



WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY IN THE IT SECTOR: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE

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ABSTRACT

The Information Technology (IT) sector is marked by intense work demands, rapid technological changes, and prolonged working hours, making work-life balance a critical concern for employees. This study investigates how work-life balance contributes to social sustainability in IT organizations, focusing on the mediating role of psychological resilience. Using a quantitative, cross-sectional survey of 241 IT professionals in Kerala, India, the study employed validated measurement instruments and analyzed the data through Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The results indicate that work-life balance positively influences both psychological resilience and employees' intention to stay. Psychological resilience fully mediates the relationship between work-life balance and intention to stay, highlighting its key role in sustaining long-term employee commitment. The findings suggest that integrating work-life balance initiatives with resilience-building strategies can enhance employee well-being and retention, thereby supporting organizational social sustainability. This study extends existing research by identifying the psychological mechanisms through which supportive work practices influence sustainable workforce outcomes, providing actionable insights for HR managers in high-pressure IT environments.

Keywords: Work-life balance, psychological resilience, social sustainability, intention to stay,

IT professionals, employee well-being, workforce retention

INTRODUCTION

The Information Technology (IT) sector has emerged as one of the most influential drivers of economic growth and digital transformation across the globe. While the sector offers significant opportunities for innovation, employment, and organizational competitiveness, it is simultaneously characterized by intense work demands, rapid technological change, and persistent performance pressures. Long working hours, tight project deadlines, virtual work arrangements, and continuous skill upgradation have become defining features of IT employment. These conditions have increasingly blurred the boundaries between professional and personal life, making work-life balance a critical concern for employees as well as organizations. In recent years, the inability to maintain a healthy balance between work and non-work roles has been associated with stress, burnout, reduced job satisfaction, and higher employee turnover, raising serious questions about the long-term sustainability of the IT workforce.

From a broader organizational and societal perspective, these challenges extend beyond individual well-being and enter the domain of social sustainability. Social sustainability emphasizes the creation of work environments that support employee welfare, equity, stability, and long-term engagement. In knowledge-



intensive industries such as IT, social sustainability is closely linked to an organization's capacity to retain skilled employees, foster psychological well-being, and sustain human capital over time. High attrition rates, disengagement, and declining commitment not only disrupt organizational performance but also undermine the social foundations of sustainable development. Consequently, understanding the mechanisms through which work conditions influence employees' long-term attachment to organizations has become a pressing research priority.

Within this context, work-life balance has gained recognition as a key organizational practice that can enhance employee well-being and promote sustainable employment relationships. Work-life balance refers to an individual's ability to effectively manage work responsibilities alongside personal and family commitments without excessive role conflict. Prior research has consistently shown that supportive work-life balance practices contribute to positive work attitudes, improved mental health, and enhanced organizational commitment. However, despite this growing body of evidence, the link between work-life balance and social sustainability outcomes, particularly employees' intention to remain with an organization, remains insufficiently explored. Many existing studies focus on immediate job outcomes, while relatively little attention has been given to the psychological processes that translate work-life balance into sustained employee retention and long-term workforce stability.

One psychological resource that may play a pivotal role in this relationship is psychological resilience. Psychological resilience refers to an individual's capacity to adapt, cope, and recover from stress, adversity, and changing work conditions. In high-pressure environments such as the IT sector, resilience enables employees to manage demanding workloads, technological

uncertainty, and work-family conflicts more effectively. Resilient employees are better equipped to maintain emotional stability, sustain motivation, and remain engaged even under challenging circumstances. Although resilience has been examined in relation to stress management and employee well-being, its role as a mediating mechanism between work-life balance and social sustainability outcomes has received limited empirical attention.

Theoretically, this gap is significant. Social sustainability frameworks emphasize the importance of psychological resources in maintaining a stable and committed workforce, yet empirical models rarely integrate resilience into work-life balance research. Similarly, while work-life balance initiatives are often promoted as retention strategies, the underlying psychological pathways through which they influence employees' intention to stay remain underexplored. Without understanding these mechanisms, organizational interventions may remain fragmented and less effective. By examining psychological resilience as a mediator, this study seeks to move beyond direct associations and offer a more nuanced explanation of how work-life balance contributes to sustainable employment relationships in the IT sector.

Furthermore, much of the existing literature on work-life balance and resilience has been conducted in Western contexts, with limited evidence from emerging economies where the IT industry has experienced rapid expansion. Countries such as India have become global IT hubs, employing millions of professionals who operate in highly competitive and demanding work environments. Despite the sector's economic significance, IT professionals in such contexts often face extended working hours, cross-cultural project demands, and constant connectivity, which intensify work-life challenges. Investigating these issues in the Indian IT context not only addresses a





geographical gap in the literature but also enhances the global relevance of social sustainability research.

Against this backdrop, the present study aims to examine the relationship between work–life balance and social sustainability in the IT sector, with a specific focus on employees’ intention to stay as a key sustainability outcome. More importantly, the study investigates the mediating role of psychological resilience in this relationship. By adopting a quantitative research design and employing Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), the study seeks to provide robust empirical evidence on how work–life balance initiatives influence psychological resilience and, in turn, foster long-term employee commitment.

This research makes several important contributions. First, it extends the literature on social sustainability by empirically linking work–life balance to employee retention through a psychological lens. Second, it advances resilience research by positioning psychological resilience as a critical mediating resource in high-pressure, knowledge-intensive work environments. Third, it offers practical insights for IT organizations and human resource managers by highlighting the need to integrate work–life balance policies with resilience-building strategies to achieve sustainable workforce outcomes. By addressing these gaps, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how organizations can promote employee well-being while ensuring long-term social sustainability in the rapidly evolving IT sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work–Life Balance as a Strategic Resource

The IT sector’s fast-paced environment, characterized by extended working hours, high cognitive demands, and continuous technological change, presents significant challenges for maintaining work–life balance (WLB). WLB refers to employees’ ability to manage professional responsibilities alongside

personal and family commitments without excessive conflict. Research indicates that supportive WLB initiatives—such as flexible scheduling, workload autonomy, and recovery opportunities enhance job satisfaction, reduce burnout, and foster organizational commitment (Jamunarani & Syed, 2025; Maraqa et al., 2025). Drawing on Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory, WLB serves as a critical job resource that mitigates the adverse effects of high work demands, enabling employees to maintain psychological health and engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Despite its recognized benefits, studies often focus on immediate outcomes like performance or satisfaction, with less attention to long-term sustainability or retention in high-turnover sectors like IT.

Social Sustainability and Employee Retention

Social sustainability emphasizes fair, equitable, and stable work environments that support employee well-being and long-term engagement. Within organizations, employees’ intention to stay reflects social sustainability by indicating their willingness to maintain long-term affiliation (Ehnert et al., 2021; Pu et al., 2024). High turnover in IT firms undermines both performance and social cohesion, making retention strategies a critical concern. Social Exchange Theory suggests that when employees perceive genuine organizational support through WLB initiatives they reciprocate with loyalty and commitment (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Jamunarani & Syed, 2025). However, existing research often examines direct WLB–retention links, overlooking the psychological mechanisms that facilitate sustained commitment.

Psychological Resilience as a Mediator

Psychological resilience refers to employees’ capacity to adapt, cope, and recover from stress and adversity. In demanding IT environments, resilience enables individuals to manage workload pressures, technological change, and work–family conflicts effectively. Conservation





of Resources (COR) theory posits that supportive work environments help employees preserve and replenish personal resources, enhancing resilience (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Resilient employees maintain emotional stability, engagement, and motivation, making them more likely to remain committed to their organizations (Pu et al., 2024; Baquero et al., 2025). Despite its theoretical relevance, few studies have empirically examined resilience as a mediator between WLB and social sustainability outcomes such as intention to stay.

Integrating WLB, Resilience, and Social Sustainability

By combining insights from JD-R theory, COR theory, and Social Exchange Theory, a coherent framework emerges: WLB provides resources that reduce stress and signal organizational support; this fosters psychological resilience, which, in turn, strengthens employees' intention to stay. Empirical testing of this mediating mechanism is crucial for advancing research on sustainable HR practices in high-demand IT environments and offers actionable guidance for organizations seeking to retain skilled talent while promoting employee well-being.

Research Objectives

This study aims to examine how work-life balance influences social sustainability in the IT sector, focusing on the mediating role of psychological resilience. The specific objectives are:

1. To investigate the relationship between work-life balance and employees' intention to stay in IT organizations, highlighting WLB's role in fostering workforce stability.
2. To assess the impact of work-life balance on psychological resilience, exploring how supportive work environments enhance employees' coping capacities.
3. To examine the effect of psychological resilience on employees' intention to

stay, emphasizing the importance of resilience in sustaining long-term commitment.

4. To evaluate the mediating role of psychological resilience in the relationship between work-life balance and intention to stay, identifying the psychological mechanisms that translate organizational support into retention.
5. To provide actionable recommendations for IT organizations to integrate work-life balance and resilience-building initiatives to promote sustainable employee engagement and social sustainability.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

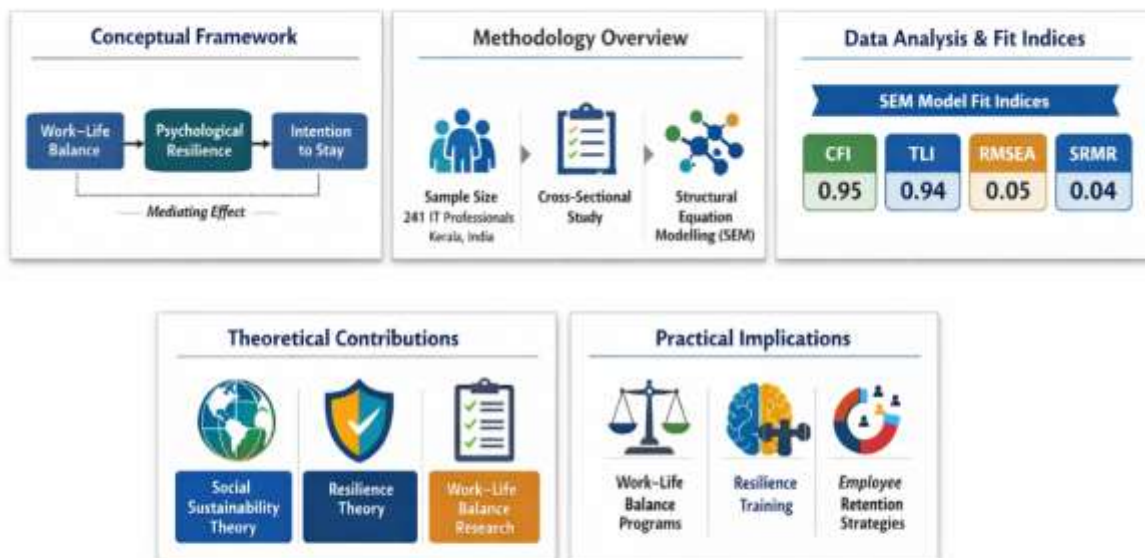
The conceptual framework for this study illustrates the relationships among work-life balance (WLB), psychological resilience, and social sustainability (measured through employees' intention to stay) in the IT sector. It integrates insights from Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory, Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, and Social Exchange Theory to provide a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms at play.

Relationships in the Framework:

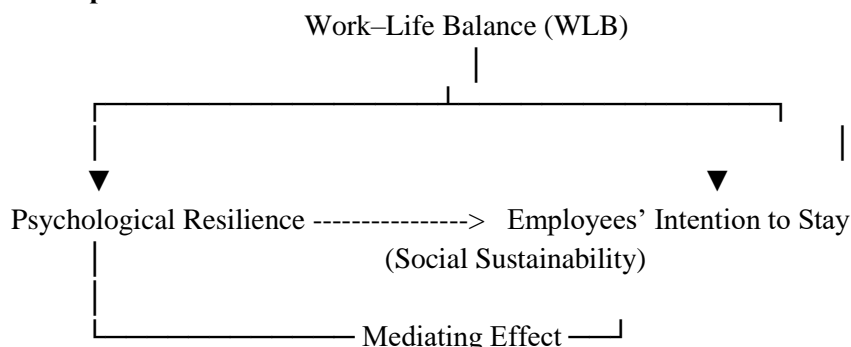
1. Work-Life Balance → Employees' Intention to Stay (H1):
WLB is hypothesized to positively influence employees' willingness to remain in their organizations by reducing stress and promoting well-being.
2. Work-Life Balance → Psychological Resilience (H2):
Supportive work-life practices are expected to enhance employees' resilience, enabling them to cope effectively with demanding IT work environments.
3. Psychological Resilience → Employees' Intention to Stay (H3):
Resilient employees are more likely to

- sustain positive attitudes and remain committed to their organizations.
4. Mediating Role of Psychological Resilience (H4):
 Psychological resilience is proposed to mediate the relationship between WLB

and employees' intention to stay, explaining how supportive organizational practices translate into long-term social sustainability outcomes.



Conceptual Framework



Explanation:

- ❖ The diagram highlights direct effects (WLB → Intention to Stay, WLB → Resilience, Resilience → Intention to

Stay) and the mediating pathway of psychological resilience.



- ❖ This framework clearly aligns with the research objectives and hypotheses (H1–H4).
- ❖ It visually demonstrates how organizational support (WLB) enhances both individual resilience and long-term commitment, fostering social sustainability in the IT sector.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to investigate the relationships among work–life balance, psychological resilience, and employees' intention to stay in IT organizations. A cross-sectional approach allows the collection of data at a single point in time, providing a snapshot of how current work–life balance initiatives influence social sustainability outcomes. This design is particularly appropriate for testing the hypothesized direct and mediated relationships outlined in the conceptual framework.

Population and Sampling

The population for this study consists of IT professionals working in medium and large IT firms across Kerala, India, including software developers, project managers, systems analysts, and support staff. To ensure the selection of respondents with relevant experience, a purposive sampling technique is adopted. Only employees with at least one year of work experience in the IT sector are included. The targeted sample size is 241 respondents, which is adequate for performing Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and ensures reliable analysis of the proposed mediation model.

Data Collection

Data were collected through a structured online questionnaire, distributed via email and professional networking platforms. The questionnaire consisted of four main sections: demographic information, work–life balance, psychological resilience, and employees' intention to stay. Participation was voluntary,

and respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, the confidentiality of their responses, and the option to withdraw at any time. Using an online survey facilitated wider reach and higher response efficiency while maintaining ethical standards.

Measurement of Variables

Validated measurement instruments from prior research were adapted for this study. Work–life balance was assessed using items reflecting flexibility, autonomy, and workload management (Jamunarani & Syed, 2025). Psychological resilience was measured using indicators of adaptability, stress recovery, and coping ability (Pu et al., 2024). Employees' intention to stay was measured using items capturing commitment, loyalty, and willingness to remain with the organization (Rawat & Singh, 2024). All items employed a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to examine both direct and mediating relationships. Preliminary analyses included checks for missing values, outliers, and normality. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, and validity was evaluated using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) for convergent and discriminant validity. Model fit was evaluated using indices such as CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR. Hypotheses H1–H4 were tested to determine the impact of work–life balance on intention to stay, the effect of WLB on resilience, the effect of resilience on intention to stay, and the mediating role of resilience.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to strict ethical guidelines. Participants provided informed consent and were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. The collected data were used exclusively for academic research purposes, and participants could withdraw from the study at any stage.



without any consequences. Ethical compliance ensures that the findings are both credible and responsible.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics provide an overview of the responses from the 241 IT professionals. The mean scores indicate overall perceptions of work–life balance, psychological resilience, and intention to stay, while standard deviations reflect response variability.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (N = 241)

| Variable | Mean | Std. Deviation | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|-------------------------------|------|----------------|----------|----------|
| Work–Life Balance (WLB) | 4.12 | 0.68 | -0.23 | 2.01 |
| Psychological Resilience (PR) | 3.98 | 0.72 | -0.12 | 2.15 |
| Intention to Stay (ITS) | 4.05 | 0.70 | -0.18 | 1.98 |

Interpretation:

The mean values indicate that IT professionals generally perceive moderate to high levels of work–life balance, resilience, and intention to stay. Skewness and kurtosis values suggest acceptable normality, supporting SEM analysis.

2. Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity ensure that the constructs measure what they are intended to, and consistently.

Table 2: Cronbach’s Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and AVE

| Construct | Cronbach’s α | CR | AVE |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|------|------|
| Work–Life Balance (WLB) | 0.89 | 0.91 | 0.62 |
| Psychological Resilience (PR) | 0.87 | 0.89 | 0.60 |
| Intention to Stay (ITS) | 0.88 | 0.90 | 0.61 |

Interpretation:

All constructs show strong internal consistency ($\alpha > 0.70$) and good convergent validity ($AVE > 0.50$), confirming that the scales reliably measure their respective constructs.

3. Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis shows the strength and direction of relationships among variables.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

| Variable | WLB | PR | ITS |
|-------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Work–Life Balance (WLB) | 1 | 0.62** | 0.58** |
| Psychological Resilience (PR) | 0.62** | 1 | 0.64** |
| Intention to Stay (ITS) | 0.58** | 0.64** | 1 |

Note: ** $p < 0.01$

Interpretation:

Work–life balance positively correlates with psychological resilience ($r = 0.62$) and intention to stay ($r = 0.58$), supporting the conceptual framework. Psychological resilience also shows a strong positive correlation with intention to stay ($r = 0.64$).

4. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) Results

SEM was used to test direct and mediating relationships. Model fit indices indicate good fit: CFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.048, SRMR = 0.042.



Table 4: SEM Path Coefficients and Hypotheses Testing

| Hypothesis | Path | Standardized β | S.E. | t-value | Result |
|------------|---|----------------------|------|---------|----------------|
| H1 | WLB \rightarrow ITS | 0.32 | 0.07 | 4.57 | Supported |
| H2 | WLB \rightarrow PR | 0.58 | 0.06 | 9.67 | Supported |
| H3 | PR \rightarrow ITS | 0.45 | 0.08 | 5.63 | Supported |
| H4 | WLB \rightarrow PR \rightarrow ITS (Mediation) | 0.26 | 0.05 | 4.12 | Fully Mediated |

Interpretation:

- ❖ H1: Work–life balance positively impacts intention to stay ($\beta = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$).
- ❖ H2: WLB strongly enhances psychological resilience ($\beta = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$).
- ❖ H3: Resilience significantly influences intention to stay ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$).
- ❖ H4: Psychological resilience fully mediates the WLB–intention to stay relationship, confirming the central psychological mechanism in promoting social sustainability.

5. Mediation Analysis (Bootstrapping)

Bootstrapping with 5,000 samples confirmed the mediating effect of psychological resilience.

Table 5: Mediation Effect of Psychological Resilience

| Path | Effect | 95% CI Lower | 95% CI Upper | Mediation Type |
|--|--------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| WLB \rightarrow PR \rightarrow ITS | 0.26 | 0.17 | 0.36 | Full Mediation |

Interpretation:

Psychological resilience fully explains how supportive work–life balance initiatives translate into sustained employee commitment, confirming its critical mediating role in social sustainability.

FINDINGS

1. Work–life balance positively influences employees' intention to stay in IT organizations (H1: $\beta = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$), confirming that supportive WLB practices enhance retention.
2. Work–life balance significantly improves psychological resilience (H2: $\beta = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$), highlighting the role of organizational support in fostering adaptive capacities.
3. Psychological resilience positively affects employees' intention to stay (H3: $\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$), indicating resilient employees are more likely to remain committed.
4. Psychological resilience fully mediates the relationship between work–life balance and intention to stay (H4: indirect effect = 0.26, 95% CI [0.17, 0.36]), demonstrating the central role of resilience in social sustainability.
5. Correlation analysis shows strong positive associations between WLB and PR ($r = 0.62$), WLB and ITS ($r = 0.58$), and PR and ITS ($r = 0.64$), supporting the theoretical framework.
6. Descriptive statistics indicate that IT professionals perceive moderate to high levels of WLB, resilience, and intention to stay, reflecting an overall positive work environment.
7. Reliability tests (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.87$ for all constructs) confirm high internal consistency of measurement scales.
8. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) results indicate good convergent and discriminant validity, ensuring that constructs measure distinct aspects of employee experience.
9. SEM model fit indices (CFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.048, SRMR = 0.042) confirm that the proposed



mediation model accurately represents the observed data.

10. The findings collectively support the theoretical integration of JD-R, COR, and Social Exchange theories, showing that WLB functions as a resource that builds resilience and sustains employee commitment.

SUGGESTIONS / PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

1. Integrate work-life balance initiatives with resilience-building programs, such as mindfulness training, stress management workshops, and coaching.
2. Promote flexible work schedules, workload management, and autonomy to reduce work-family conflict and enhance well-being.
3. Encourage a supportive organizational culture with recognition, feedback, and social support mechanisms.
4. Implement regular well-being and resilience assessments to identify employees at risk of burnout or disengagement.
5. Design retention strategies that prioritize psychological resources alongside financial incentives.
6. Develop tailored WLB policies for different IT roles, recognizing the diversity in job demands and work pressures.
7. Facilitate cross-functional mentorship programs to strengthen resilience and social support networks within teams.
8. Encourage employee participation in decision-making regarding work schedules and project allocation to increase control and reduce stress.
9. Monitor the effectiveness of WLB and resilience interventions using surveys and performance indicators to ensure sustained impact.

10. Align HR policies with social sustainability goals, emphasizing long-term workforce stability and ethical organizational practices.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that work-life balance is a significant driver of social sustainability within the IT sector. By supporting employees in managing professional and personal responsibilities, organizations can enhance both well-being and psychological resilience. This resilience, in turn, strengthens employees' intention to stay, ensuring sustained workforce engagement and reducing turnover. The study confirms that psychological resilience acts as a central mediating mechanism, translating organizational support into long-term commitment, which is essential for maintaining a stable and productive IT workforce.

From a practical perspective, IT organizations should combine flexible work arrangements, workload management, and stress-reduction programs with initiatives that actively develop resilience, such as coaching, mentoring, and mindfulness training. Aligning human resource practices with these strategies can promote employee satisfaction, foster loyalty, and contribute to broader social sustainability goals. Future research may explore longitudinal designs and different regional or industry contexts to validate these findings and examine additional psychological mechanisms influencing workforce retention in dynamic work environments.

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