

Work-Life Quality and Organizational Culture as Foundations for Professional Well-Being and Life Satisfaction in Contemporary Work Environments

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ABSTRACT – This study investigates the relationship between work-life quality and life satisfaction, exploring the multifarious ways in which organizational culture, management practices, and workplace structures shape the totality of individual well-being. Through a rigorous qualitative literature review and thematic synthesis approach, the study draws upon empirical and theoretical perspectives spanning diverse occupational contexts, emphasizing the salience of psychological safety, autonomy, flexibility, and recognition. The findings affirm that life satisfaction is integrally linked to professional experiences, with effective work-life policies, supportive leadership, and equitable environments fostering satisfaction both within and beyond the workplace. Conversely, organizational rigidity, lack of support, and unchecked digital encroachment undermine psychological health and erode meaning. The study underscores the vital role of emotional intelligence, social support structures, and gender equity initiatives in creating climates conducive to holistic thriving. Practical implications include recommendations for policy innovation, leadership development, and the strategic realignment of cultures to endorse meaningful, sustainable, and dignified work. This research provides nuanced insights and actionable pathways for organizations, policymakers, and scholars committed to advancing both occupational well-being and broader societal prosperity.

Keywords: work-life quality, life satisfaction, organizational culture, well-being, management, emotional intelligence, flexibility.

A. INTRODUCTION

In today's increasingly competitive and dynamic landscape, well-being can no longer be interpreted solely through the prism of economic gains or career achievements.

Instead, the balance between professional commitments and personal fulfillment has emerged as a critical dimension in living a genuinely satisfying life. This transition has been propelled by societal changes, rising productivity expectations, and lengthening work hours which often come at the expense of vital aspects, such as mental health, meaningful relationships, and personal fulfillment. As a progressive response, the construct of work-life quality has evolved to capture the entirety of the lived experience, emphasizing not only time allocation but the substance and humanity found within one's professional journey (Kurowska et al., 2025; Michael et al., 2025).

When tracing its origins, the aspiration for equilibrium between working responsibilities and private existence has roots that reach back to the 1960s in the United Kingdom, predominantly as a social critique of the disproportionate demands placed upon women. As the notion matured, the 1980s witnessed men voicing analogous apprehensions, and the vocabulary of balance between work and home became more universally applied. Rather than a mere buzzword, this transformation underscored a vital critique against organizational cultures relentlessly prioritizing productivity at considerable cost to personal happiness (Darmawan, 2022; Fergusson et al., 2015). A growing body of research now highlights on how sustained misalignment between work demands and personal aspirations can erode overall satisfaction with life, heightening susceptibility to stress, burnout, and mental health challenges (Stanley et al., 2025).

This is more expansive framing of work-life quality goes well beyond clocking equal hours in each sphere. The key components including a supportive institutional climate, opportunities for professional growth, genuine acknowledgment of individual contributions, and the flexibility to pursue passions and

cultivate relationships outside formal employment responsibilities (Eddine et al., 2021). Where such attributes flourish, personal satisfaction and psychological health are greatly enhanced, producing individuals who engage with their lives—not merely their jobs—with greater richness and intention. In contrast, environments that subordinate such values all too often yield deleterious outcomes for both workers and the societies they underpin (Pakpahan et al., 2022).

Transformative research consistently reveals that life satisfaction, as an index of subjective well-being, is closely intertwined with how individuals interpret, experience, and integrate their professional and personal identities (Hariani & Mardikaningsih, 2023). When the delicate interplay between work and non-work experiences is disturbed, repercussions are evident across the domains of mental, emotional, and social health. Professional quality is not only shape daily attitudes and work outputs, but it also leaves lasting imprints on happiness and fulfillment outside the workplace. The drive for a more humane working life, it seems, is not merely a managerial concern, but rather an imperative for sustainable human development, social cohesion, and global progress.

Across diverse occupational settings, attaining satisfaction with both work and life remains elusive for many. A recurring issue is the collision between institutional imperatives and individual needs, which, when unresolved, results in heightened psychological strain, disengagement, and dissatisfaction. Research by Michael et al. (2025) highlights that employees are experiencing insufficient support within organizational constructs frequently report diminished engagement and loyalty. As a consequence, their lived experience at work detracts from both professional contribution and broader sense of fulfillment.

Moreover, Stanley et al. (2025) and Darmawan (2022) in their study emphasize the prevalence of psychological distress attributable to poor management of the borders between working duties and personal ambitions. This distress is not confined to a specific profession or context, but recurs across work environments, particularly those who lack of flexibility, managerial consideration, or have adequate policy frameworks. The overlapping pressures exert adverse effects on family satisfaction and psychosocial functioning, suggesting systemic misalignments in employee-centric design.

A pronounced concern arises from persistent work-family conflict, as discussed by Kurowska et al. (2025), where the relentless pursuit of professional productivity compresses time and energy available for caring, leisure, and social engagement. This dynamic is especially acute for parents or caregivers engaged in remote work or operating under shifting schedules. The resultant imbalance induces cumulative stress, hinders the capacity for recovery and rejuvenation, and often impairs the ability to maintain healthy relationships at home.

The cumulative weight of these unresolved dilemmas has substantive implications for mental health, motivation, and the pursuit of meaning both within and outside organizational settings. The literature is replete with warnings about the far-reaching personal and systemic consequences if such disjunctions persist unaddressed. Organizations unwilling or unable to architect environments that nurture both professional excellence and personal integrity risk perpetuating a cycle of dissatisfaction with subsequent drops in commitment, innovation, and broader societal well-being (Eddine et al., 2021; Michael et al., 2025; Pakpahan et al., 2022).

There are two imperatives surface from this body of evidence. The first is the architecture of working life that plays a non-trivial role in generating or alleviating psychological burdens. Not merely for isolated individuals but in rippling waves across families and communities. The second is the demands for flexible and a human-centered employment arrangements that are likely to intensify alongside ongoing shifts in work modalities, digital transformation, and evolving societal expectations. However, observing these changes is not an academic exercise, but a necessity for organizations striving to cultivate productive, resilient, and satisfied contributors to social progress.

This inquiry, therefore, departs from the recognition that the stakes are profound—touching not only individual happiness, but also the collective capacity for adaptation and growth. A failure in observing and managing the quality of working life risks undermining the core of what it means to flourish in the modern era.

The purpose of this research is to systematically explore how experiences at work influence satisfaction with life, particularly by mapping the linkages between supportive work

environments and the enriched pursuit of non-work aspirations. The findings are anticipated to illuminate pathways through which organizations, policymakers, and social scientists can architect environments that advance not just productivity but also the psychological sustainability of those who participate within them. The study will contribute novel syntheses to academic scholarship, offer evidence-based guidance for managerial praxis, and advocate for a long-term vision in workforce design that uplifts both individual and societal welfare.

B. METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative literature review approach, specifically deploying thematic synthesis to interpret and integrate research findings on the nexus between work-life quality and overall life satisfaction. Qualitative literature studies are inherently valuable when the aim is to achieve nuanced interpretation of patterns, contradictions, and emerging themes across varied sources, facilitating a grounded understanding of complex constructs such as work-life quality (Thomas & Harden, 2008). Thematic synthesis, as articulated by Braun and Clarke (2006), enables researchers to identify, analyze, and report patterns within data by employing a rigorous coding process that transcends mere description and moves towards theoretical development. The application of this methodology is particularly appropriate, as it emphasizes depth, context-sensitive analysis, and theoretical insight in synthesizing lived experiences articulated across primary studies.

Within this qualitative tradition, the study systematically searched reputable databases including Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, and ScienceDirect for peer-reviewed articles, empirical reports, and landmark works published from reputable publishers. Stringent inclusion criteria were established to ensure the credibility and relevance of sources, that focus on material examining the relationship between work-life quality, subjective well-being, and satisfaction with life in a variety of organizational and cultural environments (Booth et al., 2016). Articles discussing the intersection of professional environment, organizational support, family life, psychosocial health, cognitive engagement, or structural determinants of satisfaction were prioritized, reflecting the polyvalent nature of the work-life quality construct.

Data extraction and analysis involved multiple stages. First, all collected studies were appraised for methodological soundness and conceptual clarity using established protocols for qualitative research evaluation (Noblit & Hare, 1988). Subsequent coding followed the thematic analysis framework, wherein relevant information was distilled into core themes such as flexibility in work arrangements, perceived organizational support, and psychological well-being, conflict between work and home demands, and indicators of life satisfaction. Cross-study findings were then synthesized to yield interpretive narratives addressing the research questions. The reflective and iterative nature of this process supported the distillation of complex interrelationships pertaining to satisfaction with life and the multifaceted quality of work-life experience.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Influence of Work-Life Quality on Life Satisfaction

The intricate relationship between work-life quality and overall satisfaction with life is foundational in shaping individual well-being in the contemporary workplace. Sirgy et al. (2001) demonstrate that satisfaction with work-life is not an isolated psychological event but is strongly intertwined with subjective well-being, mediated via mechanisms of need fulfillment and emotional spillover. The extent to which the work environment supports autonomy, psychological safety, equitable treatment, and recognition directly contributes to individuals' global life contentment. Haar et al. (2014) confirmed that balanced work and non-work boundaries are essential for elevating both job and life satisfaction, as well as safeguarding mental health. When the work experience quality stagnates or declines, negative emotional states often permeate other life areas, reduce holistic satisfaction and raise vulnerability to psychological distress.

Theories of occupational health illuminate how adverse work environments induce cascading effects on subjective fulfillment beyond the workplace (Darmawan, 2024). Kunkcu et al. (2025) argue that persistent work-family conflict and suboptimal workplace relationships detrimentally influence life satisfaction through increased emotional exhaustion and cognitive overload. These stressors, if left unmanaged, can impede individuals' capacity to recover, participate fully in family life, and pursue meaningful

recreational or developmental activities. Otaghi et al. (2023) reinforce this conclusion through evidence that deteriorated mental health and job dissatisfaction create feedback loops which undermine all aspects of well-being. Notably, the magnitude of such impact is often contingent upon both organizational practices and the congruence between personal values and institutional priorities.

The workplace is commonly the site where adults expend most of their productive energy, meaning the stakes of work-life quality are extensive and multi-layered. Wulandari and Halizah (2021) emphasize that the human desire for social belonging and psychosocial stability is often negotiated at the intersection of occupational structures and external social systems. Where organizations nurture voluntary motivation, meaningful interpersonal interaction, and emotional resources, individuals are better equipped to cope with professional pressure and derive satisfaction from personal domains (Vitrianingsih & Issallillah, 2021). Emotional well-being, as a mediating variable, unites disparate facets of the work-living experience, amplifying overall life satisfaction when adequately supported by favorable working conditions.

A recurring theme in advanced scholarship centers on the autonomy supportive environment as a driver of intrinsic motivation and personal fulfillment. According to Jang et al. (2011), organizations granting flexibility in task scheduling, decision-making, and break empower individuals to better manage non-work obligations, and reducing constraint and frustration. This autonomy supports meaningful relationships, health, and pursue interests beyond the professional domain, ultimately contributing to a deeper sense of agency and life satisfaction. Global studies corroborate the notion that autonomy and work-life integration, rather than rigid separation, offer protection against negative spillover and facilitate thriving (Haar et al., 2014).

Organizational culture and practical policy mechanisms likewise occupy a central place in the configuration of well-being. The empirical demonstration by Zhang et al. (2024) among healthcare professionals reveals that fostering psychological capital—through encouragement, resilience-building, and recognition—mediates the influence of work-life balance initiatives on mental health and satisfaction. Interventions designed to facilitate open communication,

emotional management training, and stress reduction are consistently shown to increase feelings of self-efficacy, optimism, and overall happiness. This is supported by Irfan and Darmawan (2021) that emotional management education has the potential to transform psychological well-being in everyday life.

Job satisfaction itself is both a consequence and a predictor of life satisfaction. As Sirgy et al. (2001) stated that fulfillment at work, spills over into positive evaluations of personal existence, confirming the “spillover theory.” Persistent work dissatisfaction often affects overall life evaluation, lowering self-worth, and reducing participation in other valued areas. This highlights the interconnectedness of life’s spheres, as psychosocial experiences inevitably crossing traditional compartmental boundaries. The escalating expectations and digital transformation of the modern workplace create novel challenges and opportunities for promoting work-life quality. Kunkcu et al. (2025) examined professionals in project management and found that digitalization, while offering flexibility, could simultaneously intensify demands and blur boundaries between professional and private spheres. When managed with thoughtful policy and technological support, however, employees report higher satisfaction with both work and life, suggesting that contemporary work arrangements must be proactively aligned with human needs for rest, recuperation, and self-realization.

Global events such as the recent pandemic and the resultant Great Resignation have intensified the conversation surrounding the intrinsic value of work-life quality (Zhang et al., 2024). These trends highlight a societal shift toward valuing humane, meaningful, and sustainable engagement as key to life satisfaction. Cross-cultural data show that more individuals choose to sacrifice income rather than endure harmful work, prioritizing dignity, autonomy, and well-being. Those attitudes are redefining expectations across industries.

Societal norms concerning success, gender, and identity further condition the salience of work-life quality in determining well-being. Studies by Wulandari and Halizah (2021) and Jang et al. (2011) highlight the experience of employees in collectivist and individualist societies, reinforcing the significance of cultural context in determining pathways to satisfaction. Flexibility, organizational justice, and the

alignment of personal and collective values are increasingly recognized as non-negotiable elements in designing environments that foster life satisfaction through positive work-life experiences.

The interplay between cognitive evaluation, psychological resources, and structural opportunity forms the bedrock of overall life satisfaction. Drawing on cognitive evaluation theory, that trust, respect, and meaningful choice foster intrinsic motivation and reduce psychological strain. This view aligns with empirical models of well-being and engagement, reinforcing evidence that organizational structures significantly influence the perceived quality of work and life.

In addition, workplace relationships, fairness, and identity formation continue to be significant dimensions through which work-life quality imprints upon the broader life experience. When these essential needs are met, individuals are able to derive existential meaning from professional endeavor, translating occupational goal into elevated fulfillment in private and social domains as well.

Emerging trends suggest that contemporary workers now expect more than transactional interactions with their employers—they seek purpose, flexibility, and opportunities for authenticity. The shift toward human-centered management reflects a deeper understanding of well-being and is gradually shaping labor relations and organizational norms worldwide, prompting a holistic reassessment of work's role in a fulfilling life.

Notably, many of the theoretical and practical implications observed here call for an ongoing commitment to research, innovation, and empathy at all organizational levels. Only by proactively addressing the diversity of individual needs and the complexity of modern working lives can organizations become catalysts for both personal satisfaction and societal advancement.

Organizational Determinants of Professional and Personal Well-being Alignment

A comprehensive understanding of the alignment between professional well-being and personal fulfillment begins with the critical examination of organizational culture. Hemade et al. (2025) contend that organizations cultivating a supportive climate—characterized by empathy, open communication, and leader

emotional intelligence—are pivotal in bridging the experience of occupational and personal satisfaction. The presence of work-life balance policies is frequently insufficient unless embedded in a culture where employees feel trust, psychological safety, and inclusive belonging. When genuine concern for individual well-being permeates the management ethos, employees are more likely to experience an integration of professional achievement and personal contentment.

Structural flexibility is a paramount factor influencing this alignment. Noda (2020) demonstrates that flexibility in terms of work schedules, remote engagement opportunities, and adaptive leave policies markedly enhances the capacity for individuals to fulfill non-work obligations and nurture relationships beyond the workplace. This adaptability is not merely a matter of operational convenience but represents an organizational commitment to human dignity and psychological sustainability. The presence of such flexibility has been especially associated with higher levels of overall life satisfaction among diverse occupational groups, irrespective of specific job roles or demographic variables.

Recognition of individual contributions and the cultivation of meaning within the workplace are further hallmarks of organizations that successfully align professional and personal well-being (Begum, 2025). Mechanisms for acknowledgment—ranging from performance-based rewards to simple acts of appreciation—fortify self-esteem and foster intrinsic motivation, thus deepening the perceived significance of one's professional journey. Such recognition also strengthens the affective bonds between employees and the institution, lessening alienation and promoting enduring engagement with both work and life pursuits.

The management of emotional climate within organizations exerts significant influence. Yildiz et al. (2021) found that employees supported in cultivating emotional resilience demonstrate superior adaptive skills both at work and in private life. Proactive interventions—such as counseling, resilience training, and structured debriefing—not only reduce distress but also enhance interpersonal connections, contributing to greater personal fulfillment.

Transparency and equity in decision-making processes further demarcate organizations adept at integrating well-being across life domains. As reported by Taşdelen-Karçkay and

Bakalim (2017), clarity and fairness in policies—ranging from promotions to disciplinary actions—support perceptions of organizational justice. Such justice strongly predicts life satisfaction, as employees' sense of agency and respect within the workplace serves as a psychological anchor for confidence, optimism, and authentic living away from professional settings.

Gender equality initiatives, as explored by Begum (2025), alter both the subjective and objective experience of working life for individuals across diverse backgrounds. Equal opportunity practices and protections against discrimination foster environments where all workers can harmonize professional growth with personal aspirations. Contextualized in the global dialogue on sustainable development, such initiatives directly improve both employee mental health and the pursuit of satisfaction outside the work arena.

Technological advancements and digital infrastructure likewise shape modern organizational practices, generating both opportunities and new forms of complexity (Warin, 2021). The adoption of well-calibrated communication tools and remote collaboration platforms may decrease logistical strain and enhance flexibility. However, organizations must remain vigilant regarding the risk of encroachment upon personal time, as unchecked digitalization can erode boundaries, induce fatigue, and undermine the potential for recovery and meaningful personal engagement.

Support structures—in the form of mentoring, social groups, and professional development programs—constitute another dimension through which organizations enable employees to balance the competing demands of work and life (Ismail, 2021). Such structures offer not only practical assistance but a sense of belonging and continuity, empowering individuals to negotiate the challenges of contemporary employment while preserving commitments to personal wellness, family, and community.

Appropriate workload distribution, job design, and the avoidance of excessive demands are recurrently cited as determinants of both professional and personal thriving. Schmitt et al. (2008) found that organizations attentive to crafting realistic responsibilities and allowing periodic reprioritization protect workers from burnout, mental health declines, and the progressive disintegration of personal ambitions. Prudent workload design is thus central to facilitating

the harmonious development of competence, autonomy, and life meaning.

Leadership style serves as a substantial moderator of the employee experience. Research by Hemade et al. (2025) and Yildiz et al. (2021) highlights that transformational and dialogical leaders who model balance, encourage self-care, and validate diverse expressions of well-being incite similar behaviors among their teams. These leaders anchor the culture of care, authenticity, and shared humanity that underlies the possibility of integrating work and personal fulfillment.

Building on theoretical perspectives, the Cognitive Evaluation Theory posits that autonomy and competence perceptions forged in organizational life shape employees' intrinsic motivation and subjective well-being. By framing job tasks as opportunities for growth and self-expression, management interventions can foster a milieu where satisfaction at work becomes a springboard for holistic thriving. The emergence of the Great Resignation highlights a societal shift toward demanding quality of working life as a non-negotiable determinant of overall satisfaction and meaning-making. Post-pandemic, individuals widely rejected psychologically unsustainable roles, elevating the organizational imperative to align institutional culture with human needs for authenticity and fulfillment.

Trends continue to show that organizations prioritizing these cultural and management features not only safeguard retention and productivity but also generate ripples of satisfaction that reach into family, community, and societal development. A future orientation, empathetic leadership, and structural agility stand as the cornerstones of a sustainable, life-affirming organizational paradigm.

As the global workforce becomes more diverse in terms of needs and aspirations, only those organizations committed to continual learning, compassionate adaptation, and evidence-based policymaking will achieve the authentic integration of professional well-being and personal fulfillment.

D. CONCLUSION

A synthesis of the evidence reveals that the interplay between work-life quality and life satisfaction is profound and multifaceted. The contemporary work environment, shaped by continuous societal evolution, organizational transformation, and rapid digitalization, is

inevitably affect the individual well-being. When organizations incorporate psychological safety, fairness, flexibility, and a supportive culture into their management philosophy, the boundary between professional engagement and personal fulfillment becomes porous, enabling workers to thrive in all aspects of their lives. Yet, rigid and unsupportive environments undermine satisfaction, erode motivation, and lay the groundwork for psychological distress. The insights offered by thematic synthesis confirm that quality of work-life does not reside merely within organizational routines, but flows outward into family, community, and the broader enterprise of human flourishing.

These findings hold manifold implications for practitioners, policymakers, business leaders, and scholars alike. Organizations must reassess structures and managerial practices to ensure work design aligns with the lived needs and goals of diverse employees. Adaptations such as autonomy in scheduling, equitable performance recognition, robust leadership development, and investments in social support must become standards rather than exceptions. Policy frameworks must evolve to safeguard flexibility and inclusion, supporting gender parity, emotional well-being, and sustainable work cycles. For researchers and consultants, this study illuminates critical focal points for intervention, measurement, and long-term strategy in advancing human-centered employment.

Future initiatives should prioritize continuous assessment of work-life quality, using robust qualitative and quantitative methods to track progress and identify emergent needs. Organizations are encouraged to foster transparent communication, increase training for emotionally intelligent leadership, and build flexible ecosystems responsive to life-stage and context. Investments in both structural policies and cultural change are necessary to translate commitments into lived improvements. Societal actors must advocate for models of work that enhance dignity, fulfillment, and adaptive capacity, in order to fully realize the potential of contemporary professionals and catalyze sustainable social development.

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