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The influence of work life balance on employee well-being:
The mediating roles of job satisfaction and burnout/stress

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Abstract

The effect of work-life balance (WLB) on employee well-being had been broadly researched, but within the different dimensions of social, physical, and psychological well-being, a gap existed. Additionally, the relationship between WLB and factors such as job satisfaction and burnout/stress were deemed worthy of more research, especially their mediating role of WLB and employee well-being. WLB was expected to be positively related to the dimensions of well-being and job satisfaction, negatively related to burnout/stress, and assumed that these factors would mediate WLB's effect on the three dimensions of employee well-being. The data used came from the 2021 European Working Conditions Telephone Survey (EWCTS). To test the hypotheses, a cross-sectional design was employed, using data from a large representative sample of 1096 Norwegian workers. Findings from the confirmatory factor analysis and the structural equation modelling confirmed the hypotheses: WLB was positively related to social well-being and physical well-being. Further, the hypotheses WLB positively relates to job satisfaction and WLB negatively relates to burnout/stress was also confirmed through the analyses. Findings about job satisfactions' positive relation to the three dimensions of employee well-being, and the negative relation between burnout/stress and psychological well-being was in line with the hypotheses. WLB and psychological well-being, burnout/stress and social and physical well-being were the hypotheses that did not reveal the expected outcome. Moreover, job satisfaction was found to play a mediating role for WLB and the three dimensions of well-being, and burnout/stress was found to have a mediating role for WLB and psychological well-being, but not for social and physical well-being. We recommend practical implementation of support and direction provided by supervisors and managers, which play an important role in improving WLB and employee well-being, lowering burnout/stress and improving job satisfaction. Lastly, we recommend future studies to investigate the relations of our study in a wider population, where not only focusing on the Norwegian participant's answers.
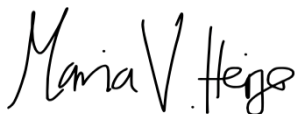
Preface

This paper represents the culmination of our two-year journey in the Master of Science degree program in Business Administration at the University of Stavanger. Throughout our time at UiS, we have been immersed in a diverse range of subjects that have significantly expanded our knowledge and understanding. We extend our gratitude to our professors for their innovative teaching methods and tools, which fostered an environment conducive to meaningful discussions among the students. Additionally, we appreciate their efforts in designing exams and tasks that effectively adapted to the evolving circumstances.

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Also, we would like to acknowledge Eurofund. Without their dataset this research would not have been possible. Finally, we would like to thank our family and friends for supporting and motivating us on this journey. We would also like to thank the other students for two great years here at the University of Stavanger.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Quiet quitting and quiet hiring were two phenomena that had garnered a lot of attention recently, as we were seeing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. When working from home rather than commuting to work for a 9-5 job became the new normal, people and organizations began to realize and feel the importance of work life balance, and how it affected organizations and individuals in both positive and negative ways.

The balance between private life, family and work demands was a widely studied area in literature regarding organizational studies. The World Health Organization (WHO) defined work-life balance as the connection between work and other areas of life, such as personal life, family, social life, and leisure (World Health Organization, 2010). Establishing and sustaining supportive and healthy work environments could enable employees to balance their work and personal responsibilities, thereby enhancing employee loyalty and productivity through work-life balance (Dhas, 2015). Another critical element that organizations and individuals must consider was the importance of job demands and job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Both contribute significantly to increased job satisfaction and decreased burnout/stress, which is thought to promote employee well-being.

Employee well-being, also known as job-related affective well-being, was characterized by an individual's subjective experience of positive or negative affect, in relation to performing specific job tasks within a particular life context (Hosie & Sevastos, 2010; Warr, 1990). Because of a rising number of employees experiencing mental illness in the workplace, employee well-being has emerged as a significant focus for modern organizations (Zheng et al., 2015). According to researchers, WLB was advantageous for both organizations and individuals since achieving a good WLB results in improved health and well-being for individuals, which could positively impact organizational productivity and performance (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; De Cieri et al., 2005; Wood & De Menezes, 2010).

Achieving work-life balance could be influenced by a variety of factors, both positive and negative, such as level of job satisfaction, burnout, stress, and employee well-being which encompassed a set of different dimensions. Although job satisfaction was an important criterion for assessing employee well-being, it failed to encompass the multidimensional nature of the concept (Grant et al., 2007), this thesis has a broad focus on the dimensions of employee well-being; social, physical, and psychological.

1.2 Problem Statement

The rationale for this study originated from a research gap identified in the literature regarding the connections between work-life balance (WLB), employee well-being, and related factors such as job satisfaction and burnout/stress, which were believed to have a mediating effect on this relationship. Several scholars have called for further research in these areas. For instance, Sonnentag and Kühnel (2016) emphasized the need for additional studies to explore the specific ways in which recovery experiences impacted employee outcomes beyond well-being and productivity. They suggested investigating broader improvements in work-life balance to deepen our understanding of recovery experiences, employee outcomes, and work-life balance.

Another study by Nabawanuka and Ekmekcioglu (2022) highlighted the importance of examining other forms of organizational support, and their potential influence on facilitating work-life balance for employees. Haar et al. (2019) suggest several opportunities for future research. They emphasized the need to investigate the complex relationships between demands and resources in relation to work-life balance, including the examination of interaction effects within study models. They further proposed exploring the relationship between work-life balance and active jobs characterized by autonomy, skill utilization, and meaningful work, to gain insights into designing job roles that promote better work-life balance.

Other scholars suggested further research in areas relevant to various job contexts (Kelly et al., 2020). This included exploring the impact of additional personal factors on job stress and burnout, investigating the relationship between work-life balance and specific recreational activities, and examining the role of the work environment in promoting well-being and reducing stress. Furthermore, scholars such as Haider et al. (2018) recommend establishing and examining a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influenced employee job performance, psychological well-being, and job satisfaction. This involved studying a wider range of antecedents and exploring the relationships between these factors, including the influences between job satisfaction, employee job performance, and psychological well-being. Based on these studies and others, this study sought to address part of the identified gaps from the literature, expand knowledge on work life balance, different dimensions of employee well-being, and related factors such as job satisfaction and burnout/stress, and provide insights that could promote healthier work environments.

1.3 Research Question and Sub-questions

The main research question for this study was: what is the relationship between work-life balance and employee well-being dimensions, and to what extent do job satisfaction and burnout/stress mediate this relationship? To answer this question, the following sub-questions were posed:

I. How does work life balance and the three dimensions of employee well-being; social, physical, and psychological relate to each other?

II. How do the factors job satisfaction and burnout/stress affect work life balance?

III. How does job satisfaction relate to the three dimensions of employee well-being; social, physical, and psychological?

IV. How does burnout/stress relate to the three dimensions of employee well-being; social, physical, and psychological?

V. Does the factors job satisfaction and burnout/stress mediate the relationship between work life balance and the dimensions of employee well-being; social, physical, and psychological?

1.4 Contributions of the Study

The study made contributions to the field of work life balance and its relations to employee well-being by addressing research gaps and advancing knowledge in several ways. Firstly, it filled a gap by exploring a new aspect/fresh perspective of WLB in relation to three different dimensions of employee well-being, job satisfaction, and burnout/stress. Secondly, it contributed empirical evidence through robust data collection and analysis, both supporting and challenging existing theories. Thirdly, the thesis provided practical implications by providing recommendations and insights for real-life applications and guiding improvements in practices. Such as implications for the employee to improve WLB and well-being, and for the management to implement applications to make it easier to have a balanced WLB and well-being.

1.5 Chapter Disposition

This study was structured into six different chapters. The first chapter introduced our thesis and provided background information, offering insights into the study's purpose. Chapter two presented a theoretical background based on previous studies about work-life balance, employee well-being, job satisfaction, and burnout/stress, as well as the interrelationships

among these topics. Additionally, this chapter provided definitions for each of the variables. Chapter three presented a research model, materials, and the methodological choices based on the quantitative data used in the study. The results from the structural equation model, confirmatory factor analysis, and descriptive statistics were presented in chapter four. It was in chapter four where the study either confirmed, partially confirmed, or rejected the hypotheses, forming the basis for the discussion in chapter five. Chapter five discussed the results in relation to the relevant theories presented in chapter two. Finally, in chapter six, the study concluded by presenting the findings and answering the hypotheses. Furthermore, chapter six discussed the limitations of the study and highlighted areas for further research.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Concepts

2.1.1 Work -life balance

Given its comprehensive nature, the definition of work-life balance (WLB) has been approached differently by researchers, resulting in diverse interpretations. Bulger et al. (2007) refers to the concept of WLB as the balance between an individual's work and personal responsibilities. In existing research, the term work life balance has different concepts mainly focusing on the family bit of balance such as: work-family conflict (Frone, 2003) work-family enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), or work-family balance (Michel et al., 2011). According to Frone et al. (1992) the concept of work-family conflict is explained as a role conflict between job and family, or personal life. It arises when an individual's ability to perform one duty (for example employment) is hampered by the time, energy, and resources required to fulfill another role (for example family or personal life).

Work-family enrichment is explained as the concept of the positive effects that work could have on family or personal life, and vice versa. Furthermore, when work and family or personal life are in balance, individuals experience benefits such as increased resources, skills, and social support (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000).

Work-family balance refers to an individual's capacity to balance job commitments with family or personal life responsibilities. It was defined as a state of equilibrium in which an individual felt that the responsibilities of job and family, or personal life are met without one role negatively influencing the other (Allen & Kiburz, 2012). However, current research on the concept of work life balance looks more into individuals' assessment of their balance between work and life (Haar et al., 2014). Our study chose the definition by Haar et al. (2014) and Bulger et al. (2007) which focused on the individual.

2.1.2 Social well-being

Social well-being refers to the extent to which an individual's social ties, relationships, and interactions with others are satisfying (Keyes, 1998). It includes things like social support, belonging, and the perception of favorable social ties (Diener & Seligman, 2002).

2.1.3 Physical well-being

Physical well-being refers to the condition of a person's physical well-being and capacity (Mckee-Ryan et al., 2005). It includes absence of illness or disease, physical fitness, and overall

vitality (Capio et al., 2014; Wilson & Cleary, 1995). Higher levels of life satisfaction, self-esteem, and general well-being are associated with good physical health (Diener & Chan, 2011; Helliwell & Huang, 2014).

2.1.4 Psychological well-being

Psychological well-being refers to an individual's psychological functioning and subjective experiences of well-being (Ryff, 1990). Furthermore, it embraced aspects such as self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, personal growth, purpose in life, and autonomy (Ryff & Keyes, 1996). Psychological well-being is linked to increased levels of life satisfaction, positive affect, and overall well-being (Ryff, 1990).

2.1.5 Burnout/stress

Burnout and stress are psychological factors that could negatively impact employees in their work. Burnout is defined by researchers as a negative psychological experience as a reaction to work related stress (Deutsch, 1984; Ratlif, 1988). Earlier research has revealed that key indicators of burnout are emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Bakker et al., 2002; Leiter & Schaufeli, 1996).

2.1.6 Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction could be defined as an individual's subjective assessment of their job or work experiences (Weiss & Merlo, 2015). It demonstrates how pleased, fulfilled, and satisfied employees are with their work (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Judge et al., 2001). Job satisfaction is a vital component of employee well-being and work-life balance (Faragher et al., 2005).

2.2 Theoretical Underpinning

The job-demand resources (JD-R) theory and its theoretical framework describes how workplace characteristics influence employees' well-being and work-related outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Furthermore, two main categories could have an impact on employee well-being and performance: job demands and job resources. Job demands are features of a job that required the employee to exert prolonged physical, psychological, or emotional effort (Karasek, 1979). Job demands include heavy workload, time constraints, competing expectations, and emotionally taxing relationships (Taris & Schreurs, 2009). Furthermore, if not managed properly, these pressures could lead to stress, burnout, and severe health results.

Job resources, on the other hand, are the aspects of a job that could help employees to achieve their work-related goals, reduce job demands, and promote well-being (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Job resources include social support from coworkers and managers, opportunity for skill development and training, autonomy and control over work duties, and appropriate performance evaluation.

JD-R theory is a valuable framework for studying how workplace conditions affect employees' well-being and performance. Organizations may contribute to establish work environments that support employee health, well-being, and productivity by identifying and resolving job demands and job resources. Job resources like social support referred to the availability of assistance that individuals received from peers, colleagues, and supervisors, creating a sense of belonging. This increased satisfaction could work as a buffer towards stress and enhanced well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Autonomy represents the ability to measure how much freedom and choice individuals have when choosing their work tasks and schedule, which again fosters job satisfaction and well-being, enabling individuals to have control over their work (Fotiadis et al., 2019). Skill development for individuals to acquire and improve their skills and competencies such as training, learning and development programs promoted engagement, job satisfaction and career growth (Bakker et al., 2007a). Feedback regarding information individuals received about their performance, development, and work-related results enhanced self-efficacy, motivation, and job satisfaction (Schaufeli et al., 2009; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Furthermore, increased job resources reduce burnout/stress and improved the individual's well-being (Bakker et al., 2007a; Hakanen et al., 2005).

Job demands on the other hand such as workload represent the quantity and intensity of job tasks individuals were required to do within a particular period. Exhaustion, stress, and decreased well-being could result from a heavy workload (Ford & Jin, 2015; Taris & Schreurs, 2009). Time pressure alludes to the sense of not having enough time to fulfill job tasks, which are frequently caused by tight deadlines or competing priorities (Demerouti et al., 2001). Time pressure could increase stress and have a detrimental influence on well-being (Demerouti et al., 2004). Emotional demands encompass the need to control and manage emotions while performing job duties, such as handling demanding customers, or emotionally taxing circumstances (Bakker, 2016; Bakker & de Vries, 2021). High emotional demands could deplete an individual's emotional reserves and lead to burnout (Bakker et al., 2005). Role

conflict occurs when individuals face conflicting expectations and demands from dissimilar roles or sources (Sardeshmukh et al., 2012). Role conflict can cause stress, dissatisfaction, and a reduction in well-being (Michel et al., 2011).

It is critical to balance job resources and job demands to promote employee well-being, job satisfaction, and reduce burnout and stress. Job resources give employees the essential support, autonomy, skill development, and feedback to properly cope with and manage job demands. Employees who have sufficient resources might perceive job demands as challenges rather than insurmountable obstacles (Hakanen et al., 2005). As a result, their motivation, engagement, and overall job satisfaction improved (Bakker et al., 2005, 2007b). Furthermore, the presence of job resources could mitigate the negative effects of high job demands, reducing the risk of burnout and stress (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Organizations can build healthier and more sustainable work environments by striking a balance between job resources and demands, resulting in improved employee well-being.

Another theoretical framework used to examine how workplace conditions influence employee behavior is role theory. Role theory could help to explain how employees' perceptions of their role and fit within the organization can affect their well-being and performance in the workplace (Biddle, 1986; Kahn, 1990). In addition, employees who felt their job obligations were unclear or inconsistent might experience stress and decreased job satisfaction. Employees who believed their position was relevant and linked with their personal values, on the other hand, could experience more motivation and engagement (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). Role theory provided an insightful look at how workplace issues influence employee behavior and outcomes. Organizations could establish a work environment that fosters employee well-being by recognizing and managing employees' responsibilities and expectations.

Overall, both theories give frameworks for understanding how workplace conditions influence employee well-being. The most essential component of these theories is that they acknowledge the necessity of studying the human and organizational factors that influence employee well-being.

2.3 Empirical Review

Job demand and job resources are factors that affect an individual's ability to balance work and life (Thilagavathy & Geetha, 2022). Job demands such as the individuals' perception of their

roles and responsibilities (Haar et al., 2019), as well as personal demands, referring to one's social, physical, or psychological needs (Bakker & de Vries, 2021) are examples of factors that impact work life balance. Job resources, however, are aids and perks that assist individuals in dealing with workplace demands and achieving work-life balance. Examples of this is supportive organizational policies that promote job satisfaction, and minimize burnout/stress (Haar & Roche, 2010; Montano et al., 2017; Shanafelt & Noseworthy, 2017), in conjunction with assistance and support from coworkers and supervisors (Haider et al., 2018).

2.3.1 Work Life Balance and Social Well-being

Social well-being is a crucial factor in context of work life balance. For example, an increasing amount of research has emphasized the significance of social support in alleviating stress and enhancing well-being (Gurung et al., 1997; Umberson et al., 1996). Social support, in terms of social well-being in the workplace, is often viewed as a coping mechanism, serving as a social reservoir of emotional and material resources that individuals could utilize when faced with challenging and stressful situations (Cohen, 2004; Thoits, 1995).

A study conducted by Karasek et al. (1998) found that the risk of mental stress was increased at work when employees did not receive enough social support, in the form of having people around that could offer help, advice, or emotional support. Furthermore, if an employee lacked supportive colleagues, supervisors, or friends at work, this could further increase their risk of mental stress. According to Greenhaus and Powell (2006) having a poor work-life balance could have a detrimental impact on a person's social well-being by increasing stress, burnout, and job dissatisfaction. Achieving work-life balance, on the other hand, has been connected to improved relationships, greater life satisfaction, and improved general well-being (Clark, 2000).

For independent professionals, their partners, family, work colleagues, and non-work-related friends who could offer both emotional and instrumental support were the primary sources of social support (Annink, 2017). Social well-being in the workplace in the form of support from co-workers, supervisors and general trust between employees and management was correlated with a person's work life balance. Therefore, we proposed the following hypothesis.

H1: Work life balance is positively related to social well-being.

2.3.2 Work Life Balance and Physical Well-being

Maintaining a healthy work-life balance has been associated with numerous physical health benefits. The balance between these domains is crucial for an individual's physical and emotional well-being. When it comes to physical well-being and work-life balance, there are numerous factors to consider. On the one hand, an individual working night shift or irregular hours have a weakened work-life balance, because one's availability and flexibility for participation in social and family activities is affected (Tausig & Fenwick, 2001). However, someone with flexibility in their working hours could have an increased work life balance (Hill et al., 2001).

Other characteristics that could affect physical well-being and lead to decreased work life balance are increased workload (Johansson, 2002), toxic work environment (King et al., 2012), and diminutive support (O'Driscoll et al., 2003). Whereas, employees that had balanced workload (Ford & Jin, 2015), good work- environment and culture (Hill et al., 2001), together with supportive co-workers and supervisors (Rashmi & Kataria, 2021) had an increased physical well-being.

Research by Dhas (2015) found that work-life conflict could have a negative effect on both physical and mental health. Furthermore, a good WLB was associated with better physical health outcomes. Individuals with better WLB were at a lower risk of chronic illnesses such as depression, obesity, cardiovascular disease, and other negative health outcomes (Allen et al., 2000; Dhas, 2015; Shockley et al., 2017). Furthermore, a good WLB allowed individuals to manage their stress levels, take part in healthy behaviors like exercise and enough sleep, spend time with family, all of which could positively impact physical and mental health (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Hill et al., 2001).

In addition, a study conducted by the National Institutes of Health found that individuals who worked more than 60 hours per week had a higher risk of heart disease compared to those who worked fewer hours (Kivimäki et al., 2015). Another study by the British Heart Foundation found that individuals who worked long hours were more likely to have an unhealthy diet, less physical activity, and higher levels of stress (Virtanen et al., 2011). Studies highly suggest a positive relationship between WLB and physical well-being, therefore, we suggested the following hypothesis.

H2: Work life balance is positively related to physical well-being.

2.3.3 Work Life Balance and Psychological Well-being

The impact psychological well-being can have on work life balance has been studied by Karasek (1998). He identified that some of the worst effects of psychological strain happen at work when there are strong psychological demands and little room for decision-making. Workers' psychological well-being and organizational productivity were positively impacted by social support in the workplace, and this effect was found to be direct and independent of any interaction with the work-stress framework (Park et al., 2004). Both physical and psychological work demands were positively correlated with WLB and types of work-family conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Pleck et al., 1980). Shockley and Allen (2013) study found that there was a negative relation between work-family conflict and psychological well-being, while there was a positive relation between work-family conflict and burnout.

Blustein (2008) discussed the importance of work when it comes to psychological health, and states that work plays a vital role in people's work and matters in people's psychological well-being. Meaningful work has been associated with psychological well-being by different researchers. One study conducted by Arnold et al. (2007) found that leaders who have participated in training had increased psychological well-being, which we can associate with better work life balance. Another study found that workers who say their work is meaningful and serves a higher common, or social good report a better psychological well-being (Steger et al., 2012). It is essential for researchers and managers to understand the relationship between work life balance and psychological well-being. Moreover, this can help them develop strategies that promote work-life balance and support employees' psychological well-being, which can enhance their job performance (Haider et al., 2018). Based on these findings from previous literature we propose the hypothesis underneath.

H3: Work life balance is positively related to psychological well-being.

2.3.4 Work Life Balance and Job Satisfaction

The level of job satisfaction an individual experiences, reflected their general attitude towards their job and was influenced by the perceived gap between the rewards they received, and the reward they believed they should receive (Anitha, 2011). Job satisfaction was thought to have a positive relationship with work life balance. Research conducted by Syed and Akhtar (2014) about organizational commitment of healthcare workers, confirmed that there was a significant

correlation between work life balance and job satisfaction. Research by Maeran et al. (2013) about teachers' relation to work life balance and job satisfaction identified that there was a negative relation between work-family conflict, family-work conflict, and job satisfaction. The research indicated that when the respondents of the study experienced conflict between their family and work responsibility, it could lead to lower job satisfaction. Furthermore, empirical findings indicated that there was a mediated relation between WLB and job satisfaction through psychological well-being (Haider et al., 2018). Additionally, Haider and colleges (2018) stated that job performance was reinforced by employees' contentment with coworkers as it was strengthened by the effect of WLB on psychological well-being.

Findings from a study by Yadav and Dabhade (2014) indicated that achieving WLB was possible through factors that were responsible for job satisfaction, for example supportive colleagues, mentally challenging work, supporting working conditions, employee-oriented policies, and equitable rewards. Research about WLB and job satisfaction among doctors in Pakistan suggest that doctors who were better at managing their WLB experience lower levels of burnout and increased job satisfaction, indicating that these were less likely to leave their jobs (Malik et al., 2010). Based on the findings presented above, we proposed the following hypothesis.

H4: Work life balance is positively related to job satisfaction.

2.3.5 Work Life Balance and Burnout/Stress

A study conducted by Kanwar et al. (2009) investigated the impact of WLB and burnout as predictors of job satisfaction. Burnout was measured by the three dimensions meaningfulness, exhaustion, and de-motivation. Findings from this study revealed that WLB was positively related to job satisfaction, while the three dimensions of burnout were negatively related to job satisfaction (Kanwar et al., 2009). To prevent burnout and promote WLB, it was necessary to contemplate a range of factors including workload, values, learning, work-life integration, and environment, and then design resources consequently to this (Kelly et al., 2020). Furthermore, healthcare workers were repeatedly reporting experiencing burnout and dissatisfaction with work life balance, which was believed to be caused by a prolonged work life imbalance (Shanafelt et al., 2015). It did not only affect healthcare workers, as research by Schwartz et al. (2019) stated that many workers in general were struggling with the problem of poor work-life

balance and burnout. A balanced relationship between work life and personal/family life was thought to reduce burnout and stress, which was why we proposed the following hypothesis.

H5: Work life balance is negatively related to burnout/stress.

2.3.6 Job Satisfaction and Employee Well-being

Job satisfaction was a significant aspect that could affect an employee's well-being in both directions. Pay, promotion and benefits (Judge et al., 2010), supervision and co-workers (Babin & Boles, 1996), job situation and job security (De Cuyper et al., 2009), work environment (Kalliath & Brough, 2008), and meeting or exceeding the expectations of the individual (Ugboro & Obeng, 2000), were all factors that influenced an individual's perception of job satisfaction. All these factors could have an impact on an individual's social, physical, and psychological well-being.

2.3.6.1 Job Satisfaction and Social Well-being

Several studies have established a positive association between job satisfaction and social well-being, implying that satisfied workers were more likely to be happy than unsatisfied ones. For example, Demerouti et al. (2015) discovered that employees had greater levels of job engagement and job satisfaction when they engaged in productive job crafting, such as making adjustments that enhanced their work experience by adding challenges, strengths, and interests. Employees who engaged in counterproductive job crafting, such as avoiding tasks, taking longer breaks, or making changes that had negative effects on themselves, or others on the other hand, reported lower levels of work engagement and job satisfaction as well as higher levels of exhaustion and cynicism.

According to Raziq and Maulabakhsh (2015) a work environment with good cooperation between coworkers and managers had a beneficial effect on job satisfaction. Moreover, Fisher (2010) found that engaging in meaningful work and developing supportive relationships with colleagues increased social well-being and job satisfaction. Based on the above we proposed the following hypothesis.

H6: Job satisfaction is positively related to social well-being.

2.3.6.2 Job Satisfaction and Physical Well-being

Physical well-being was required to perform everyday tasks, and job satisfaction plays a significant role in preserving an individual's physical well-being. In a meta-analysis on health and job satisfaction Faragher et al. (2005) found job dissatisfaction was linked with cardiovascular diseases, musculoskeletal problems, and chronic pain. Furthermore, they imply that job dissatisfaction may lead to unhealthy behaviors such as smoking, drinking, and not exercising.

Overall, the results of this meta-analysis emphasized the necessity of encouraging job satisfaction and fostering positive work environments to increase employee well-being. As a result, higher job satisfaction improves physical well-being.

Research has also shown that job satisfaction was linked to better sleep quality, which in turn can have a positive impact on physical health (Chang & Chang, 2019). Employees satisfied with their jobs are more likely to get sufficient sleep and experience better sleep quality than those dissatisfied with their jobs (De Lange et al., 2009). Furthermore, better sleep quality has been linked to improved physical health outcomes, such as lower rates of obesity and lower risk of cardiovascular disease (Magnavita & Garbarino, 2017; Schleupner & Kühnel, 2021). Therefore, it seemed relevant that increased job satisfaction increases physical well-being, and we hereby propose the following hypothesis.

H7: Job satisfaction is positively related to physical well-being.

2.3.6.3 Job Satisfaction and Psychological Well-being

Job satisfaction was a significant aspect that could influence an individual's psychological well-being. Psychological well-being referred to an individual's positive emotional, cognitive, and social functioning and was a vital component of overall health and happiness (Diener et al., 2002). Individuals who were content with their jobs were more likely to have positive emotions, have a feeling of purpose and meaning in their lives, and have better mental health outcomes (Maslach et al., 2001). On the other hand, job dissatisfaction could result in bad feelings, tension, fatigue, and even depression (Salvagioni et al., 2017).

According to Sironi (2019) and Wright and Cropanzano (2000) several factors could influence the relationship between job satisfaction and psychological well-being, including an individual's level of control over their work, the support they received from their colleagues and superiors, and the level of job demands. Understanding these elements could assist firms in

creating work environments that encourage employee job satisfaction and psychological well-being which leads us to the following hypothesis.

H8: Job satisfaction is positively related to psychological well-being.

2.3.7 Burnout/Stress and Employee Well-being

In today's fast-paced and competitive world, burnout and stress have become common experiences for many individuals. Burnout was shown to be a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged exposure to stressors (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1996, p. 35). Stress, on the other hand, was the body's response to a challenging or threatening situation (Koolhaas et al., 2011). While a moderate amount of stress can be motivating (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004), chronic stress and burnout can have a negative impact on an individual's social, physical, and psychological well-being (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

2.3.7.1 Burnout/Stress and Social Well-being

Burnout and stress could result in social isolation and withdrawal from social interactions (Gabriel & Aguinis, 2022; Gandi et al., 2011). Moreover, burnout/stress could negatively impact relationships with coworkers, friends, and family, which could negatively impact social well-being (Zhang et al., 2020). According to Schaufeli et al. (2009) limiting job resources such as social support resulted in expected and increasing burnout on one hand, whereas increases in job demand, on the other hand, had a negative influence on job satisfaction. Moreover, Halbesleben and Buckley (2004) identified that burnout was negatively related to social support from supervisors and coworkers. Thus, we proposed the following hypothesis.

H9: Burnout/stress is negatively related to social well-being.

2.3.7.2 Burnout/Stress and Physical Well-being

Studies have shown that stress and burnout can negatively impact physical well-being. For example, Branand and Nakamura (2016) found that burnout was negatively related to physical well-being. Moreover, there were several studies who investigated the impact burnout might have on physical health and well-being leading to increased risk of cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal pain, gastrointestinal issues, and respiratory (Golonka et al., 2019; Melamed et al., 2006; Shirom, 2005; Shirom et al., 2011). However, other studies have suggested that

physical activity and exercise could serve as a buffer against the negative effects of burnout on physical well-being (Naczenski et al., 2017; Stults-Kolehmainen & Sinha, 2014; Toker & Biron, 2012). Based on this we proposed the following hypothesis.

H10: Burnout/stress is negatively related to physical well-being.

2.3.7.3 Burnout/Stress and Psychological Well-being

Stress and burnout were common in many contexts, including the workplace, and they have been shown to affect psychological well-being. According to Maslach and Leiter (2016) and Schonfeld and Bianchi (2016), burnout has negative outcomes including anxiety, depression, and job dissatisfaction. According to research by Ebert et al. (2016) and Ruotsalainen et al. (2014), cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and mindfulness could be useful in minimizing the impact burnout and stress have on psychological well-being. Additionally, Halbesleben and Buckley (2004) discovered that support from coworkers and managers improves physical well-being and lessens burnout. Similarly, a study by Toker and Biron (2012) indicated that physical activity was positively associated to psychological well-being and may lessen burnout and stress effects. Overall, burnout and stress had a considerable negative impact on psychological well-being. As a result, we suggested the following hypothesis.

H11: Burnout/stress is negatively related to psychological well-being.

2.3.8 Job Satisfaction as a Mediator

Based on the theoretical framework presented above, we assume that job satisfaction was related to work-life balance (WLB) in a positive way. Furthermore, how job satisfaction was related to the three dimensions of employee well-being: social, physical, and psychological well-being. The study has investigated whether job satisfaction mediated the influence of social well-being, physical well-being, and psychological well-being on work-life balance. Job satisfaction was a key factor in both work-life balance and employee well-being. There have been several articles discussing this topic, and the consensus was that job satisfaction was positively related to work-life balance (De Menezes & Kelliher, 2017; Haar et al., 2019; Syed & Akhtar, 2014), and that job satisfaction was positively related to employee well-being. Demerouti et al. (2004) suggests that organizations should prioritize work-life balance to improve employee well-being and job satisfaction. Indicating that a focus on work life balance

would increase job satisfaction and employee well-being. Furthermore, a meta-analysis performed by Faragher et al. (2005) showed that there was a positive relationship between job satisfaction and physical well-being and psychological well-being, suggesting that job satisfaction was a crucial factor in promoting employee well-being. Seeing the positive effect job satisfaction had on work life balance and employee well-being we proposed the following hypothesis.

H12: Job satisfaction will mediate work life balance associations with social, physical, and psychological well-being.

2.3.9 Burnout/Stress as a Mediator

Alarcon et al. (2009) discovered that certain personality traits (such as neuroticism and conscientiousness) may be associated with burnout/stress. Furthermore, burnout was linked to undesirable effects such as diminished work-life balance and well-being. Increased burnout/stress had a negative impact on work-life balance and employee well-being (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000). According to Bakker et al. (2002) burnout/stress was associated with high job expectations and few job resources which negatively affected work-life balance and employee well-being.

Burnout/stress were also detrimental to job satisfaction (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004), and as burnout/stress levels were raised, the sense of work-life balance and employee well-being deteriorated, resulting in a negative impact (Lee & Ashforth, 1996). We expected that if burnout/stress increased this would have a negative influence on work-life balance and employee well-being and hereby proposed the following hypothesis.

H13: Burnout/stress will mediate work life balance associations with social, physical, and psychological well-being.

2.4 Conceptual Framework
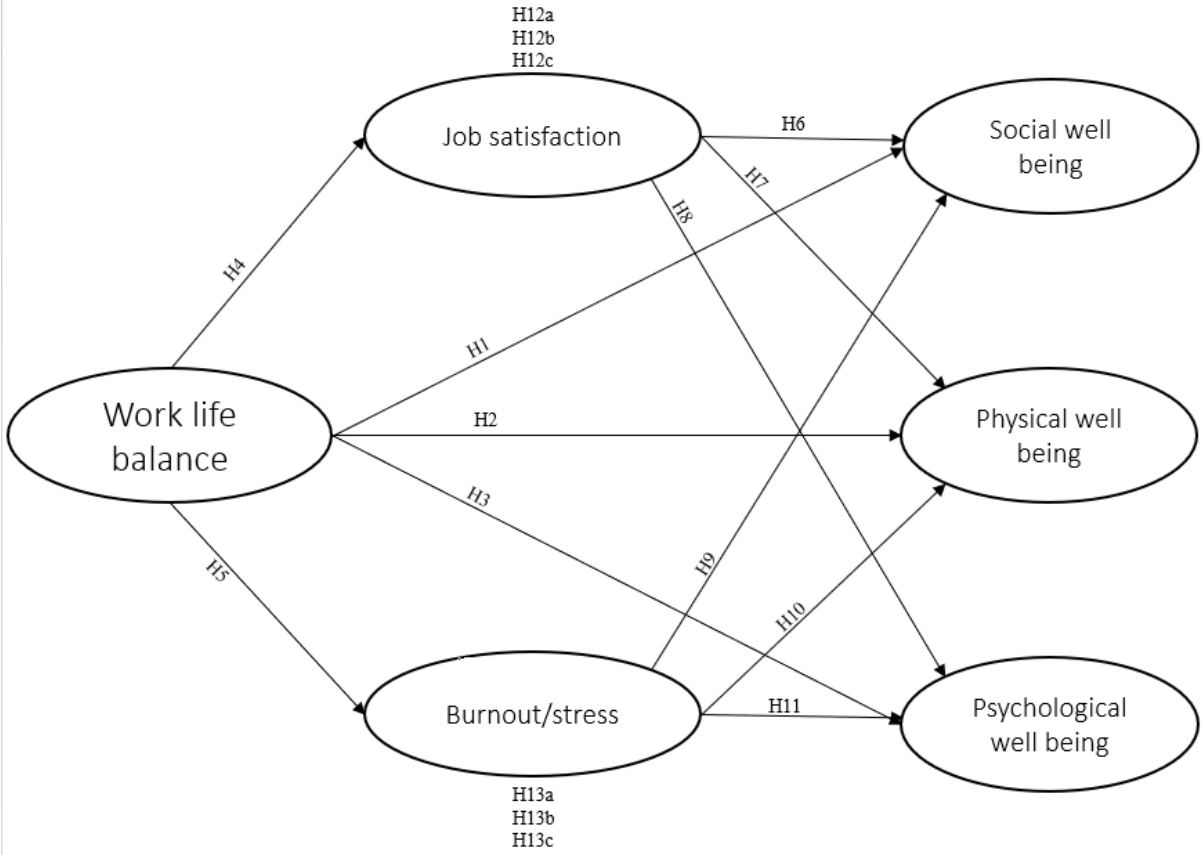
Figure 1 - Research model and hypotheses reference

Based on the literature review and research questions we established the following conceptual framework where the dependent variable work life balance and the affect it had on the independent variables' social well-being, physical well-being, and psychological well-being. Furthermore, how job satisfaction and burnout/stress mediate work life balance influence on the dependent variables.

3.0 Research Method

3.1 Materials and Method

The study's design was a cross-sectional quantitative research approach. Cross-sectional quantitative research collects data from a sample or population at a single point in time (Saunders et al., 2009). Moreover, it measured and analyzed variables of interest, providing a snapshot of the relationships and patterns among those variables at a specific point in time. To acquire data this research method used either survey questionnaires or structured interviews (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Following that, statistical analysis techniques were used to investigate associations and develop findings based on the acquired data (Bell et al., 2022).

To determine whether a positive or negative work-life balance was linked to increased or decreased social, physical, and psychological well-being, quantitative research design was used to look for insights into the relationships between work life balance, job satisfaction, burnout/stress, and each dimension of well-being. Also, to determine whether burnout/stress and job satisfaction played a mediating role in work-life balance and employee well-being.

As noted in previous chapters, the growing interest in the importance of work-life balance and the emphasis on employee well-being was a subject that had been researched for many years. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between work-life balance and the chosen dimensions of employee well-being, among them social well-being, physical well-being, and psychological well-being. Also, investigate if job satisfaction and burnout/stress play a mediating role between these three dimensions of employee well-being and work-life balance. As control variables, age and gender are utilized to investigate the potential influence on the relationship on job satisfaction, burnout/stress, and employee well-being. The study intended to answer these questions by focusing on Norwegian respondents to investigate if the findings were consistent with previous studies in the field.

3.2 Sample and Data Collection

The dataset utilized in the investigation came from the 2021 European Working Conditions Telephone Survey (EWCTS) performed by Eurofund through contractor Ipsos NV (Eurofund, 2021a). The dataset included validated interviews, final and cleaned data from the EWCTS from 2021 (Eurofund, 2022), and variables built for an investigation of employment equity and working circumstances. Each dataset contained interviews from all 36 EWCTS 2021 nations. The collection has 71758 records in total. On December 6, 2022, the datasets were made public.

The EWCTS included the adult working population of the 36 nations as its target market. There were 27 EU Member States, six Candidate and Potential Candidate countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia), and three other European countries (Norway, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom). From March to October 2021, interviews were held. Most of the interviews took place between March and July. Our survey solely included Norwegian respondents and there were a total of 1096 respondents. According to (Eurofund, 2021b), the sample size was adequate and representative for the Norwegian population.

During the survey, some questions were not asked of certain participants, resulting in the skipping of those questions. Consequently, when a question was skipped for a respondent, a missing value was recorded for that question in the dataset. The variables Survey Module M1 and Survey Module M2 specified which modules a respondent received and where the various paths connect both. Any modularization of a variable has been considered in the analysis. The missing respondents were ignored since respondents were assigned to modules at random, which reduced analysis bias from being introduced (Krosnick, 1999).

3.3 Measures

Work Life Balance

The chosen variables for work-life balance were measured using three items from the questionnaire. The questions to measure work-life balance stemmed from the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) created by Kristensen et al. (2005a). Each item was measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = never, 5 = always). The first item was regarding how often, since you started your main paid job, have you been too tired to do some of the household jobs that needed to be done after work. The next two items were about how you feel regarding the following statements about your job: I feel physically exhausted at the end of the working day, and I feel emotionally exhausted by my work. The CBI was used to assess burnout; however, by analyzing an individual's physical, emotional, and personal obligations, the three questions could provide a holistic understanding of their work-life balance. Cronbach's alpha was 0.72.

Job Satisfaction

Our final model measured job satisfaction using a modified version of Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) by (Schaufeli et al., 2006). All three questions used a five-point Likert scale (1 = never, 5 = always). The three questions "At my work I feel full of energy", "I

am enthusiastic about my job", and "Time flies when I am working" could be related to job satisfaction. These questions were usually used to measure work engagement. However, both Christian et al. (2011) and Bakker and Demerouti (2007) provided evidence to support the notion that work engagement and job satisfaction were positively related but not identical to it. Cronbach's alpha was 0.72.

Burnout/Stress

Two items developed by Karasek et al. (1998) were used to measure burnout/stress in one's workday. Both items were measured on a five-point scale (1 = never, 5 = always). The two items were responded to regarding whether the worker's job involved working at a very high speed or whether the worker was working to tight deadlines. Cronbach's alpha was 0.61.

Employee Well-being

Social well-being (SWB), physical well-being (PWB), and psychological well-being (PSWB) were all dimensions under employee well-being (EWB). The questions used to measure these dimensions were all taken from the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ) developed by Kristensen et al. (2005b).

Physical Well-being

Physical well-being was measured through 5 items from the questionnaire, all items with a six-point scale (1 = all the time, 6 = at no time). All items were answered with the reservations about it being over the last two weeks. The statements were as follows; how often have you felt a) cheerful and in good spirits, b) calm and relaxed, c) active and vigorous, d) fresh and rested when you wake up, and e) your daily life has been filled with things that interest you. Cronbach's alpha was 0.77.

Social Well-being

Three items, each on a five-point scale (1 = never, 5 = always) were used to measure social well-being. The items evaluated whether participants felt supported by their colleagues and managers, and whether employees had trust in management. Cronbach's alpha was 0.68.

Psychological Well-being

To assess psychological well-being, three items were included in the study, each rated on a scale of one to five (with one indicating "never" and five indicating "always"). Two of the items

required the respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements related to trust and cooperation between management and colleagues, while the third item asked whether they felt adequately recognized for their work. Cronbach's alpha was 0.71.

Control Variables

Gender and age were included as control variables in the correlation matrix and structural equation model since they could explain some variation. Gender and age were utilized in research as control variables since they could have a considerable impact on the dependent variables' outcome (Bernerth & Aguinis, 2016).

In their research, Hill et al. (2001) found that women perceived less job flexibility and had more work-family conflict than men. In addition, Byron (2005) found that women and men experienced different levels of work-family conflict, indicating that gender may affect how individuals perceive work-life balance.

Age was found to have a significant impact on a few job performance aspects, including task proficiency and job knowledge (Ng & Feldman, 2008). While Kanfer and Ackerman's (2004) study examined the connection between age and job motivation and found that the two variables were significantly influenced by age, suggesting that age was an essential element to consider when studying motivation.

3.4 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, correlations, and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) were analyzed by using SPSS 28.0. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and Cronbach's alpha was conducted using RStudio 2023.03.0, while structural equation modeling (SEM) was conducted in AMOS 28.0. EFA was performed as a preliminary step to discover the dataset's underlying factor structure. The purpose was to find latent factors that underpin the collection of observable variables and the pattern of these variables' loadings on the factors. To assess the suitability of the data for factor analysis Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO), Bartlett's test of sphericity and anti-image correlation was applied. KMO value was 0.871 which was considered excellent (Kaiser, 1974). Bartlett's test of sphericity came back statistically significant (p less than 0.05), indicating that the variables were significantly intercorrelated (Bartlett, 1950). Anti-image correlation value was above 0.7 indicating that the variables were suitable for factor analysis (Jolliffe, 2002). Given the criteria above the dataset was deemed acceptable for further EFA

analysis. The EFA analysis identified 35 potential variables using Guadagnoli and Velicer (1988) recommended threshold of 0.4. This was then employed in the initial CFA analysis.

CFA using maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) was performed to corroborate the factor structure revealed in our EFA study, as well as to evaluate whether the observed variables fit the hypothesized factor structure and quantify the strength of the correlations between the factors and the observed variables. Fitting all 35 variables into our CFA model we applied modified indices to adjust the model fit by correlating variables. Also, by removing variables with factor loadings less than 0.4 we ended up with 19 variables to test the validity of the factor loadings. The measurement model validation was done prior to estimating the structural model (Kline, 2016; R. MacCallum, 1986).

SEM was chosen over Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression for a number of reasons, including the ability of SEM to use latent constructs, evaluate mediating effects, and include several endogenous variables (Kline, 2016). Overall, SEM was a more potent statistical technique than Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) for a better understanding of the correlations between various constructs and many variables (Bollen, 1989; Byrne, 2001). The relationships between observable and latent variables were measured and analyzed using SEM with MLE. The results of the SEM analysis were applied to reject or support the hypotheses and theoretical model.

To assess the reliability of concepts composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha were used, while validity was assessed using average variance explained (AVE). According to the guidelines presented by (Hu and Bentler (1999) CR and Cronbach's alpha should be > 0.7 and AVE > 0.5 for a good fit. However, Taber (2018) findings indicated that a Cronbach's alpha > 0.6 could be accepted, and Hair et al. (2021) acceptance criteria for composite reliability was > 0.6. Furthermore, if AVE was < 0.5, but composite reliability was > 0.6, the convergent validity of the construct is still satisfactory (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2009). This creates the following guidelines CR > 0.6, Cronbach's alpha > 0.6 and AVE > 0.4. To evaluate the model fit, the following indicators and thresholds were used: CFA: Comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker Lewis index (TLI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and standardized root mean squared residuals (SRMR). SEM: discrepancy divided by degree of freedom (cmin/df), goodness of fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI), incremental fit index (IFI), CFI, RMSEA, and SRMR.

An RMSEA less than 0.05 indicated a 'good' fit (R. C. MacCallum et al., 1996), whereas an RMSEA less than 0.08 indicated an 'acceptable' fit (McDonald & Ho, 2002) for SRMR less than 0.05 indicated an 'acceptable' fit (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000). For cmin/df a value less than 3 indicated an 'acceptable' fit (Kline, 2016), whereas cmin/df less than 5 indicated a reasonable fit (Marsh & Hocevar, 1985). The other indicators CFI, TLI, GFI, AGFI, and IFI values above .95 indicated an 'excellent' fit (Kline, 2016; West et al., 2016), while a value above .90 indicated an 'acceptable' fit (Fan et al., 1999; Hu & Bentler, 1999; McDonald & Ho, 2002; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Bootstrapping was utilized to assess the indirect effects and the mediating role of job satisfaction and burnout/stress. Instead of evaluating the precision of the estimates using parametric assumptions, bootstrapping was a non-parametric resampling technique that examines the variability of the sample data to analyze the variability of the sample (Streukens & Leroi-Werelds, 2016). Bootstrapping was resampled 5000 times with a 95 percent bias-corrected confidence interval (CIs) as per Wilcox (2010) recommendations.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Before beginning the research, permission from Eurofund was obtained. The sample data utilized for the analysis was completely anonymized, which means that the respondents' names could not be divulged. As a result, no permission or approval from SIKT (NSD) was necessary. The identity was solely available to Eurofund for additional research and follow-up. Access to the sample data needed an application and approval from the UK data service. Eurofund and Ipsos adhere to the UK Government Social Research ethical guidelines, as well as other relevant ethical codes such as the MRS61 and ICC/ESOMAR, and were in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (Directive 95/46/EC). The telephone survey was conducted by Ipsos, which was accredited to ISO 9001, the international standard for Quality Management Systems, and ISO 20252, the international standard for Market, Opinion, and Social Research. The data was treated with confidentiality.

4.0 Results

4.1 Sample

A total of 1096 Norwegian workers participated in the study. Among them 593 (54.1%) were male and 503 (45.9%) were female. 275 were between 18-34 years old, 583 were between 35-55, and 238 were above 56 years old. Of the respondents, 1048 (95.6%) were full-time employees whilst 48 (4.4%) were part-time employees. Furthermore, 317 had been in their current job for 5-10 years (28.9%), while 310 (28.3%) had been in their current job for four or fewer years. Working hours resulted in 487 (44.4%) worked from 21- 40 hours, and 517 (47,2%) worked between 41-60 hours per week. Demographic data is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 - Study participants characteristics

Descriptive variables		Total sample (n=1096)	
		n	%
Gender			
	Male	593	54.1%
	Female	503	45.9%
Age			
	18-24	51	4.7%
	25-34	224	20.4%
	35-44	258	23.5%
	45-55	325	29.7%
	56+	238	21.7%
Work situation			
	Full time	1048	95.6%
	Part time	48	4.4%
Years in current job			
	≤ 4	310	28.3%
	5-10	317	28.9%
	11-20	286	26.1%
	≥ 20	183	16.7%
Working hours per week			
	≤ 20	55	5.0%
	21-40	487	44.4%
	41-60	517	47.2%
	≥ 61	37	3.4%

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 below presents the descriptive statistics and correlations. The age of the participants varied from 18 to 78 (mean = 43.74, SD = 12.33). Following the mean of the variables, excluding the control variables, job satisfaction had the highest score (mean = 3.95, SD = 0.63), followed by social well-being with the second highest score of mean (mean = 3.79, SD = 3.79), followed by psychological well-being with the third highest score (mean = 3.67, SD = 0.81). Work life balance had the lowest mean score (mean = 2.57, SD = 0.78), followed by physical well-being with the second lowest score (mean = 2.77, SD = 0.92) and finally burnout/stress had the third lowest score (mean = 3.46, SD = 0.80). There was no statistical significance between burnout/stress and job satisfaction and between burnout/stress and social well-being. This does not necessarily mean that there was no relationship between the variables. In some cases, the relationship between variables may be weaker or more complex than expected and may require additional analyses to fully understand (Hair et al., 2009; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Table 2 - Descriptive statistics and correlations

	Range	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	18-78	43.7	12.33	–						
2. Work life balance	1-5	2.57	0.78	-0.13**	–					
3. Burnout/stress	1-5	3.46	0.80	-0.04	-0.28**	–				
4. Job satisfaction	1-5	3.95	0.63	-0.16**	0.28**	0.04	–			
5. Social well-being	1-5	3.79	0.80	-0.14**	0.25**	0.01	0.39**	–		
6. Physical Well-being	1-6	2.77	0.92	–0.19**	0.50**	-0.09**	0.51**	0.28**	–	
7. Psychological well-being	1-5	3.67	0.81	-0.09**	0.22**	–0.18**	0.26**	0.41**	0.36**	–

4.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Reliability, and Validity

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using Maximum likelihood-estimate (MLE) was applied to evaluate each concept's validity and factor structure of the variables (Table 3). The measurement model was supported with a 'good' fit (CFI = 0.93, TLI = 0.91, RMSEA = 0.052, and SRMR = 0.05). The 19 standardized factor loadings range from 0.53 - 0.81, with five factor loadings less than 0.6 and seven factor loadings greater than 0.7. Physical well-being (0.53); "how often have you been feeling calm and relaxed" was the lowest and the two highest was burnout/stress (0.81); "Does your job involve working at very high speed", and psychological well-being (0.81); "I receive the recognition I deserve for my work". Furthermore, AVE was greater than 0.4 (0.42 - 0.48), and CR was greater than 0.6 (0.63 - 0.78). Cronbach's Alpha was

more than 0.6, with burnout/stress (0.61) scoring the lowest and physical well-being (0.78) scoring the highest. The model fit and factor loadings were declared acceptable and validated. Based on the results of the preceding tests, the structural model could be assessed with a validated measurement model.

Table 3 - Confirmatory factor loadings with standardized factor loadings, reliability, and convergent validity.

Dimension/Items	Factor loadings	CR	AVE	Alpha
Work life balance		0.72	0.46	0.72
How often have you felt too tired after work to do some of the household jobs which need to be done	0.66			
I feel physically exhausted at the end of the working day	0.68			
I feel emotionally exhausted by my work	0.69			
Job satisfaction		0.73	0.48	0.72
At my work I feel full of energy	0.79			
I am enthusiastic about my job	0.71			
Time flies when I am working	0.57			
Burnout/stress		0.63	0.46	0.61
Does your job involve working at very high speed	0.81			
Does your job involve working to tight deadlines	0.56			
Social well-being		0.69	0.42	0.68
Your colleagues help and support you	0.54			
Your manager helps and supports you	0.67			
In general, employees trust management	0.77			
Physical well-being		0.78	0.42	0.78
How often have you been feeling cheerful and in good spirits	0.68			
How often have you been feeling calm and relaxed	0.53			
How often have you been feeling active and vigorous	0.75			
How often have you been feeling fresh and rested when you woke up	0.61			
How often have you been feeling that your daily life has been filled with things that interest you	0.66			
Psychological well-being		0.63	0.42	0.71
The management trusts the employees to do their work well	0.53			
There is good cooperation between you and your colleagues	0.55			
I receive the recognition I deserve for my work	0.81			

4.4 Validity and Reliability

Validity was confirmed as all factor loadings were above 0.5. Furthermore, CR was above 0.6 and AVE was above 0.4. We acknowledge that AVE was below the recommended threshold for a 'good fit' (>0.5). However, According to Fornell and Larcker (1981) if AVE had been below 0.5 but CR had been above 0.6 the validity of the construct would still be satisfactory. Reliability was accepted, as the Cronbach Alpha was shown to be above 0.6 (Taber, 2018).

4.5 Results of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

SEM using maximum likelihood extraction was applied using the validated measurement model. The model interpretation had an overall good fit, with fit indices such as cmin/df = 4.44, CFI = 0.90, IFI = 0.90, RMSEA = 0.06, SRMR = 0.05, GFI = 0.94, and AGFI = 0.91 indicating a good fit. Overall, the model provided a good fit to the data and was acceptable. R squared values for the concepts were as follows: Work life balance (R^2 = 0,43), job satisfaction (R^2 = 0,19), burnout/stress (R^2 = 0,16), social well-being (R^2 = 0,32), physical well-being (R^2 = 0,64), and psychological well-being (R^2 = 0,20).

Eight of the eleven hypotheses were significant, whereas three were not. H3; work-life balance was positively associated to psychological well-being (β = 0.08 $p < 0.23$), implying that improved WLB would result in increased psychological well-being. However, no significant relationship was discovered. This was also true for H9; burnout/ stress is negatively associated with social well-being (β = 0.07 $p < 0.14$) and H10; burnout/stress is negatively associated with physical well-being (β = 0.04 $p < 0.33$). We expected that there would be a negative relationship, indicating that as burnout/stress levels grew, there would be a decrease in reported social and physical well-being. The absence of significance did not necessarily imply that no relationship exists between the variables, but rather that this study was unable to discover one.

Of the eight that were significant H1; work life balance is positively related to social well-being (β = 0.12 $p < 0.05$), H2; work life balance is positively related to physical well-being (β = 0.42, $p < 0.01$), and H4; work life balance is positively related to job satisfaction (β = 0.44, $p < 0.01$) reflected our hypothesis assumptions on H1, H2 and H4 that an increase in WLB lead to a positive increase in social well-being, physical well-being and job satisfaction. Our findings showed that individuals who felt that they had a good balance between their work and personal lives would be more likely to engage in social activities, such as spending time with friends, family, and colleagues, which could contribute to their social well-being. Similarly, individuals

who had a good work-life balance may have more time to engage in physical activity or take care of their health, which could contribute to their physical well-being. Finally, individuals who had a good work-life balance may feel more satisfied with their job, which could improve their overall well-being and quality of life.

Job satisfaction also played an important role in the positive relationship, where we hypothesized that job satisfaction was positively related to H6 social well-being ($\beta = 0.47$, $p < 0.01$), H7 physical well-being ($\beta = 0.61$, $p < 0.01$), and H8 psychological well-being ($\beta = 0.37$, $p < 0.01$). These indicated that individuals who were more satisfied with their job tended to experience higher levels of well-being in multiple domains. Lastly, H11 burnout/stress was negatively related to psychological well-being ($\beta = -0.27$, $p < 0.01$) showed that as levels of burnout/stress increased, levels of psychological well-being decreased. In other words, elevated levels of burnout/stress were associated with poor psychological well-being.

Regarding the control variables, age had two significant relationships with social well-being ($\beta = -0.08$ $p < 0.05$) and physical well-being ($\beta = -0.05$ $p < 0.05$). There was a significant relationship between gender and social well-being ($\beta = 0.07$ $p < 0.05$), but no significant relationships were found between gender and other dimensions of well-being. The data suggested that as age increased, levels of social and physical well-being tended to decrease. This finding suggested that aging may have a negative impact on social and physical well-being in this context. However, the magnitude of the effect was relatively small, with betas of -0.08 and -0.05, respectively, indicating that age was only a modest predictor of social and physical well-being. The same could be said for gender which indicated that being male was associated with higher levels of social well-being, beta of 0.05. However, it was important to note that this did not imply causation or that being male was the sole factor affecting social well-being. There could be other factors that were contributing to the observed relationship.

Table 4 - Standard path coefficients (direct effects)

Hypotheses	Relationship	β	p
H1	Work life balance -> social well-being (SWB)	0.12	0.041
H2	Work life balance -> physical well-being (PWB)	0.42	0.001
H3	Work life balance -> psychological well-being (PSWB)	0.08	0.226
H4	Work life balance -> job satisfaction (JS)	0.44	0.001
H5	Work life balance -> burnout/stress (BS)	-0.40	0.001
H6	Job satisfaction -> social well-being (SWB)	0.47	0.001
H7	Job satisfaction -> physical well-being (PWB)	0.51	0.001
H8	Job satisfaction -> psychological well-being (PSWB)	0.35	0.001
H9	Burnout/stress -> social well-being (SWB)	0.07	0.135
H10	Burnout/stress -> physical well-being (PWB)	0.04	0.327
H11	Burnout/stress -> psychological well-being (PSWB)	-0.22	0.001

4.5.1 Mediation by Job Satisfaction and Burnout/Stress

To measure indirect effects of job satisfaction and burnout/stress, bootstrapping was utilized. The data was resampled 5000 times with a 95% confidence interval (CI) and discovered a total of four significant indirect effects (SIE).

The following significant indirect effects were discovered for job satisfaction. H12a Work life balance -> job satisfaction -> social well-being (SIE = 0.20, $p < 0.001$, CI = 0.14 – 0.27) and H12b work life balance -> job satisfaction -> physical well-being (SIE = 0.25, $p < 0.001$, CI = 0.20 - .033). H12c work life balance -> job satisfaction -> psychological well-being (SIE = 0.15, $p < 0.001$, CI = 0.1 – 0.22). We hypothesized that work-life balance influences employee well-being through job satisfaction, and our findings showed that job satisfaction helped to explain the relationship between work-life balance and these outcomes. In other words, when people were satisfied with their jobs, they were more likely to have better SWB, PWB, and PSWB, and this link was influenced in part by their capacity to maintain a healthy work-life balance. This supported all hypotheses for H12, where job satisfaction mediated work life balances influence on social well-being, physical well-being, and psychological well-being.

For burnout/stress only H13c work life balance -> burnout/stress-> psychological well-being (SIE = 0.09, p < 0.001, CI = 0.03 – 0.16) were significant. The mediating effect of burnout/stress influence on work life balance, and psychological well-being indicated that higher levels of burnout/stress were associated with lower levels of PSWB supporting our hypothesis. On the other hand, H13a work life balance -> burnout/stress -> social well-being (SIE = -0.26, p < 0.15 CI = -0.08 – 0.10), and H13b work life balance -> burnout/stress -> physical well-being (SIE = -0.02, p < 0.31 CI = -0.06 – 0.02) were not significant. Our assumption was that with increased burnout/stress there would be decreased social well-being and physical well-being. A non-significant effect does not necessarily mean that the effect is zero, but rather that it cannot be distinguished from random variation in the data analyzed. However, the results did not support hypotheses H13a and H13b.

Table 5 - Job satisfaction standardized indirect effects.

Hypotheses	Relationship	β	p
H12a	Work life balance -> job satisfaction -> social well-being	0.20	0.001
H12b	Work life balance -> job satisfaction -> physical well-being	0.25	0.001
H12c	Work life balance -> job satisfaction -> psychological well-being	0.15	0.001

Table 6 - Burnout/stress standardized indirect effects.

Hypotheses	Relationship	β	p
H13a	Work life balance -> burnout/stress -> social well-being	-0.03	0.151
H13b	Work life balance -> burnout/stress -> physical well-being	-0.02	0.309
H13c	Work life balance -> burnout/stress-> psychological well-being	0.09	0.001

*Figure 2 - Structural equation model **p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01*
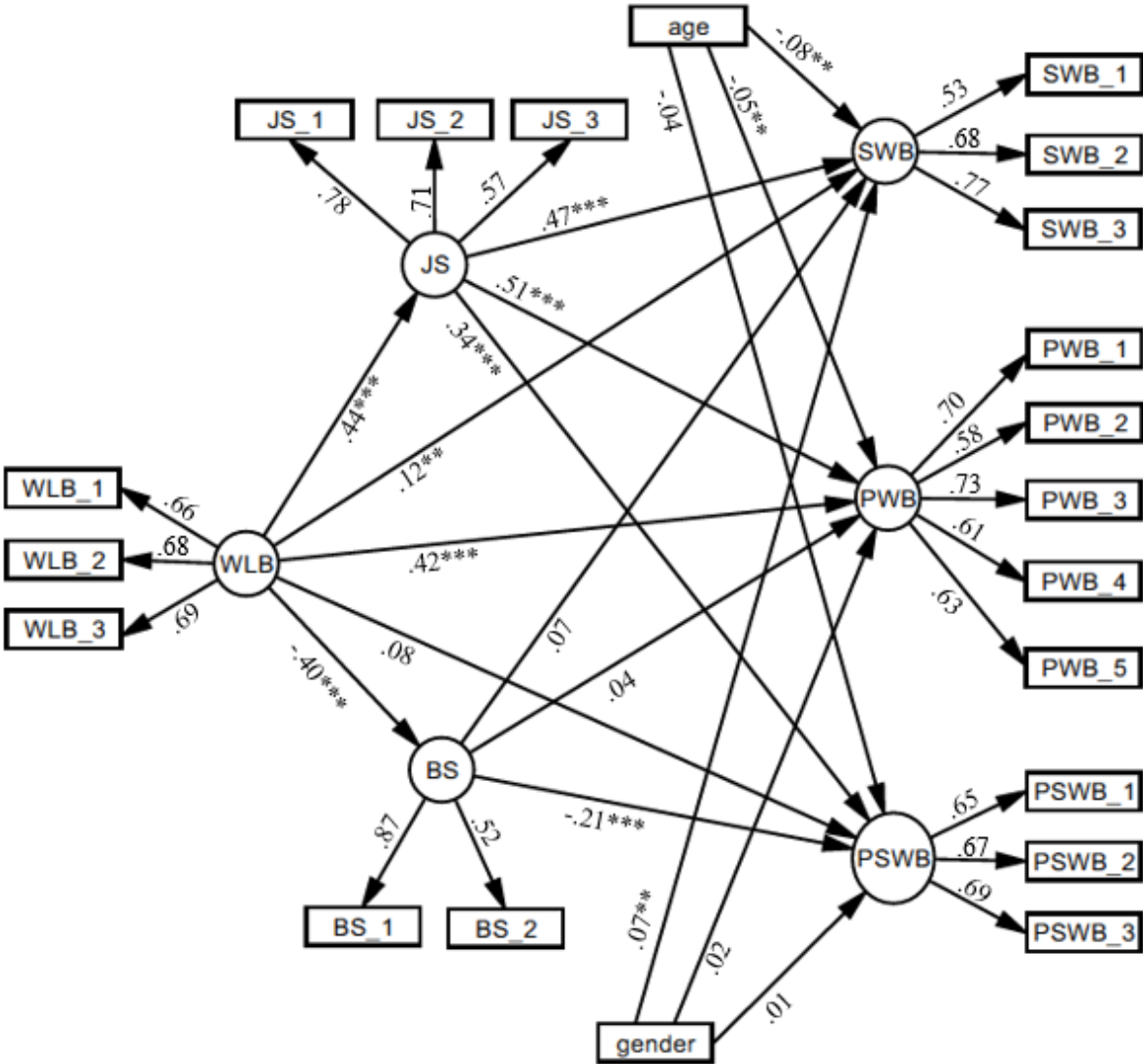
5.0 Discussion

Work life balance holds significance for both organizations and individuals, as an imbalance could result in adverse outcomes for both. The Job Demand Recourses (JD-R) theory and its theoretical framework were based on how workplace factors could influence employee's well-being and work-related outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). This study explored the relationship between WLB and the three dimensions of employee well-being, namely, social, physical, and psychological, and the mediating roles of job satisfaction and burnout/stress in a structural model. The study was conducted approximately three years after the covid-19 pandemic outbreak and has a large representative sample of Norwegian workers. This study found that there was a positive correlation between WLB and employee well-being, while it built on previous research indicating that there was a positive correlation between WLB and employee well-being (Dhas, 2015; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Pleck et al., 1980). The findings confirmed the hypotheses that WLB was positively related to the three dimensions of well-being.

5.1 The Effect of Work Life Balance and Employee Well-being

Evidence was provided by our study that there was a positive association between social well-being, physical well-being and phycological well-being, supporting H1, H2 and H3. These results were supported by previous studies that highlight the importance of a decent work life balance in terms of social support in alleviating stress and enhancing well-being (Gurung et al., 1997; Umberson et al., 1996), reducing the risk of chronic illness like depression, obesity, cardiovascular disease etc. (Allen et al., 2000; Dhas, 2015; Shockley et al., 2017), and that meaningful work plays a key role in peoples psychological health and well-being (Blustein, 2008). The positive relation of WLB and employee well-being may be explained by several factors, such as the reduction of work-related stress, increased job satisfaction, improved physical health and mental health, enhanced work engagement, and greater overall satisfaction. Further this positive association may be linked to the variety of factors of life and work that an individual must balance, including the job demands and job resources (Thilagavathy & Geetha, 2022). These factors encompassed not only the demands placed on individuals in their jobs, but also the resources available to them, such as support from colleagues, organizational policies promoting WLB, and opportunities for skill development and autonomy. Furthermore, effective management and alignment of these factors contribute to a balanced integration of work and personal life, leading to enhanced employee well-being.

5.1.1 Social

Greenhaus and Powell (2006) found that a bad WLB could result in increased stress, burnout, and job dissatisfaction, which all can have a detrimental impact on a person's social well-being. However, on the other hand Clark (2000) argues that achieving a good WLB had been connected to an improved general well-being, in terms of improved relationships and greater life satisfaction. Regarding a good WLB, previous studies have highlighted the importance of support from colleagues and supervisors, as well as general trust between the management and employees, which are aspects shown to have a positive effect on social well-being. The previous study by Annink (2017) regarding independent professionals, emphasized that these individuals depend on various sources of social support for different purposes. These sources of social support played a key role in providing practical help, advice, and encouragement for these independent professionals to achieve a better WLB, and subsequently, better social well-being. These individuals play crucial roles in providing both emotional and instrumental support, contributing significantly to the social well-being of independent professionals. Consistent with prior research findings, our study examined the factors of social support from colleagues and management, and trust within the workplace. Our analysis of social well-being primarily centered around these aspects, with the responses gathered through the questionnaire serving as our guiding framework.

5.1.2 Physical

Research by Dhas (2015) highlighted the detrimental impact of work-life conflict on physical health. Conversely, a good WLB was associated with better physical health outcomes and reduced risk of chronic illnesses such as depression, obesity, and cardiovascular disease (Allen et al., 2000; Dhas, 2015; Shockley et al., 2017). Moreover, a favorable work-life balance enables individuals to effectively manage stress levels, engage in healthy behaviors like exercise and sufficient sleep, and allocate time for family, all of which positively influenced physical health (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Hill et al., 2001). Additional studies have indicated that working long hours, exceeding 60 hours per week, have been associated with higher risks of heart diseases, unhealthy dietary habits, lower physical activity, and increased stress levels (Kivimäki et al., 2015; Virtanen et al., 2011). These findings strongly suggested a positive relationship between work-life balance and physical well-being.

Based on the findings of previous studies and our own research, it was evident that work-life balance (WLB) played a crucial role in physical health outcomes. Tausig and Fenwick (2001)

found that there was a difference in an individual's working hours and flexibility, an individual working night shifts or irregular hours had a reduced WLB, while Hill et al. (2001) found that individuals with flexible working hours had increased WLB. A balanced workload, as found by Ford and Jin (2015), enhanced employees' physical well-being by minimizing stress, fatigue, and physical strain. It allows individuals to maintain a healthy WLB, which further allows employees to prioritize self-care, and engage in activities that promote physical health, resulting in improved overall physical well-being. Moreover, aligning with the study by Rashmi and Kataria (2021), the presence of supportive supervisors and co-workers was an important aspect of WLB and emerged as crucial for enhancing physical well-being. Meaning that supportive supervisors and co-workers positively influenced physical well-being, by creating a supportive work environment that promoted a healthier and more balanced lifestyle, enhancing WLB. Furthermore, our research reinforced the importance highlighted by Hill et al. (2001) regarding a positive work environment and culture in promoting physical well-being.

5.1.3 Psychological

Psychological well-being was one of the three dimensions that did not imply a significant correlation with WLB, but still there was a positive relationship between the two variables. The lack of significance does not necessarily imply that no relationship exists, rather that our study was unable to discover one. Earlier studies by Karasek (1998) demonstrated that high psychological strain occurred when there were significant psychological demands at work, combined with limited decision-making autonomy. Park et al. (2004) further found that social support in the workplace, as an aspect of WLB positively impacted both workers' psychological well-being and organizational productivity, independent of the work-stress framework. The correlation between work-life balance and psychological well-being extended to the realm of work-family conflict. Pleck et al. (1980) and Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) found that there was a connection between psychological work demands, WLB, and diverse types of work-family conflict. In other words, when individuals experienced elevated levels of work demands and work-family conflict, it could negatively impact their ability to achieve a satisfactory WLB, consequently affecting their psychological well-being. Therefore, achieving a healthy WLB was important for promoting positive psychological well-being. Additionally, Shockley and Allen (2016) discovered a negative relationship between work-family conflict and psychological well-being, while a positive relationship emerged between work-family conflict and burnout. This suggested that work-family conflict had a negative impact on psychological well-being, while contributing to the experience of burnout, which both are aspects of WLB.

Furthermore, Blustein (2008) emphasized the significance of work in relation to psychological health, highlighting its impact on overall well-being. Meaningful work has been consistently linked to psychological well-being, as evidenced by studies such as Arnold et al. (2007), which found that leadership training positively affected leaders' psychological well-being, and Steger et al. (2012), which demonstrated that workers who perceived their work as meaningful and serving a higher purpose report better psychological well-being. Although these previous studies indicated a positive relation between WLB and psychological well-being, our study was not able to find a significant correlation between the two. The results were positive, but without a significant relation this could be due to chance rather than meaningful true effects. In other words, our analysis did not provide sufficient evidence to support the hypothesis, or the research question investigated. Sample size or measurement limitations could account for our findings not being in line with previous studies, which indicated that this comprehension enables the development of strategies to promote WLB, support employee's psychological well-being and enhance job performance (Haider et al., 2018).

5.2 The Effect of Work Life Balance on Job Satisfaction and Burnout/Stress

5.2.1 Job Satisfaction

Findings from our analysis showed that individuals who have a better WLB may feel more satisfied with their job, which could improve their overall well-being. A previous study confirmed a significant correlation between WLB and job satisfaction among healthcare workers (Syed & Akhtar, 2014), and indicated that conflicts between family and work responsibilities can lower job satisfaction (Maeran et al., 2013). Further, WLB indirectly influenced job satisfaction through its impact on psychological well-being (Haider et al., 2018). Factors contributing to job satisfaction, such as supportive colleagues and effective work-life balance management, were also important for achieving WLB (Yadav & Dabhade, 2014). In other words, when employees have colleagues with provided support, and when they could effectively manage the demands of both work and personal life, it positively influenced their overall job satisfaction and contributed to a better WLB. This implies that creating a work environment with supportive colleagues and implementing strategies to help employees manage their WLB, it could have a significant impact on their job satisfaction and overall well-

being. Findings from our analysis supported this, showing a positive relationship between WLB and job satisfaction.

5.2.2 Burnout/Stress

Our study confirmed a negative correlation between work-life balance (WLB) and burnout/stress, aligning with previous research. Kanwar et al. (2009) found that WLB was negatively related to dimensions of burnout. This suggested that maintaining a good WLB could help prevent burnout, which was consistent with previous studies. Furthermore, this means that when individuals have a better WLB it was associated with lower levels of burnout. This implied that maintaining a good balance between work and personal life can serve as a protective factor against burnout. By effectively managing their work-life demands, individuals can reduce the risk of experiencing excessive stress and burnout in the workplace. Both our findings and previous studies suggest that prioritizing and maintaining a healthy WLB can contribute to preventing burnout and stress and thereby promote better overall well-being. Poor work-life balance and burnout were common issues among healthcare workers and across industries (Schwartz et al., 2019; Shanafelt et al., 2015), which was supported by our findings and the previously stated hypothesis; a stronger WLB was associated with reduced burnout and stress.

5.3 The Effect of Job Satisfaction and Burnout/Stress on Well-being

5.3.1 Job Satisfaction

The findings presented in the analysis confirmed a positive correlation between job satisfaction and the three dimensions of employee well-being; social, physical, and psychological. Individuals who were more satisfied with their jobs tended to experience higher levels of well-being in all three dimensions. Multiple factors influencing job satisfaction have been studied by other scholars, and shown to have an impact on individuals' social, physical, and psychological well-being.

Previous research has highlighted the positive relationship between job satisfaction and various dimensions of well-being, which was in line with our findings. Some of these studies have consistently shown that job satisfaction was associated with higher levels of social well-being. Employees who showed to engage in productive work and making changes by adding challenges, strengths and interests to their work were shown to experience a higher level of

social well-being, and reported a higher level of job satisfaction (Demerouti et al., 2015). Good cooperation between co-workers and managers in the work environment, was an aspect of social well-being that have been associated with beneficial effects on job satisfaction (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015). These previous studies were in line with what our analysis revealed and indicated that when employees were satisfied with their jobs, they took on more challenging work and engaged in more productive work, and these likely improved social aspects of their lives which pertained to their social well-being.

Regarding physical well-being, our findings were consistent with Faragher et al. (2005), who found that job dissatisfaction was associated with cardiovascular diseases, musculoskeletal problems, and chronic pain, which all were important aspects of physical well-being related to job satisfaction. Job satisfaction has been linked to better sleep quality, which in turn positively impacted physical health (Chang & Chang, 2019), as an aspect of physical well-being. Furthermore, sleep quality was an important aspect of job satisfaction as it has been linked to improved physical health outcomes, such as lower rates of obesity and lower risk of cardiovascular disease (Magnavita & Garbarino, 2017; Schleupner & Kühnel, 2021). Job satisfaction improved the employee's physical well-being as it reduced unhealthy behaviors and improved physical health. Previous research was in line with our findings, encouraging job satisfaction and fostering positive work environments that could contribute to improved physical well-being.

As previously stated, job satisfaction was a significant aspect that could influence the psychological well-being of an individual. Maslach et al. (2001) found that people that were content with their jobs were more likely to have a feeling of purpose and meaning in their lives, have positive emotions and overall better mental health outcomes. On the other hand, Salvagioni et al. (2017) found that dissatisfaction with your job could result in bad feelings, tension, fatigue, and depression. These aspects and others like an individual's level of control over their work, support they received from colleagues and supervisors, and level of job demand (Sironi, 2019; Wright & Cropanzano, 2000), were factors that impact job satisfaction, and further would influence the psychological well-being of an individual. There was a clear relation between job satisfaction and psychological well-being, which also was found to be true through our analysis. Previous studies were in line with ours.

5.3.2 Burnout/Stress

Initially we predicted a negative correlation between burnout/stress and the three dimensions of well-being. However, our analysis revealed a positive insignificant relationship between burnout/stress and the two dimensions of well-being; social and physical, while the last dimension; psychological well-being, showed a negative significant impact as predicted. Previous studies have consistently shown that chronic stress and burnout have a negative impact on social well-being. They could lead to social isolation, strained relationships with co-workers, friends, and family, and a decrease in social interactions (Gabriel & Aguinis, 2022; Gandi et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2020). Likewise, previous research has indicated that burnout and stress negatively affected physical well-being. These conditions have been associated with increased risk of cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal pain, gastrointestinal issues, and respiratory problems (Golonka et al., 2019; Melamed et al., 2006; Shirom, 2005; Shirom et al., 2011). However, our study found a positive relationship between burnout/stress and physical well-being, contrary to these previous findings. From a theoretical and literature perspective there could be several explanations as to why our findings did not align with these previous studies. This could be caused by the fact that the sample could have consisted predominantly of youthful individuals who already actively engaged in exercise, adopted healthy physical behaviours, and experienced positive social relations, despite their reported levels of stress. As a result, their burnout or stress levels did not necessarily have a negative impact on their social and physical well-being. Additionally, it was important to recognize that while stress alone was not inherently detrimental, it could become problematic when escalated to the point of burnout. It was also important to consider the contextual factors and work environments of the participants in our study. Some work settings may provide access to health-promoting resources for social and physical activity, which could offset the negative impact of burnout and stress on employee well-being. These explanations are speculative and further research is needed to fully understand the underlying factors that could have contributed to this unexpected finding.

Our findings revealed a negative correlation between burnout/stress and psychological well-being, which aligned with previous research on the subject. Studies by Maslach and Leiter (2016) and Schonfeld and Bianchi (2016) have demonstrated that burnout was associated with adverse outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and job dissatisfaction, all of which contribute to poor psychological well-being. Furthermore, studies by Halbesleben and Buckley (2004) and Toker and Biron (2012), indicated that social support from co-workers and engagement in physical activity could positively influence psychological well-being, and serve as protective

factors against burnout and stress. These findings emphasize the detrimental effects of burnout and stress on psychological well-being. Consequently, our findings supported the hypothesis that higher levels of burnout/stress are associated with poorer psychological well-being.

5.4 The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction and Burnout/Stress

5.4.1 Job Satisfaction

The analysis revealed that there was a significant positive mediating role of job satisfaction between WLB and employee well-being; social, physical, and psychological. Our findings supported previous research highlighting the mediating relationship between job satisfaction, work-life balance (WLB), and employee well-being. Previous studies have consistently shown that job satisfaction was positively related to WLB (De Menezes & Kelliher, 2017; Haar et al., 2019; Syed & Akhtar, 2014). Furthermore, job satisfaction has been found to have a significant impact on employee well-being, both in terms of physical well-being and psychological well-being (Demerouti et al., 2004; Faragher et al., 2005). These findings suggested that organizations should prioritize WLB to improve job satisfaction and overall employee well-being. Our findings confirm that job satisfaction plays a mediating role in the relationship between WLB and social, physical, and psychosocial well-being. Satisfied employees who achieved a healthy WLB were more likely to experience better overall well-being. These findings align with previous research, emphasizing the importance of job satisfaction and WLB in promoting employee well-being and organizational success.

5.4.2 Burnout/Stress

The results showed a significant mediating effect of burnout/stress on WLB and psychological well-being, supporting our hypothesis. However, the study did not find a significant mediating effect of burnout/stress on the relationship between work-life balance, burnout/stress, and the dimensions of social and physical well-being, contradicting the assumptions we made. Previous research by Grzywacz and Marks (2000) indicated that WLB was negatively related to increased burnout/stress and could lead to diminished overall well-being. Bakker et al. (2003) identified a significant relationship between high job expectations, limited job resources, and the experience of burnout/stress, which in turn exerted a negative impact on work-life balance (WLB) and employee well-being. Their findings suggested that burnout/stress acts as a mediating factor on WLB and overall employee well-being. These studies suggest that the negative effects of burnout/stress can extend beyond psychological well-being to other

dimensions of well-being, including social and physical aspects. For instance, individuals experiencing burnout/stress may encounter challenges in maintaining healthy relationships, which could lead to social isolation. Furthermore, the physical toll of burnout/stress can manifest in symptoms such as fatigue, sleep disturbances, and compromised immune function. As stated, our findings confirmed that higher levels of burnout/stress were associated with lower levels of psychological well-being, which aligns with previous research. Alarcon et al. (2009) found that certain personality traits, such as neuroticism and conscientiousness, were associated with burnout/stress, suggesting that individual differences could contribute to the experience of burnout/stress. This supported our understanding that burnout/stress could have a mediating effect on WLB and psychological well-being.

Although our study did not find a significant mediating effect of burnout/stress on work-life balance and social well-being or physical well-being, these previous findings highlighted the complex interplay between burnout/stress, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. As previously discussed in chapter 5.3.2 there could be a link between this non-mediating finding and our previously stated finding where burnout/stress did not have a significant relationship with social- and physical well-being. Although there was a direct significant effect, between WLB and burnout/stress, there was no indications of either indirect effect, direct effect, or a mediating effect between social-, physical employee well-being and burnout/stress. As our results confirmed, burnout/stress did not serve as a mediator between WLB and social-, physical employee well-being. There were many possible reasons as to why our findings did not align with previous studies, such as differences in the characteristics of the study participants compared to those in previous research. Factors such as age, occupations, industry, or cultural balance may have influenced the relationship between WLB, burnout/stress and employee well-being.

6.0 Conclusion, Limitations, and Recommendations for Future Research

6.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study explored the relationship between work life balance, three dimensions of employee well-being, as well as the relationship between work life balance and its effect on job satisfaction and burnout/stress, all among Norwegian workers. The results suggest that a better work life balance correlates with better social, physical, and psychological well-being. Based on these findings it was evident that WLB plays a crucial role in all the three dimensions of employee well-being. Further, there was a positive relation between job satisfaction and WLB and a negative relation between burnout/stress and WLB. The findings confirm our hypotheses and previous research. The effect of job satisfaction and well-being was also examined through the analysis, the correlation here was also in line with previous research and our hypotheses as job satisfaction played a positive role in well-being within all three dimensions. The relationships between burnout/stress with social- and physical-well-being were positive, although not significant, contrary to previous studies. The last dimension of well-being, psychological, on the other hand showed a negative significant relation to burnout/stress, which was in line with earlier studies and our hypothesis. Lastly, the analysis revealed that job satisfaction had a significant mediating effect on the relationship between WLB and the three employee well-being dimensions. Findings confirmed that higher levels of burnout/stress were associated with lower levels of psychological well-being but not on social and physical well-being.

6.2 Theoretical and Practical Implications

Our findings confirmed the significance of work-life balance and employee well-being, as well as the effects of job satisfaction and burnout/stress on work-life balance and employee well-being. Furthermore, our findings were consistent with previous research in the field of job resources and job demands, which showed that having adequate job resources, such as social support, autonomy, and development opportunities, helped offset the negative effects of job demand, fostering positive outcomes such as job satisfaction and work engagement. (Schaufeli et al., 2009). Whereas the physical and psychological aspects with high job demands lead to increased burnout/stress (Demerouti et al., 2004). Our study emphasized the necessity of having

adequate job resources and control over job demand to promote employee well-being, job satisfaction and prevent burnout/stress.

On an organizational level, numerous initiatives could be created to enhance work-life balance and employee well-being, leading to increased job satisfaction and reduced burnout/stress. Training and employee development opportunities were examples, as were creating healthy work environments and ensuring individuals have the required skills and tools to properly execute their job responsibilities and feel appreciated in their positions. Organizations could also create policies that promote work-life balance, flexible working arrangements, and clear job expectations. These measures assisted individuals in managing their workload and creating a sense of control, hence lowering burnout/stress, and increasing job satisfaction.

Supervisors and managers played an important role in promoting work-life balance and employee well-being, lowering burnout/stress, and improving job satisfaction by providing support and direction. They could also ensure that job demands are appropriate, and they could delegate tasks to share the workload. Job satisfaction and motivation can be increased by providing regular feedback and recognizing individual contributions. Furthermore, they could provide possibilities for skill development and autonomy, allowing individuals to have control over their workload and advancement in their role, improving work-life balance and employee well-being.

Individuals could take actions to manage their own well-being. This included self-care, establishing boundaries between work and personal life, and participating in activities that enhance physical and psychological well-being. Using organizational policies, the support of supervisors and colleagues, as well as family, could act as a buffer against burnout and stress. Taking charge of one's career development, seeking opportunities for growth and learning, and balancing work and life can all contribute to increased job satisfaction. Individuals who manage their work-life balance and capitalize on job resources were more likely to have reduced burnout/stress, more job satisfaction, and a greater sense of well-being. Work-life balance influenced employee well-being through job satisfaction.

6.3 Limitations of the Study

Our study used a representative sample of Norwegian workers. However, there were some limitations to consider. As our study only included Norwegian respondents, we got a more limited view of the results, restricting generalization to other countries. In contrast, if we had included all respondents, we would have been able to generalize for the entire data set. That notwithstanding, there was significant variance within this sample as the data entailed different genders, age groups as well as work characteristics, which provided adequate basis for some generalizability. Furthermore, past data was scarce since the pandemic's impact on individual responses must be regarded. Individuals were affected differently by the pandemic because most countries went into lockdown, although others, like Sweden, did not. In addition, this survey was the first to be conducted via computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) rather than in person, as in previous surveys. This would put a limitation of trends over time for future research. However, it was uncertain whether this survey will continue as CATI, which would be required to conduct a longitudinal study to control the current study's findings.

The EFA and CFA removed questions intended for use, lowering the number of questions included in the various variables. This may result in the removal of indicators that alter relationships with other variables, resulting in sample data that was not cohesive and generalizable. This was evident in our study, since burnout/stress had no correlation with social or physical well-being, despite past researchers establishing a relationship between the two. This may be accounted to few questions used for each variable. Furthermore, CR and AVE were below the 'recommended' thresholds, which again might be attributed to the limited number of questions utilized for each variable because of being deleted for low loadings during the CFA analysis. Nonetheless, the CFA and SEM models showed acceptable fitness to the data thus boosting the confidence in the results of this study.

6.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Firstly, our study had several interesting findings and some results that were inconclusive. One interesting study would be to verify if our findings are generalizable for other nations as we only looked at Norwegian respondents. In addition, it would be interesting to check if our results are generalizable for the wider population and not only the Norwegian population, and if burnout/stress were related to social well-being and physical well-being.

Secondly, past data was restricted and was not obtained in the same manner. Furthermore, if the project continues as CATI, a longitudinal study would be required to validate the findings of the importance of work-life balance and employee well-being.

Thirdly, other questions from the questionnaire could have been utilized to develop the model, and it should be investigated whether other questions could have been chosen to enhance CR and AVE to recommended thresholds.

Finally, there was limited research which had investigated work life balance and the mediating effect of job satisfaction and burnout/stress on employee well-being. A study focusing on job demands and job resources and how they can affect job satisfaction and burnout/stress would be able to increase the understanding on how job satisfaction and burnout/stress affect work life balance and employee well-being.

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