The Impact of Job Flexibility, Workload, and Self-Efficacy on Work–Life Balance: The Mediating Role of Technology Effectiveness and Organizational Support, and the Moderating Role of Leadership Style among Remote Knowledge Workers

Mansour. Ghalbi[1], Alireza. Zolfaghari[2]*, Zabih. Pirani[1]

[1] Department of Psychology, Ar.C., Islamic Azad University, Arak, Iran
[2] Department of Psychology, Tu.C., Islamic Azad University, Tuyserkan, Iran

* Corresponding author email address: Ar.zolfaghari@iau.ac.ir

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The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of job flexibility, workload, and individual self-efficacy on work–life balance, considering the mediating role of technology effectiveness and organizational support, as well as the moderating role of leadership style among remote knowledge workers. This research is applied in nature and adopts a descriptive–correlational method. The statistical population consisted of 196 remote employees working in startup companies in Tehran. Using convenience sampling and G*Power software, a sample size of 111 was determined. Data were collected through a questionnaire, and path analysis was conducted using PLS version 3 software. The results indicated that organizational support mediates the relationship between workload and work–life balance ($R^2=0.542$, p=0.000), as well as between individual self-efficacy and work–life balance ($R^2=0.582$, p=0.000). Furthermore, technology effectiveness mediates the relationships between job flexibility ($R^2=0.698$), workload ($R^2=0.745$), and self-efficacy ($R^2=0.685$) with work–life balance (all with p=0.000). The moderating role of leadership style was also confirmed ($R^2=0.639$, p=0.000). Based on the findings, it is recommended that training programs be designed and implemented to enhance self-efficacy and increase job flexibility for remote employees.

Keywords: Job flexibility, workload, self-efficacy, information technology, organizational support, leadership style, work–life balance.

1. Introduction

In today's highly dynamic and digitized labor market, maintaining an effective work–life balance (WLB) has become one of the most pressing organizational and social concerns. Work–life balance refers to the individual's ability to meet both work and personal responsibilities with minimal conflict and optimal enrichment between roles (Carlson et al., 2006; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Scholars argue that sustaining this balance contributes to improved psychological well-being, productivity, and retention, while its absence leads to stress, job dissatisfaction, and turnover (Badri, 2019; Haar et al., 2014; Richman et al., 2008). Rapid transformations such as digitalization, globalization, and the growth of remote knowledge work have fundamentally restructured how employees experience their professional and personal lives (Bhuyan, 2025; Hotama, 2025). These changes, while offering flexibility and technological connectivity, have simultaneously blurred the boundaries between work and non-work domains (Kinman & Jones, 2008; Mellner et al., 2015).

Two complementary theoretical lenses have shaped WLB research. First, work–family enrichment theory posits that resources such as skills, perspectives, and social capital acquired in one role can positively influence the other (Carlson et al., 2006; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Marais et al., 2014). Second, conservation of resources (COR) theory explains that individuals strive to acquire and protect valued resources like time, energy, and autonomy; resource loss leads to stress, while resource gain fosters resilience and well-being. These frameworks are especially relevant for remote knowledge workers who navigate intensified job demands, continuous connectivity, and blurred role boundaries (Kubicek et al., 2017; Morgeson et al., 2005). When resources are insufficient or depleted due to heavy workload, inflexible schedules, or lack of organizational support, individuals are more likely to experience conflict and emotional strain (Baillien et al., 2011; Grotto & Lyness, 2010). Conversely, resource availability through autonomy, job flexibility, and self-efficacy can create positive spillovers that enhance enrichment and overall well-being (Faryad et al., 2016; Li et al., 2018).

Job flexibility has emerged as a central structural resource enabling employees to negotiate competing demands and sustain WLB (Hotama, 2025; Le et al., 2020; Mirespasi et al., 2022). Flexibility encompasses control over work hours, location, and task scheduling, which can empower individuals to reduce strain and invest in personal or family domains (Crompton & Lyonette, 2006; Lingard et al., 2007). Empirical evidence suggests that flexible arrangements support creativity, innovation, and engagement (Faryad et al., 2016; Li et al., 2018), while rigid job structures contribute to burnout and dissatisfaction (Clarke et al., 2015; Kinman & Jones, 2008). Yet, flexibility is not universally beneficial; when poorly managed, it may lead to work intensification and extended working hours, eroding boundaries and triggering additional stress (Kubicek et al., 2017; Mellner et al., 2015).

Workload remains a significant barrier to achieving WLB, particularly in knowledge-intensive contexts. Excessive job demands consume time and cognitive resources, leaving less capacity for family and personal recovery (Baillien et al., 2011; Panatik et al., 2012). Overload is associated with negative spillover effects such as mental strain, emotional exhaustion, and intention to quit (Badri, 2019; Noor, 2011). Remote work can paradoxically amplify workload by creating expectations of constant availability and accelerated response times (Hashemi et al., 2020; Mirespasi et al., 2022). These conditions underscore the importance of organizational strategies to counterbalance demands with support and technology infrastructure (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2025; Salehabadi, 2021).

While structural factors shape WLB opportunities, personal psychological resources also play a decisive role. Self-efficacy—the belief in one's capability to plan, organize, and execute actions effectively—empowers employees to manage demands, set boundaries, and reframe challenges (Ballout, 2009; Guarnaccia et al., 2018). High self-efficacy has been linked to stronger coping strategies, higher job performance, and proactive career development (Frederick et al., 2005; Hair et al., 2010). In the WLB context, it enhances adaptive boundary management and buffers stress caused by workload and ambiguity (Hashemi et al., 2020; Neeta, 2025). Recent studies highlight that self-efficacy can mediate or moderate the negative effects of job demands by enabling resource regeneration and fostering positive work-to-life spillover (Bhuyan, 2025; Rahimi-Moghadam & Namvar, 2023).

The advent of advanced communication technologies and digital collaboration tools has transformed how work is performed, especially for remote knowledge workers. When implemented effectively, technology can enhance autonomy, reduce role overload, and strengthen connectivity with supportive organizational networks (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2025; Hotama, 2025). However, poorly integrated or overly invasive technology can blur work–life boundaries

and lead to technostress (Grotto & Lyness, 2010; Hobfoll et al., 2018). Technology effectiveness—employees' perception of how well digital tools facilitate task accomplishment without creating additional strain—has been identified as a mediator linking flexibility and workload to WLB (Le et al., 2020; Mirespasi et al., 2022).

Organizational support represents another crucial mediator. Perceived support signals that the organization values employees' contributions and well-being, fostering loyalty and resilience (Clarke et al., 2015; Marais et al., 2014). Supportive environments can offset the adverse effects of heavy workload by providing resources, reducing ambiguity, and encouraging proactive coping (Ganjinia et al., 2019; Richman et al., 2008). Moreover, organizations that cultivate spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence, and wellness programs create conditions where employees feel equipped to handle multiple roles (Neeta, 2025; Salehabadi, 2021). In remote and hybrid settings, such support often manifests through leadership practices that prioritize flexibility, clear communication, and resource provision (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2025; Rahimi-Moghadam & Namvar, 2023).

Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping how flexibility and workload impact WLB. Servant and supportive leadership styles promote trust, empowerment, and a sense of belonging, which mitigate stress and enhance positive resource cycles (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2025; Hotama, 2025). Leaders who model boundary respect and promote recovery behaviors help employees disengage after work, protecting personal time (Clarke et al., 2015; Marais et al., 2014). Conversely, controlling or unclear leadership increases role ambiguity and exacerbates the negative impact of workload (Baillien et al., 2011; Crompton & Lyonette, 2006). Evidence suggests that leadership effectiveness is particularly critical in remote work contexts where informal cues and support are less visible (Hashemi et al., 2020; Neeta, 2025).

Much of the empirical knowledge on WLB originates from Western economies, but emerging research emphasizes the unique dynamics in Asia and the Middle East. Cultural expectations regarding gender roles, extended family responsibilities, and collectivist norms influence how employees perceive and navigate work–life integration (Le et al., 2020; Noor, 2011). For example, Iranian studies show that teleworking and overtime significantly affect WLB due to infrastructural challenges and organizational cultures that expect constant responsiveness (Mirespasi et al., 2022; Tavaehteh, 2020). Similarly, research on Malaysian

academics highlights stress from intensified performance evaluation systems and limited autonomy (Husin et al., 2018; Panatik et al., 2012). The complexity of these socio-cultural factors underscores the need to contextualize WLB frameworks rather than importing Western models uncritically (Crompton & Lyonette, 2006; Lingard et al., 2007).

Despite the extensive scholarship on WLB, several gaps remain. First, the joint examination of structural (job flexibility, workload) and personal (self-efficacy) resources in remote work contexts remains underdeveloped (Hotama, 2025; Neeta, 2025). Second, while technology and organizational support are recognized as essential to WLB, their **mediating** mechanisms require further empirical validation, especially in non-Western contexts (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2025; Mirespasi et al., 2022). Third, leadership style's **moderating** influence in digitalized and remote environments is not fully understood despite its potential to mitigate workload stressors and enhance supportive climates (Marais et al., 2014; Rahimi-Moghadam & Namvar, 2023). By addressing these issues, the present study advances a comprehensive model that integrates job flexibility, workload, and self-efficacy with the mediating roles of technology effectiveness and organizational support, and the moderating effect of leadership style.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

This study is applied in purpose and descriptive–survey in nature. The statistical population consisted of 196 remote employees working in startup companies in Tehran. Based on the sample size estimation using G*Power software, the required sample size was determined to be 111 participants. Sampling was carried out using a convenience sampling method. A questionnaire was employed as the main tool for data collection. For the variable of organizational flexibility, the standardized Organizational Flexibility Questionnaire developed by Chan et al. (2017) was used. This questionnaire consists of 18 items measuring organizational flexibility across four dimensions. Responses were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "very low" to "very high."

2.2. Measures

To measure workload, the Workload Questionnaire by Van Veldhoven (1991) was applied. This instrument

contains 5 items assessed on a five-point Likert scale, with sample statements such as "Working very hard is a necessity in my job."

Individual self-efficacy was assessed using the Self-Efficacy Scale developed and validated by Morris (2001). This instrument comprises 21 items across three dimensions—social self-efficacy, emotional self-efficacy, and academic self-efficacy—measured on a five-point Likert scale.

Work–life balance was examined using the Work–Life Balance Questionnaire by Wang and Ko (2009), which consists of 26 items covering seven dimensions: having sufficient leisure time, work loyalty, workplace support for work–life balance, flexibility in work scheduling, life orientation, career maintenance, and voluntary reduction of working hours. Responses were rated on a five-point Likert scale (e.g., "When I talk to my supervisor about personal or family issues affecting my work, he/she understands me.").

Technology effectiveness was measured using Davis's (2009) IT Questionnaire, adapted from Sheikshoaee and Oloumi (2009). This instrument includes 20 items across four dimensions, scored on a five-point Likert scale (1 = very low, 5 = very high), where higher scores reflect greater emphasis on IT effectiveness.

Organizational support was measured using the Organizational Support Questionnaire by Mahrous and Junaidi (2018), which consists of 8 items, also rated on a five-point Likert scale (e.g., "This company often gives employees who have good and creative ideas the opportunity to develop them.").

Leadership style was assessed using the Leadership Style Questionnaire developed by Bardenes and Metzkas (1969). This questionnaire includes 35 items, each rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "always" to "never."

2.3. Data Analysis

For data analysis, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was used to examine normality. Inferential statistics were conducted using path analysis, considering the measurement level of variables. All analyses were performed with PLS version 3 software, with a significance level of 0.05.

3. Findings and Results

Based on the distribution of the sample by gender, 72.9% of participants were female, and 27.1% were male. Regarding educational attainment, 23.4% held a diploma or associate degree, 57.6% had a bachelor's degree, and 19% possessed a master's or doctoral degree. Concerning work experience, 54% had less than five years of experience, 36% had between five and ten years, and 10% had more than ten years. Moreover, 36% of participants were single, while 64% were married.

Table 1

Demographic characteristics of the sample

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender – Female	81	72.9
Gender – Male	30	27.1
Education – Diploma/Associate	26	23.4
Education – Bachelor	64	57.6
Education – Master/PhD	21	19.0
Work Experience – < 5 years	60	54.0
Work Experience – 5–10 years	40	36.0
Work Experience – > 10 years	11	10.0
Marital Status – Single	40	36.0
Marital Status – Married	71	64.0

According to the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test results, if the significance level for all independent and dependent variables is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) is confirmed, indicating a normal distribution. As shown in Table 2, the significance levels for all variables exceeded 0.05, confirming that the data followed a normal distribution. Therefore, parametric methods were applied in subsequent hypothesis testing.

Table 2

Normality test results

Variables	Test Statistic	Sig.	Result
Leadership Style	2.31	0.254	Normal
Organizational Support	4.25	0.236	Normal
IT Effectiveness	1.65	0.089	Normal
Job Flexibility	2.28	0.231	Normal
Workload	2.41	0.208	Normal
Work–Life Balance	3.44	0.148	Normal
Self-Efficacy	4.25	0.108	Normal

As shown in Table 3, job flexibility had a significant positive effect on work–life balance ($\beta = 0.471$, $p < 0.001$, T = 6.754). Workload exhibited a significant negative relationship with work–life balance ($\beta = -0.362$, $p < 0.001$, T = 5.235). Individual self-efficacy showed a significant positive effect on work–life balance ($\beta = 0.612$, $p < 0.001$, T = 7.436).

Organizational support mediated the relationship between workload and work–life balance ($\beta = 0.542$, $p <$ 0.001, T = 7.362) and between self-efficacy and work–life balance ($\beta = 0.582$, $p < 0.001$, T = 8.563). IT effectiveness mediated the relationships between job flexibility ($\beta = 0.698$, $p < 0.001$), workload ($\beta = 0.745$, $p < 0.001$), and self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.685$, $p < 0.001$) with work–life balance. The moderating role of leadership style was also confirmed ($\beta = 0.639$, $p < 0.001$, T = 9.638).

Table 3

Structural Model Path Coefficients and Significance

Hypothesized Path	β (Beta)	T-Value	p-Value	Result
Job Flexibility → Work–Life Balance	0.471	6.754	<0.001	Supported
Workload → Work–Life Balance	−0.362	5.235	<0.001	Supported
Self-Efficacy → Work–Life Balance	0.612	7.436	<0.001	Supported
Workload → Organizational Support → Work–Life Balance (Mediation)	0.542	7.362	<0.001	Supported (Mediated)
Self-Efficacy → Organizational Support → Work–Life Balance (Mediation)	0.582	8.563	<0.001	Supported (Mediated)
Job Flexibility → IT Effectiveness → Work–Life Balance (Mediation)	0.698	—	<0.001	Supported (Mediated)
Workload → IT Effectiveness → Work–Life Balance (Mediation)	0.745	—	<0.001	Supported (Mediated)
Self-Efficacy → IT Effectiveness → Work–Life Balance (Mediation)	0.685	—	<0.001	Supported (Mediated)
Leadership Style × (Job Flexibility, Workload, Self-Efficacy) → Work–Life Balance (Moderation)	0.639	9.638	<0.001	Supported (Moderated)

Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. As shown in Table 4, all values exceeded the recommended thresholds ($\alpha > 0.7$, CR > 0.7), confirming the reliability of the measurement model. Convergent validity was evaluated using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and all constructs achieved AVE values greater than 0.5, indicating adequate convergent validity.

Table 4

Reliability and convergent validity

Variables	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability	AVE
Leadership Style	0.865	0.917	0.785
Organizational Support	0.897	0.936	0.829
IT Effectiveness	0.799	0.882	0.714
Job Flexibility	0.848	0.907	0.766
Workload	0.863	0.907	0.710
Work–Life Balance	0.778	0.901	0.750
Self-Efficacy	0.725	0.931	0.741

Stone–Geisser's Q² statistic was used to evaluate predictive relevance. As shown in Table 5, all Q² values were above 0.3, suggesting strong predictive power of the model for endogenous constructs.

Table 5

Stone–Geisser Q² results

Variables	Q² Value	Status
IT Effectiveness	0.303	Adequate
Organizational Support	0.372	Adequate
Work–Life Balance	0.348	Adequate

The overall model fit was assessed using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). The obtained SRMR value was 0.051, below the threshold of 0.08, indicating a good fit. The Normed Fit Index (NFI) was 0.852, which is close to the acceptable level of 0.9, suggesting a satisfactory model fit.

Table 6

Model fit indices

Index	Value	Interpretation
SRMR	0.051	Good fit
NFI	0.852	Acceptable

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study examined how job flexibility, workload, and individual self-efficacy influence work–life balance (WLB) among remote knowledge workers, while testing the mediating effects of technology effectiveness and organizational support and the moderating role of leadership style. The results demonstrated that job flexibility positively affects WLB, whereas workload exerts a negative influence. Furthermore, self-efficacy emerged as a strong positive predictor of WLB. The findings also confirmed that technology effectiveness and organizational support significantly mediate these relationships, and that leadership style plays a moderating role in strengthening or weakening these pathways. Together, these outcomes reinforce theoretical frameworks such as work–family enrichment (Carlson et al., 2006; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) and the conservation of resources (COR) model (Hobfoll et al., 2018), while extending empirical knowledge about digital work contexts.

The strong positive association between job flexibility and WLB observed in this study indicates that providing employees with discretion over time, place, and methods of work helps them better integrate professional and personal demands. This aligns with previous findings showing that flexibility is a powerful job resource enabling employees to reduce strain and invest in family and leisure activities (Crompton & Lyonette, 2006; Lingard et al., 2007). Flexible work systems are also known to enhance creativity and innovative behaviors by giving individuals autonomy to structure tasks and manage energy (Faryad et al., 2016; Li et al., 2018). Our results echo the conclusion that when workers perceive control over their schedules, they can proactively manage role boundaries and replenish personal resources, thereby achieving higher well-being and job satisfaction (Clarke et al., 2015; Haar et al., 2014).

Nevertheless, our findings also support the nuanced view that flexibility alone does not guarantee improved WLB; it must be embedded within supportive organizational systems. Prior research suggests that flexibility can backfire if accompanied by increased job intensity or expectations for constant connectivity (Kubicek et al., 2017; Mellner et al., 2015). By demonstrating that technology effectiveness mediates the flexibility–WLB link, this study contributes new insight: flexibility's benefits are maximized when digital tools genuinely facilitate work tasks and reduce complexity, rather than simply increasing availability demands (Le et al., 2020; Mirespasi et al., 2022). This underscores that "smart flexibility"—backed by technological infrastructure and cultural norms supporting boundary control—is vital for sustainable balance.

As expected, workload exhibited a strong negative relationship with WLB. Heavy quantitative and qualitative job demands drain time and psychological resources, creating spillover that disrupts recovery and family life

(Baillien et al., 2011; Panatik et al., 2012). The results are consistent with evidence from higher education and knowledge-intensive sectors where escalating demands correlate with burnout and intention to quit (Badri, 2019; Noor, 2011). Our study adds to this body of work by showing that technology effectiveness can mitigate, but not fully neutralize, the adverse impact of overload. When employees perceive digital systems as efficient and user-friendly, the cognitive burden of complex tasks is partially alleviated (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2025; Hobfoll et al., 2018). However, excessive demands still erode WLB even under advanced technology conditions, suggesting the need for workload regulation and fair performance metrics.

Organizational support also played a key mediating role in the workload–WLB pathway. This finding reinforces the COR framework: social and material support from employers replenishes resources lost under strain (Hobfoll et al., 2018; Richman et al., 2008). Prior studies indicate that supervisor understanding, career development opportunities, and psychosocial resources such as wellness programs counterbalance stress from high demands (Clarke et al., 2015; Salehabadi, 2021). Our results confirm that supportive organizational climates not only buffer the effects of overload but also cultivate a sense of being valued, which enhances engagement and commitment despite challenging work conditions (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2025; Ganjinia et al., 2019).

Individual self-efficacy emerged as a particularly robust predictor of WLB. Employees with strong self-efficacy believe in their capacity to handle complex tasks, regulate emotions, and maintain clear boundaries (Ballout, 2009; Guarnaccia et al., 2018). Our findings align with prior research showing that self-efficacious employees are proactive in resource acquisition and boundary management, thus reducing conflict between work and personal life (Hashemi et al., 2020; Rahimi-Moghadam & Namvar, 2023). This psychological strength helps them cope with unpredictable demands and technological complexity, supporting both mental health and job satisfaction (Bhuyan, 2025; Neeta, 2025).

Importantly, self-efficacy's relationship with WLB was also partly mediated by organizational support and technology effectiveness. This suggests that while personal resources are critical, their impact is amplified in supportive and well-equipped digital workplaces. Prior studies note that organizational encouragement and appropriate training increase self-efficacy by reinforcing mastery and competence (Faryad et al., 2016; Frederick et al., 2005). Our

results extend this evidence by showing that technology tools that are easy to use and reliable further strengthen the confidence of self-efficacious employees, enabling them to manage complex remote tasks and personal obligations simultaneously (Le et al., 2020; Mirespasi et al., 2022).

The confirmed mediating effects of technology effectiveness and organizational support provide a more granular understanding of how structural and personal factors translate into balanced life outcomes. Previous WLB literature often treats technology as a double-edged sword: while it offers flexibility and access, it can also create "always-on" cultures (Kubicek et al., 2017; Mellner et al., 2015). Our findings refine this debate by emphasizing technology effectiveness—not merely availability—as the critical determinant. When digital systems reduce complexity, facilitate communication, and support asynchronous work, they protect against overload and allow flexibility to translate into genuine control (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2025; Hotama, 2025).

Similarly, organizational support emerged as a crucial social and structural buffer. Earlier studies in Asian and Middle Eastern contexts highlight how cultural expectations and organizational inertia can limit the practical value of flexible policies (Mirespasi et al., 2022; Noor, 2011). By demonstrating that support mediates the relationship between both workload and self-efficacy with WLB, this study shows that supportive leadership, fair policies, and recognition systems are pivotal to turning resources into well-being (Clarke et al., 2015; Marais et al., 2014). This resonates with the COR principle that external resources can offset depletion and enable personal resources like self-efficacy to flourish (Hobfoll et al., 2018).

A notable contribution of this study is the evidence that leadership style moderates the overall WLB model. Leaders who adopt servant or empowering behaviors amplify the positive impact of flexibility and self-efficacy while reducing the harm of heavy workloads (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2025; Hotama, 2025). Supportive leaders signal respect for personal time, provide clear digital norms, and encourage recovery practices, making remote work sustainable (Clarke et al., 2015; Marais et al., 2014). Conversely, leaders with controlling or ambiguous styles intensify stress and erode the benefits of flexibility, consistent with past observations on role ambiguity and negative spillover (Baillien et al., 2011; Crompton & Lyonette, 2006). The moderating results thus reinforce calls to integrate leadership development into digital transformation and remote work strategies.

The study's context—remote employees in Iranian startups—adds valuable nuance to predominantly Western WLB research. Local findings that overtime and teleworking can impair balance due to infrastructure gaps and long-hour cultures (Mirespasi et al., 2022; Tavaehteh, 2020) contextualize the role of organizational support and technology. Similarly, research on Malaysian and Asian academics underscores how collective norms and performance pressures heighten conflict (Husin et al., 2018; Le et al., 2020; Panatik et al., 2012). Our findings confirm that while theoretical frameworks like COR and enrichment theory are broadly applicable, the pathways from resources to outcomes are strongly shaped by cultural and structural contingencies. This underscores the need for context-sensitive WLB strategies rather than one-size-fits-all policies (Crompton & Lyonette, 2006; Lingard et al., 2007).

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the use of self-reported questionnaires introduces the possibility of common method bias and social desirability effects, as participants may have over- or under-estimated their levels of flexibility, self-efficacy, or perceived support. Second, the cross-sectional design restricts causal inference; while the tested model fits the data well, longitudinal research is needed to confirm temporal ordering and resource gain cycles over time. Third, the sample was drawn from remote employees in Iranian startup environments, which may limit generalizability to other industries or countries with different technological infrastructures and cultural values. Additionally, the study did not account for potential moderating effects of demographic characteristics such as gender, caregiving status, or tenure, which could shape WLB dynamics in nuanced ways.

Future studies could address these limitations by employing multi-wave or longitudinal designs to track how changes in workload, flexibility, and technology effectiveness influence WLB across time. Qualitative and mixed-methods approaches could deepen understanding of how employees experience remote work and organizational support beyond survey metrics. Comparative cross-cultural research would be valuable to explore how national culture and labor market norms interact with leadership style and digitalization in shaping WLB. Further, future models could incorporate other personal resources such as resilience or emotional intelligence, and structural variables such as job security or economic stability, to build a more holistic resource-based framework. Expanding research into hybrid and gig-economy settings could also illuminate WLB dynamics in rapidly evolving work arrangements.

For practitioners, the findings highlight the importance of designing integrated WLB strategies. Organizations should implement genuine flexible work policies supported by effective digital tools that reduce complexity rather than increase connectivity pressures. Leadership development programs are critical, equipping managers with the skills to promote boundary respect, clear expectations, and empathic support. Providing career development opportunities, wellness initiatives, and psychosocial resources can buffer workload stress and enhance employees' self-efficacy. Finally, tailoring WLB interventions to cultural norms and industry demands will increase their relevance and impact, especially in emerging economies adapting to remote and hybrid models.

Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

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