

The Moderating Role of Hybrid Work Flexibility on the Relationship Between Work-Life Balance and Employee Well-Being

Waiphot Kulachai^{1,*}, Khwanta Benchakhan², Patipol Homyamyen³

^{1,2} College of Politics and Government, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand

³ Faculty of Business Administration and Information Technology, Rajamangala University of Technology Suvarnabhumi, Suphanburi, Thailand

*Corresponding author. Email: waiphot.ku@ssru.ac.th

ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between work-life balance (WLB), hybrid work flexibility (HWF), and employee well-being (EWB) in the context of post-pandemic hybrid work environments. Drawing on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory, the research examines how HWF moderates the effect of WLB on EWB using data from 298 hybrid workers across various sectors. Findings reveal that while WLB significantly enhances employee well-being, HWF strengthens this positive relationship as a moderating factor. However, HWF alone does not directly impact well-being. The study highlights the need for organizations to integrate flexible work policies with broader strategies that promote balance and autonomy to optimize employee outcomes.

Keywords: Hybrid work flexibility, Work-life balance, Employee well-being

1. INTRODUCTION

The rise of hybrid work models has transformed the landscape of organizational operations, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. As organizations adopt flexible work arrangements that blend remote and on-site work, there is growing interest in understanding their implications for employee experiences and organizational outcomes (Sull et al., 2022). One critical area of concern is how hybrid work influences the balance between professional responsibilities and personal life, commonly referred to as work-life balance (WLB). Work-life balance is recognized as a fundamental component of occupational health, associated with improved productivity, job satisfaction, and overall well-being (Putri & Amran, 2021). Simultaneously, employee well-being (EWB)—encompassing physical, mental, and emotional health—has become a key indicator of organizational sustainability and workforce resilience. Evidence shows that employees with high WLB report stronger mental health, higher motivation, and reduced turnover intention (Choi, 2019; Kushlev et al., 2020). However, while WLB has been positively linked to EWB, there is a growing recognition that this relationship is not uniform across all contexts and may depend on enabling factors such as organizational support and workplace flexibility (Allen et al., 2021; Vaziri et al., 2020). Hybrid work flexibility (HWF)—defined as the degree to which employees have autonomy over where and when they work—has gained traction as a critical factor that can shape work-life dynamics and well-being outcomes (De Klerk et al., 2021). Although existing studies suggest that flexible arrangements can enhance employee satisfaction and performance, most prior research has focused on either remote or flexible work in general, without isolating the unique effects of hybrid work structures (Spurk & Straub, 2020). Furthermore, few empirical studies have explored how HWF functions as a moderating mechanism in the relationship between WLB and EWB, especially in diverse organizational and cultural contexts. This lack of nuanced understanding represents a significant research gap, particularly as hybrid work becomes institutionalized in post-pandemic workplace design (Choudhury et al., 2021). There is a pressing need to explore not only the direct effects of hybrid flexibility but also its interactive influence on core psychosocial outcomes such as work-life balance and well-being. To address this gap, the present study investigates the moderating role of hybrid work flexibility in the relationship between work-life balance and employee well-being, offering both theoretical contributions and actionable insights for organizations seeking to optimize employee experiences in flexible work environments.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The increasing prevalence of hybrid work models in the post-pandemic era has prompted widespread academic interest in their influence on key organizational outcomes, particularly work-life balance (WLB) and employee well-being (EWB). As hybrid work arrangements—defined by a combination of remote and in-office work—become institutionalized, understanding the mechanisms by which they affect employees' psychological and professional outcomes is vital. Drawing on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), this study posits that both WLB and hybrid work flexibility (HWF) operate as job resources that can either directly enhance or buffer the demands of work, ultimately influencing employee well-being. WLB refers to an individual's perceived ability to allocate sufficient time and energy across work and personal life roles, and it has been shown to reduce stress, increase job satisfaction, and improve overall quality of life (Lesener et al., 2020; Park & Lee, 2020). Numerous studies have validated the positive link between WLB and EWB across industries and national contexts, especially during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, where boundaries between personal and professional life became increasingly blurred (Kumarasamy et al., 2022; Putri & Amran, 2021). Employee well-being itself encompasses a multidimensional concept that includes mental, emotional, and physical health, and is now regarded as a strategic organizational imperative (Cheng et al., 2022). When employees feel their well-being is supported, they tend to exhibit higher motivation, reduced turnover intention, and better workplace performance. However, the extent to which WLB contributes to EWB may be contingent on contextual and structural factors such as organizational culture and flexibility. One such factor is hybrid work flexibility (HWF), which refers to the extent to which employees have autonomy over where and when they work (De Klerk et al., 2022). HWF can be viewed as a structural resource that empowers employees to personalize their work routines in alignment with personal and family needs, potentially enhancing their capacity to achieve a work-life balance. Research shows that flexibility over work location and hours is associated with greater autonomy, lower stress, and higher engagement (Allen et al., 2021; Choudhury et al., 2021). Yet, despite the potential of HWF to enhance job outcomes, empirical evidence examining its role in moderating the link between WLB and EWB remains sparse. Most prior studies have explored WLB and flexibility as independent predictors of well-being, but there is limited research investigating how HWF may interact with WLB to influence EWB (Spurk & Straub, 2020). Furthermore, many studies focus predominantly on Western contexts, remote-only work, or do not distinguish between different types of flexible arrangements—thereby overlooking the hybrid-specific dynamics that have emerged in the post-pandemic workforce (Vaziri et al., 2020). Addressing this critical gap, the current study proposes that the positive relationship between WLB and EWB is strengthened when employees perceive a high degree of flexibility in their hybrid work environment. That is, HWF acts as a moderating variable that enables individuals to optimize the benefits of WLB, consistent with the buffering hypothesis of the JD-R model. Accordingly, two hypotheses are proposed:

H1—*Work-life balance has a positive effect on employee well-being.*

H2—*Hybrid work flexibility moderates the relationship between work-life balance and employee well-being.*

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Participants

The study included 298 participants working in hybrid arrangements across multiple sectors. Most respondents were female (53.02%), followed by male (44.30%), and those identifying as other (2.68%). The largest age group was 25–34 years (51.68%), followed by 35–44 years (11.74%), below 25 years (27.52%), 45–54 years (6.04%), and 55 years and above (3.02%). In terms of employment status, full-time employees accounted for 54.70%, contract employees 27.52%, freelancers 11.41%, and executives 6.38%. Participants came from various industries, primarily government/non-profit organizations (40.27%), education (31.21%), IT (16.44%), finance and banking (6.38%), and others (5.70%). Regarding hybrid work experience, 39.26% reported 1–3 years of experience, 35.57% had less than 6 months, 14.77% had 6 months to 1 year, and 10.40% had more than 3 years of experience.

3.2 Measures

This study employed a structured questionnaire to measure three key constructs: Hybrid Work Flexibility (HWF), Work-Life Balance (WLB), and Employee Well-Being (EWB). All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Hybrid Work Flexibility (HWF) was assessed using five items reflecting the degree of flexibility employees experience in hybrid work settings. These include flexibility in choosing work location, autonomy in scheduling, perceived improvement in work efficiency, managerial support, and accessibility to necessary technologies. An example item is: "My organization allows flexibility in choosing the workplace (e.g., home or office)." The internal consistency of this scale was satisfactory, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.848. Work-Life Balance (WLB) was measured through five items capturing participants' perceptions of their ability

to manage work responsibilities alongside personal and family life. A sample item includes: "I can manage time for work and personal life efficiently." The scale exhibited high reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.894. Employee Well-Being (EWB) was evaluated using five items related to job satisfaction, mental and physical health, organizational support, motivation, and personal control. A representative item is: "I feel happy and motivated at work." This scale demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.904.

3.3 Data Collection

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3.4 Data Analysis

The data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 4, which is suitable for predictive and theory-building research with complex models and latent constructs (Hair et al., 2021). The analysis proceeded in two stages: evaluation of the measurement model and assessment of the structural model. In the measurement model, internal consistency reliability was verified using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR), while convergent validity was examined through average variance extracted (AVE). Discriminant validity was assessed using both the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT). The structural model was then evaluated by examining path coefficients, R^2 values (explained variance), effect sizes (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2). A moderation analysis was conducted using the product indicator approach to test whether hybrid work flexibility moderated the relationship between work-life balance and employee well-being (Chin, Marcolin, & Newsted, 2003). Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was applied to test the statistical significance of all path estimates.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Measurement Model Assessment

Before evaluating the structural relationships among constructs, it is essential to assess the measurement model to ensure the reliability and validity of the latent variables. The measurement model was evaluated in terms of internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity using SmartPLS 4, following established guidelines in the literature (Hair et al., 2021). As shown in Table 1, all constructs demonstrated acceptable levels of internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (ρ_c) exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Additionally, the average variance extracted (AVE) values for all constructs exceeded 0.50, supporting convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Discriminant validity was confirmed using both the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Table 2) and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio (Table 3), with all inter-construct correlations being lower than the square root of the AVE and all HTMT values falling below the conservative threshold of 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015). These results indicate that the measurement model demonstrates strong psychometric properties, justifying the use of the latent variables in the subsequent structural model analysis.

Table 1. Construct reliability and validity.

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (ρ_a)	Composite reliability (ρ_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)

EWB	0.902	0.908	0.902	0.649
HWF	0.836	0.842	0.836	0.507
WLB	0.893	0.900	0.887	0.614

Table 1 presents the results of construct reliability and convergent validity for the three latent variables: Hybrid Work Flexibility (HWF), Work-Life Balance (WLB), and Employee Well-Being (EWB). All constructs demonstrated strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), indicating that the items reliably measure their respective constructs. Composite reliability (both ρ_a and ρ_c) also surpassed the 0.70 criterion, further confirming internal consistency (Hair et al., 2021). In addition, the average variance extracted (AVE) values for all constructs were above the 0.50 benchmark, satisfying the requirement for convergent validity and suggesting that more than half of the variance in the indicators is explained by the latent variable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). These results provide evidence that the measurement model is both reliable and valid, supporting the use of these constructs in the structural model analysis.

Table 2. Fornell-Larcker criterion.

	EWB	HWF	WLB
EWB	0.806		
HWF	0.480	0.712	
WLB	0.803	0.635	0.784

Table 2 displays the Fornell-Larcker criterion, which is used to assess discriminant validity by comparing the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct to its correlations with other constructs. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), discriminant validity is established when a construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with other constructs in the model—evidenced by the square root of the AVE (shown on the diagonal) being greater than the off-diagonal correlation values. In this study, the square root of the AVE for EWB (0.806), HWF (0.712), and WLB (0.784) all exceed their corresponding inter-construct correlations. For example, the correlation between EWB and WLB is 0.803, which is lower than the square root of EWB's AVE (0.806) and WLB's AVE (0.784). Similarly, HWF's correlation with WLB (0.635) and EWB (0.480) are both below its AVE square root of 0.712. These results confirm that each construct is empirically distinct from the others, thereby supporting discriminant validity within the measurement model.

Table 3. HTMT criterion.

	EWB	HWF	WLB	HWF x WLB
EWB				
HWF	0.475			
WLB	0.786	0.644		
HWF x WLB	0.056	0.105	0.261	

Table 3 presents the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), a modern and robust method for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modelling. The HTMT values reflect the ratio of between-construct correlations (Heterotrait) to within-construct correlations (Monotrait), and a value below 0.85 is generally considered acceptable for establishing discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). In this study, all HTMT values fall well below the conservative threshold of 0.85. Specifically, the HTMT between EWB and WLB is 0.786, between EWB and HWF is 0.475, and between HWF and WLB is 0.644, indicating that these constructs are empirically distinct. Additionally, the interaction term (HWF $\times$ WLB) demonstrates very low HTMT values with all other constructs—ranging from 0.056 to 0.261—suggesting no multicollinearity or overlap with the main constructs. These results

confirm strong discriminant validity across all latent variables, further supporting the reliability of the measurement model.

4.2 Structural Model Assessment

After establishing the reliability and validity of the measurement model, the next step involved evaluating the structural model to test the hypothesized relationships between constructs. The assessment focused on examining the significance and strength of the path coefficients, the explanatory power of the model through the coefficient of determination (R^2), and the effect sizes (f^2) of each path. Additionally, the moderating effect of Hybrid Work Flexibility (HWF) on the relationship between Work-Life Balance (WLB) and Employee Well-Being (EWB) was tested using the product indicator approach, which is suitable for latent variable interactions in PLS-SEM (Chin et al., 2003). The bootstrapping method with 5,000 subsamples was applied to generate t-values and p-values for significance testing. This comprehensive approach allows for evaluating both the direct and interaction effects within the model, providing insights into the structural relationships and the conditional influence of HWF on employee outcomes (Hair et al., 2021).

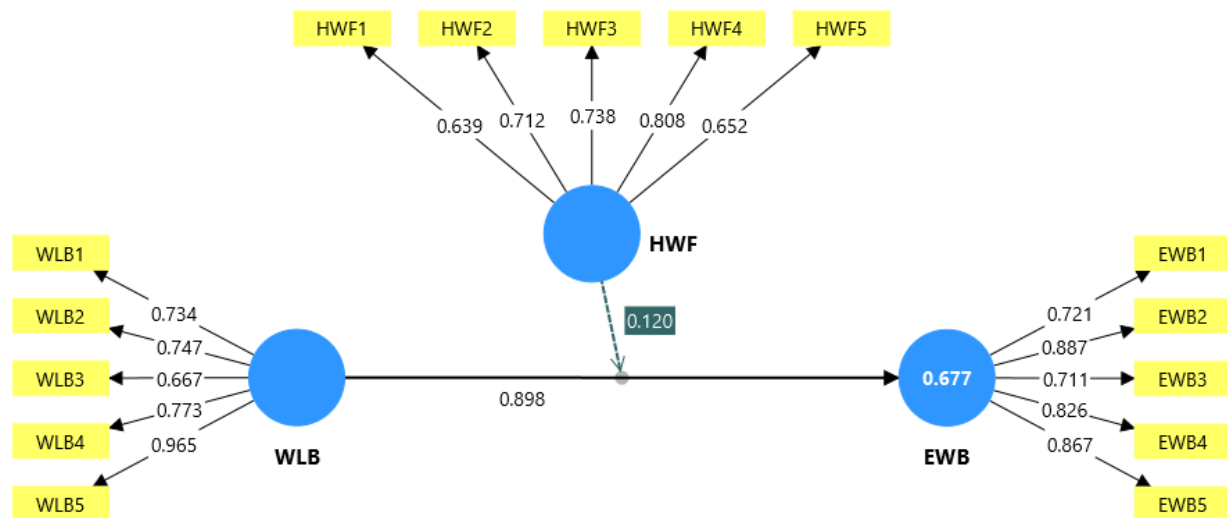


Figure 1 Consistent PLS-SEM algorithm results.

Table 4. R-square

	R-square	R-square adjusted
EWB	0.677	0.675

Table 4 presents the coefficient of determination (R^2) and adjusted R^2 values for the dependent variable Employee Well-Being (EWB). The R^2 value of 0.677 indicates that approximately 67.7% of the variance in EWB can be explained by the combined effects of Work-Life Balance (WLB), Hybrid Work Flexibility (HWF), and their interaction ($HWF \times WLB$). This suggests a strong explanatory power of the model, exceeding the 0.50 threshold commonly considered substantial in behavioural research (Hair et al., 2021). The adjusted R^2 value of 0.675, which accounts for model complexity and sample size, is very close to the unadjusted R^2 , indicating that the model is both parsimonious and stable. These results imply that the selected predictors are highly effective in explaining employee well-being within hybrid work environments.

Table 5. f-square

	EWB	HWF	WLB	HWF x WLB
EWB				

HWF	0.009			
WLB	1.385			
HWF x WLB	0.095			

Table 5 presents the effect size (f^2) values, which indicate the individual contribution of each predictor to the variance explained in Employee Well-Being (EWB). According to Cohen (1988), f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 represent small, medium, and large effects, respectively. In this study, Work-Life Balance (WLB) has a very large effect on EWB ($f^2 = 1.385$), demonstrating that it is the most influential predictor in the model. The interaction term (HWF $\times$ WLB) shows a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.095$), supporting its role as a meaningful moderator that enhances the impact of WLB on well-being. In contrast, Hybrid Work Flexibility (HWF) on its own has a negligible effect size ($f^2 = 0.009$), indicating that while flexibility contributes to the interaction effect, it does not significantly influence EWB directly. These findings reinforce the importance of WLB and the conditional role of HWF in shaping employee well-being.

Table 6. Path coefficients.

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
HWF -> EWB	-0.070	-0.065	0.073	0.959	0.338
HWF x WLB -> EWB	0.120	0.119	0.050	2.389	0.017
WLB -> EWB	0.898	0.898	0.066	13.512	0.000

Table 6 presents the results of the structural model's path coefficients, indicating the strength and significance of the hypothesized relationships among constructs. The path from Work-Life Balance (WLB) to Employee Well-Being (EWB) is both positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.898$, $t = 13.512$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H1 and confirming that employees who experience greater work-life balance tend to report higher levels of well-being—a finding consistent with prior research (Lesener et al., 2020; Park & Lee, 2020). The interaction term (HWF $\times$ WLB) to EWB also shows a statistically significant effect ($\beta = 0.120$, $t = 2.389$, $p = 0.017$), supporting H2 and suggesting that hybrid work flexibility moderates the relationship between WLB and EWB. Specifically, the positive impact of WLB on EWB is stronger under conditions of high HWF, aligning with the moderation effects proposed in the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). However, the direct effect of HWF on EWB is not significant ($\beta = -0.070$, $p = 0.338$), indicating that flexibility alone does not directly enhance well-being without the presence of work-life balance.

5. DISCUSSION

This study contributes to the growing body of literature exploring how work-life balance (WLB) and hybrid work flexibility (HWF) impact employee well-being (EWB) in the context of evolving workplace structures. The findings confirm that employees who perceive a better balance between their professional and personal lives tend to experience higher levels of well-being. This aligns with existing research, which consistently highlights WLB as a critical factor in reducing stress, enhancing job satisfaction, and improving overall life satisfaction (Lesener et al., 2020; Park & Lee, 2020). In hybrid work settings, where the boundaries between work and personal life are increasingly fluid, the ability to maintain this balance becomes even more essential (Putri & Amran, 2021). Although hybrid work flexibility did not show a direct effect on well-being, it played a significant moderating role. When combined with high levels of work-life balance, flexibility in choosing work hours and locations further enhanced employee well-being. This supports the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory, which posits that workplace resources, such as autonomy and flexibility, do not act in isolation but interact to buffer the impact of job demands and foster motivation and resilience (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). The findings imply that simply offering flexibility is not sufficient; it must be accompanied by a supportive structure that allows employees to effectively manage their responsibilities across different domains of life. For practitioners, the results underscore the importance of implementing hybrid work policies that go beyond logistical adjustments to include cultural and managerial support. Organizations should invest in training managers to lead with empathy, promote boundary-setting, and support employee autonomy. Future

research should explore how additional factors—such as leadership styles, digital fatigue, or organizational trust—might influence the effectiveness of hybrid work models across various industries and cultural contexts.

6. CONCLUSION

This study examined the impact of work-life balance (WLB) and hybrid work flexibility (HWF) on employee well-being (EWB) within the context of hybrid work environments. The findings highlight that work-life balance is a key determinant of employee well-being, reaffirming its critical role in fostering positive psychological, emotional, and occupational outcomes. While hybrid work flexibility did not directly influence well-being, it was found to significantly moderate the relationship between WLB and EWB. This suggests that flexibility enhances the benefits of work-life balance when the two coexist, rather than functioning as an independent driver of well-being. The results emphasize that organizations should not treat hybrid flexibility as a standalone solution but rather as a strategic support mechanism that works best when integrated with broader initiatives to promote work-life harmony. Policies should focus on empowering employees to manage their work and personal lives effectively while ensuring managerial and technological support is in place. In conclusion, this research contributes to both theory and practice by demonstrating that the interaction between structural flexibility and personal balance is central to enhancing employee well-being in the modern workplace. Future studies are encouraged to explore additional moderating variables, apply longitudinal methods, and examine these dynamics across different cultural and organizational contexts to gain a deeper understanding of sustainable hybrid work practices.

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