, or demographic factors would further enrich the understanding of employee well-being frameworks.

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