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Emotional Intelligence and Role Conflict in Female Academics “Work-Life Harmony”

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ABSTRACT

The previous two decades have seen increased interest in work-life balance (WLB), which has, latterly, become an essential symbol of an individual's well-being and happiness and it refers to the lack of equilibrium between one's career and other roles in life. WLB has been identified as a challenging problem for female professionals since educated women who participate in professional work has increased more than previously and finding an optimal work-life balance is an open issue that is yet to be resolved in academia. Emotional intelligence (EI) plays a crucial role in modern work life, and psychological studies have shown that understanding and controlling emotions play a significant role in gratifying one's life and work environment. Role conflict is the conflict between the two roles, work and family, and it is inevitable because both pull in opposite directions. Therefore, this study examined the WLB and identified the impact of EI and role conflict over the WLB, which can be used to reduce or overcome this problem. Similarly, this study examines the moderating effects of perceived family support and perceived supervisor support on the relationships between role conflict, emotional intelligence, and work-life balance. The survey was conducted among 116 female academics in the state Universities in Sri Lanka. The constraints were measured through a self-administered questionnaire. The data were analyzed through the SPSS 22 analysis tool. The empirical data supported that the relationship between emotional intelligence, role conflict, and work-life is significant. Perceived supervisor support has moderated the relationship between emotional intelligence and work-life balance. Further, the perceived family support also moderates the relationship between role conflict and work-life balance. In conclusion, it could be stated that there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and work-life balance and a negative relationship between role conflict and the work-life balance of female academics in state universities in Sri Lanka.

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INTRODUCTION

The previous two decades have seen increased interest in work-life balance (WLB), which has, latterly, become an important symbol of an individual's well-being and happiness and it refers to the lack of equilibrium between one's career and other roles in life, such as an uneven amount of time divided between work and family (Asfahani, 2021). Irrespective of the profession, the majority of employees currently play a dual role as an employee and as a parent and are responsible for both family and work duties (Welmilla & Semasinghe, 2022). Therefore, it is challenging for them to achieve Work-Life Balance (WLB). This has created a severe dilemma for working professionals, to maintain a balance between work and Family, and individuals were found to be failing to strike a good balance between their corporate life and their social lives, this imbalance causes a slew of psychosomatic problems, lack of competency, lower productivity, insatiability, failure to sustain, lower adaptability, and mobility in the workforce (Sharma, 2014). Also, Clark (2001) stated that ignoring proper functioning both at home and in the workplace leads to an imbalance of work-life. Till the 1970s, the area of work and life was considered two different areas (Clark, 2000). Then, the interdependence of these two areas has been given importance, and therefore it is important to maintain a balance when it is challenged (Mayberry, 2006).

Work-life balance (WLB) has been identified as a challenging problem for female professionals (Johanim et al., 2018) since educated women who participated in professional work has been increased more than previously (Welmilla, 2020). As per the Naseem et al., (2022) There is a shortage of research from the developing economies that encompass women as a sample, causing the disregard of females in the mainstream work-life interface literature. For working women, it has become a daunting task to manage work and family responsibilities as compared to men because usually women got a large share of unpaid domestic work (Bird, 2006) as cited in (Naseem et al., 2022). According to Goyal and Arora (2012), most women employees are under pressure to balance responsibilities in their career and family domains. Also, demographic changes including the increase in the number of women in the workplace and their greater need to balance work and family life has emerged (Samson & Sareena Umma, 2019).

Finding an optimal work-life balance is an open issue that is yet to be resolved in academia (Lendák-kabók & Lendák-kabók, 2022). Studies on WLB repeatedly concern on women professionals, especially in the academic field since a high percentage of women work as academic professionals and fewer

of them enter the top ranks of university positions where they hold dual career positions (Welmilla & Semasinghe, 2022). Recently, the women's participation in the academic field has grown when compared with the last two decades (Punia & Kamboj, 2013). Statistics by the Central Bank (2018) reveal that, recently, women's engagement in the teaching profession has grown comparatively in previous decades in Sri Lanka. Subsequently, it is the most challenging issue for female university academics (Ahemad et al., 2013).

In the academic environment, family support has been identified as a necessary factor for scholarly productivity (Chrisler, 1998) as cited in (Welmilla, 2020). Although more women are working as academics, few have reached the higher ranks among university positions; subsequently, they have to be responsible for domestic life in addition to work commitments (Michell, 2007). However, women academics enjoy less freedom in family life relative to their counterparts who are men (Flores & Day, 2006). According to Flores and Day (2006) detailed that women in the academic professions enjoy less freedom in their family lives than their counterparts. Thus, women who are employed as academicians are under pressure to achieve a satisfactory level of WLB (Goyal & Arora, 2012; Punia & Kamboj, 2013) as cited in (Welmilla & Semasinghe, 2022).

Problem Statement

In Sri Lanka, State universities are the largest knowledge-based institutions and therefore university academics are expected to serve the economic development of the country through disseminating their knowledge and expertise by the government (Chandra, 2017). University academicians serve the students, which also contributes to the economic development of the country. Though they are academic professionals, they too have family responsibilities and family lives, in addition to their professional duties and responsibilities. As per the Asian culture, Asian women perform several domestic activities, which include cooking, cleaning, aged care, and childcare, rather than a Western woman (Greenhaus et al., 1989). Therefore, women who are working as university lecturers face more enormous challenges when balancing their work and personal lives (Welmilla, 2020). At present, in Sri Lanka, women with a high level of educational qualification, enter professional professions, which has seen a considerable increase (Central Bank, 2019), like academics. Moreover, women holding academic positions require attributes of intelligence, knowledge, and skills (Welmilla, 2020).

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a part of the genetic makeup of an individual, and it plays a significant role in the work of an employee. EI describes the ability, capacity, skill or, a self-perceived ability to identify, assess, manage and control the emotions of one's self, of others, and of groups (Vidhya, 2019). Emotional intelligence is considered to play a crucial role in modern work life and psychological studies have shown that understanding and controlling emotions play a significant role in gratifying one's life and work environment. (Murthy & Shastri, 2015). EI is the ability to recognize one's own and others' feelings, to encourage, and to effectively manage emotions in relationships and can be utilized as a foundation to learn to manage and handle the conflicting demands of job and family life (Patel et al., 2020). EI helps in maintaining good WLB, which, in turn, is seen to have a positive effect on the well-being of employees and though the literature on EI is vast few studies have integrated EI and its impact on WLB and dimensions of work-related well-being (Nanda & Randhawa, 2020).

A work role is a specific position assigned to an individual that comes with certain responsibilities. Role conflict refers to incompatibility or inconsistency in meeting the demands of different roles (Bowling, et al., 2017). According to Javed et. al., (2014) the ambiguity in prioritizing two conflicting tasks is called role conflict. A study by Asif Iqbal et al. (2020) shows that both work and family are important. If one creates a competition between them, he would be asking for a conflict. Role theory implies that failure to perform different roles of life simultaneously can generate a conflict (Asfahani, 2021). Role conflict is the conflict between the two roles, work and family, and it is inevitable because both pull in opposite directions, which are simply incompatible with each other as the two realms invoke different demands, priorities, norms, expectations, and requirements (Fredriksen and Scharlach, 2001; Shaffer et al., 2016). Role conflicts are inversely proportional to each other roles, giving time to one role results in conflicts with the other role (Hughes et al., 1992). It can be very demanding for a person rushing through urgent tasks and realigning schedules to handle opposing demands (Barnett, 1994), and the situation is one where an employee is likely to find it difficult to establish a satisfactory work-to-family balance (Caudle, 2020) as cited in (Soomro & Breitenecker, 2017). Work- life balance is a socio-psychological phenomenon that can only be achieved with the help of organizations, societies, families and the environment and employees will be responsible for achieving work- life balance by balancing both their personal and emotional needs and role demands (Vidhya, 2019). Therefore, it was important for the Sri Lankan

women academics to understand the problem of WLB and to identify the impact of EI and role conflict over the WLB which can be used to reduce or overcome this problem. The problem statement of this research study is:

What is the Impact of Emotional Intelligence and Role Conflict on Work-Life Balance on Female Academics in State Universities, Sri Lanka?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work-Life Balance

Globally, the participation of females in the workforce has increased significantly (Grady & McCarthy, 2008). Women in most societies can now be found in careers such as medicine, teaching, and law, which were traditionally reserved for men due to higher education (Cohen & Liani, 2009) as cited in (Markwei et al., 2018). The paradigm shifts of women into the formal sector, like any other development, comes with its own most women who find themselves in the formal sector spend about eight hours more at work on a full-time basis and four hours on a part-time basis (Tetteh, 2005). Although women have taken on more jobs that were traditionally reserved for men, they continue to bear the responsibilities of their traditional roles as homemakers (Hochschild, 1989). Their domestic work usually includes sweeping, scrubbing, cooking, dishwashing, preparing children for school, looking for water, and doing laundry. The professional woman is then confronted with managing time and performing her multiple roles simultaneously (Fine-Davis et al., 2004)

WLB is perceived as a choice and a personal responsibility (Caproni, 2004; Lewis, 2003; Lewis et al., 2007; Ren & Caudle, 2016). Further, WLB can be considered a satisfactory level of involvement or “fit” between the multiple roles in a person's life (Hudson, 2005 pp 5). It reflects an individual's orientation across different life roles (Marks & MacDermid, 1996) and the extent to which an individual is equally engaged in and satisfied with all life domains with a minimum of role conflict (Clark, 2000; Greenhaus et al., 2003). This proposes that WLB is not merely a work-family balance. Greenhaus and Powell (2017, p. 3) emphasize that “work and family are the two roles in many people's lives in which they have the greatest amount of involvement and with which they identify the most,” as cited in (Caudle, 2020). WLB is often positioned as a gender-neutral concept that has challenged societally embedded beliefs that women's place is at home and men's is in paid work (Rapoport et al., 2002).

However, this has not changed the “reality of gendered spheres.” Instead, gendered spheres are being exacerbated as global competition resulting in intensified workloads has forced a retreat to traditional gender roles (Lewis et al., 2007, p. 363). Thus, the role of gender in understanding both men's and women's experiences of WLB and their individual choices of WLB strategy cannot be disregarded.

Work-life balance defines the balance between two completely different roles that an individual performs, such as work and family roles, which brings satisfaction to life and work roles (Rothbard, 2001; Greenhaus et al., 2003, p. 526; Mäkelä & Suutari, 2011; Shaffer et al., 2016) as cited in (Soomro & Breitenecker, 2017). Work-life balance primarily concerns an employee's ability to balance work and personal life (Gerson, 2011). Work-life balance reveals how much time is available to an employee to balance family and work demands. Hence, it is an employee's time-sharing ratio between work and family. WLB has become a universal social construct associated with numerous organizational efforts and public policies to enhance flexible work arrangements, equity, and family-friendly outcomes (McDonald et al., 2013). Traditionally, WLB, as a social concept, is primarily concerned with the inherent demands and struggles encountered in managing work and non-work-related activities, and its propositions often prioritize the experiences of working mothers (Lewis & Humbert, 2010) as cited in (Akanji & Ajonbadi, 2020).

Prominent demographic changes from the 1980s have led to an increase in female participation in the labour market, arising from their desire to seek economic independence, prove their self-worth, and, most importantly, break age-long glass ceiling ideologies that women are not good enough for professional and managerial positions (Agarwal & Lenka, 2015) as cited in (Akanji & Ajonbadi, 2020). Therefore, this situation continues a high role overload and caregiving strain, rendering female professionals particularly sensitive to work-family issues (Mushfiquir et al., 2018).

Past studies have indicated a gendered discourse of work-life balance in academia globally (Toffoletti & Starr, 2016; Dorenkamp & Süß, 2017; Tzanakou, 2017; Sieverding et al., 2018) as cited in (Gewinner, 2020). It suggests that female scholars are disproportionately exposed to challenges associated with research and teaching, aiming at securing a tenured position, and tensions in private life pertinent to caregiving as mothers have to work more and often irregularly. Changing macro-level factors have shaped various

organizational approaches to coping with the work-life imbalance in different nations (Joplin et al., 2003).

In countries where women's hours (Powell, 2015; Dubois-Shaik & Fusulier, 2017) have higher status and relevant legislation is in place, organizations are more likely to implement family-friendly initiatives (Ruppanner & Huffman, 2012). While academic work provides a great deal of flexibility and autonomy that supposedly facilitates WLB (Damaske et al., 2014; Rafnsdottir & Heijstra, 2013; Santos & Cabral-Cardoso, 2008), its open-ended nature (Wortman et al., 1991) and growing, often conflicting, expectations, pressures and demands are challenging academics (Acker & Armenti, 2004; Chandler et al., 2000; Deem, 2003; Doherty & Manfredi, 2006; Menzies & Newson, 2008; Ylijoki, 2013). High levels of commitment, long working hours, and constant work demands have eroded time and energy for personal life and leisure (Lewis, 2003), creating blurred work-life boundaries and work-family conflict (Damaske et al., 2014). To achieve career success, more women than men choose to minimize or conceal family commitment through behaviors such as delaying childbirth, prioritizing work once they have children, and discounting organizational WLB options (Bardoel et al., 2011; Drago, 2007; Fujimoto et al., 2012). With less ability to separate the work-life boundary than their male counterparts, career women usually engage in reactive role-coping behaviors (Kossek et al., 1999) as cited in (Caudle, 2020).

Role Conflict

Role conflict is a negative spillover from work-to-family domains (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Mäkelä & Suutari, 2011; Byrne & Barling, 2017) as cited in (Soomro & Breitenecker, 2017). It determines the degree of stress for an employee when employees spend more time working, which results in less time available for the family. The conflict between the two roles, work, and family, is inevitable because both pull in opposite directions, which are simply mismatched with each other as the two realms invoke different demands, priorities, norms, expectations, and requirements (Fredriksen & Scharlach, 2001; Shaffer et al., 2016) as cited in (Soomro & Breitenecker, 2017). It can be very demanding to rush through urgent tasks and realign schedules to handle opposing demands (Barnett, 1994). The situation is where an employee is likely to find it challenging to establish a satisfactory work and family balance (Markwei et al., 2018).

As working women misrepresent the demands of employment and family, there can be a role conflict (Markwei et al., 2018). They are faced with

a situation where they are under pressure to excel in their careers while maintaining an active personal life (Delina & Raya, 2013). Usually, when working women struggle to perform their multiple roles simultaneously, their psychosocial well-being is affected negatively (Markwei et al., 2018). Studies show that women experience job tension due to the negative job spillover from juggling career and family demands (Dako-Gyeke & Ibrahim, 2013; Lahelma et al., 2002; Catalyst, 2012). For working women to enhance their well-being, it is essential to attain a positive work-life balance, particularly with family (Delina & Raya, 2013).

Role conflict is explained by the work-family spillover theory as a lens through which to examine the subject of work-family balance. The spillover model posits that the structure, values, and experience in the work and family arena can either facilitate or undermine a person's ability to discharge responsibilities at home (Bowen, 1995). According to Bowen (1995), the philosophy of work organization creates both a structural and a dynamic work environment, which in turn influences the level of employee role and the well-being of their family members. Employees' experiences about their ability to balance work with personal life depend on a positive or negative spillover (Morris & Madsen, 2007) as cited in (Markwei et al., 2018).

Positive spillover happens when employees can experience a good balance between their work and personal life (Zedeck, 1992). Factors that account for this include a flexible and conducive work atmosphere, which influences their behaviour and satisfaction at home (Barnett, 1994). This leaves employees with a positive well-being that positively impacts their performance at work. On the other hand, negative spillover happens when individuals receive little support to balance work and family roles (Zedeck, 1992). Grzywacz and Carlson (2007) mentioned that understanding individuals' needs for balance between work and personal lives is essential because when traditional values are lost, and gender roles are not separated, individuals may experience difficulties in balancing work and family. This brings about negative spillover. Conflict between work and non-working life results in inter-role conflicts, thus affecting efficiency and one's performance at work.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a part of the genetic makeup of an individual which progresses individual and organizational performance and

plays a significant role in the work of an employee and the relationship he or she enjoys in the organization; therefore, it is considered to play a crucial role in the modern work life (Vidhya, 2019). It defines the ability, capacity, skill, and self-perceived ability to identify, assess, manage, and control the emotions of one's self, others, and groups. Emotional intelligence allows people to understand and manage emotions better. Psychological studies have shown that understanding and controlling emotions significantly gratify one's life and work environment. (Murthy & Shastri, 2015).

According to Michael (2007), there are five major categories of emotional intelligence skills self-awareness, self-management, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills. Self-awareness is the ability to recognize an emotion as it "Happens." Developing self-awareness requires tuning in to genuine feelings and, if evaluate emotions, can manage them. The significant elements of self-awareness are emotional awareness, which describes the ability to recognize own emotions and their effects. And self-confidence gives the sureness about self-worth and capabilities (Santhosh et al. 2015).

Self-management is having little control over when experiencing emotions. A few of these techniques include recasting a situation in a more positive light, taking a long walk, and meditation or prayer (Valk, 2011). Self – Management involves,

- Self-control - Managing disruptive impulses.
- Trustworthiness - Maintaining standers of honesty and integrity.
- Conscientiousness - Taking responsibility for own performance.
- Adaptability - Handling change with flexibility.
- Innovation - Being open to new ideas.

Self-motivation motivates any achievement that requires clear goals and a positive attitude. Although there may be a predisposition to either a positive or a negative attitude, there should be effort and practice to learn to think more positively. Negative thoughts occur, reframe them in more favorable terms, which will help goals (Vidhya, 2019). Self-motivation is made up of the following:

- Achievement drive: Constants striving to improve or to meet a standard of excellence.
- Commitments: Aligning with the goals of the group of the organization.
- Initiative: Readyng you to act on opportunities

Empathy is recognizing how people feel is essential to success in life and career. The more skillful one at discerning the feeling behind others' signals, the better to control the movements (Sheel & Sindhwani, 2012). An empathetic person shines at:

- Service orientation. Anticipating, recognizing, and meeting clients' needs.
- Developing other. Sensing what others need to progress and bolstering their abilities.
- Leveraging diversity. Cultivating opportunities through diverse people.
- Political awareness. Reading a group's emotional currents and power relationships.
- Understanding others. Discerning the feeling behind the needs and wants of others.

Social skills describe the development of good interpersonal skills as tantamount to success in life and career. In today's connected world, everyone has immediate access to technical knowledge (Vasanthi, S. 2013).

Perceived Family Support

According to Caudle (2020), unique resources and choices are shaped by broad institutional and socio-cultural contexts and specific, individual family contexts in which WLB decisions are made and remade over the life course (Fagan, 2001; Kan, 2007). As the primary socializing unit, the family, determines each member's social practice, defines their duties, and affects their perceptions (Uppalury & Racherla, 2014). Therefore, the family is considered a "*constitutive element within the habitus*" (McNay, 2000, p. 62). Family support networks have become a critical WLB resource because of a dramatic rise in female workforce participation and a definite preference for full-time employment (Caudle, 2020). Partner support, instrumentally or emotionally or both, has been found to influence their partner's experience of juggling family and job responsibilities considerably (Bröckel, 2018). Women usually feel lonely or stressed when such support is unavailable (Hennekam et al., 2019). Compared to men, women with strong career aspirations are more vulnerable to work-family conflict once they enter parenthood (Hennekam et al., 2019). This is due mainly to traditional gender roles in the home. Men tend to have more sources of household support, which benefits their career, primarily due to women's more significant commitment to parenting and housework even when holding full-time jobs (Gaskell et al., 2004; Leonard, 2003; Morrison et al., 2011; Nikunen, 2012; Thompson and Dey, 1998). Huppatz et al. (2019)

revealed that the family context can exacerbate women's experience in academia and academics, who are also mothers struggling to cope with the competing demands of work and home. A study by Abendroth and den Dulk's (2011) suggests that emotional family support (i.e., support from the spouse, friends, neighbors, or relatives) positively impacts one's work-life balance. Also, Ashkanasy and Daus (2002) argue that workplace conflicts can be buffered if family, friends, and colleagues are supportive. However, allowing for family support at work and providing motivation that satisfies social and emotional needs would be required essentially by those with strong personal bonds and relationships (Koubova & Buchko, 2011).

Perceived Supervisor Support

Perceived supervisor support (PSS) captures the degree to which employees believe that their supervisors care about them; they feel appreciated and are concerned about their well-being (Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006) as cited in (Dimitra & Lamprinou, 2021). As such, it explicitly focuses on how supervisors, as organizational agents, provide employees with support, which has produced positive outcomes such as increased employee retention, organizational commitment, and job performance (Baran et al., 2012). PSS, determined by the quantity of care supervisors offer their employees as an entity, supports the workforce (Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006).

METHODOLOGY

Population and Sample

The study focuses on women in the academic profession; thus, the statistics (2020) on the number of lecturers working in state universities in Sri Lanka were found from the directory of university academics available at UGC web page and university web pages in Sri Lanka. In this current study the population is a known population. The population for the current study is the female academic in the state universities in Sri Lanka. The size of population is around 3000 as at December 2022 (University Grant Commission). According to Morgan table (95% CI) researcher can draw the sample size as 350. As the researcher knows the population size, this current study has adopted probability sampling techniques to collect data whereas the researcher will use simple random sampling technique to collect the relevant data. The specific criteria to select the samples are married, having at least one child, and working on the permanent basis.

Methods of Data Collection

Primary data were collected via a structured, self-administered online questionnaire prepared based on the mentioned standard measurement scales. All the constructs in the study were measured by using the scales which were adopted from the literature. The scales used in the study include items measured on a five-point Likert scale, and those were originally in English. The entire filled questionnaire received was coded with a reference number. Data collection was done with the consent of the respondent.

Methods of Data Analysis

The collected primary data was screened and entered to SPSS - 25 for the analysis. First reliability of the scales and the sample was ensured via Cronbach Alpha coefficient of internal consistency. Construct validity was ensured using the KMO test and factor analysis. Descriptive statistics were generated to analyze the individual behavior of variables, and the dataset was tested for multivariate assumptions. The advanced hypotheses were tested using correlation analysis and regression analysis.

Development of Hypotheses

Based on existing research, it is predicted that emotional intelligence has a positive impact on work-life balance. Also, the role conflict negatively impacts on work life balance. As a result, the following hypotheses have been proposed to examine the impact of emotional intelligence and role conflict on female academics' work- life balance.

Role conflict is a form of inter-role conflict in the shape of negative spillover from work-to-family domains (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Mäkelä & Suutari, 2011; Byrne & Barling, 2017) (Soomro & Breiteneker, 2017). It determines the degree of stress for an employee when employees spend more time on working, which results in less time available for the family. The conflict between the two roles, work and family, is inevitable because both pull in opposite directions, which are simply incompatible with each other as the two realms invoke different demands, priorities, norms, expectations, and requirements (Fredriksen & Scharlach, 2001; Shaffer et al., 2016). Accordingly, work and family roles are inversely proportional to each other, giving time to one role results in conflicts with the other role (Hughes et al., 1992). It can be very demanding for a person rushing through urgent tasks and realigning schedules to handle opposing demands (Barnett, 1994), and the situation is one

where an employee is likely to find it difficult to establish a satisfactory work-to-family balance, therefore this leads to the following hypothesis:

H1 - There is a significant negative relationship between role conflict and the level of work-life balance.

Using Mayer and Salovey's construct of EI, (Koubova & Buchko, 2011) suggest that performance – in one's personal life or work life – depends on how well a person is able to cope with the negative or positive information that influences his or her emotional state of mind. Having thus analyzed the role of emotions in the work-life balance framework and further it proved that the level of EI is viewed as central to develop an individual's work-work balance. Emotions are vital in understanding the life and work relationship and their mutual influence and high levels of EI are consequently crucial for achieving life-work balance, since it helps to harness emotions and regulate behavior in both work and family roles. Therefore, this leads to the following hypothesis:

H2 - There is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and the level of work- life balance.

Work-life balance as an employee perception pertaining to the balance experienced across personal and professional domains, noting that a satisfactory work-life balance depends on how each situation is perceived, not objective measures of the concept of balance (Kalliath & Brough, 2008) as cited in (Dimitra & Lamprinou, 2021). Managerial behavior, PSS, is expected to affect employee perceptions of work-life balance because supervisors bring organizational policies to life (Kehoe & Han, 2020). Simply put, line managers are instrumental in enacting leadership intentions and bridging the gap between intended and actual organizational policies (Wright & Nishii, 2006). Therefore, this leads to the following hypothesis:

H3 - Perceived supervisor support moderates the relationship between emotional intelligence and the level of work- life balance.

The family as the primary socializing unit determines each member's social practice, defines their duties, and affects their perceptions (Uppalury & Racherla, 2014). Family support networks have become an important WLB resource because of a dramatic rise in female participation in the workforce coupled with a definite preference for full-time employment. In particular, family support, either instrumentally or emotionally or both, has been found to influence their partner's experience of juggling family and job responsibilities considerably (Bröckel, 2018) as cited in (Caudle, 2020). In addition, results of

research by Abendroth and den Dulk's (2011) suggests that family support has positive impact on one's work-life balance. Also, Ashkanasy and Daus (2002) argue that workplace conflicts can be buffered if family, friends and colleagues are supportive (Koubova & Buchko, 2011). Therefore, this leads to the following hypothesis:

H4 - Perceived family support moderates the relationship between role conflict and the level of work-life balance.

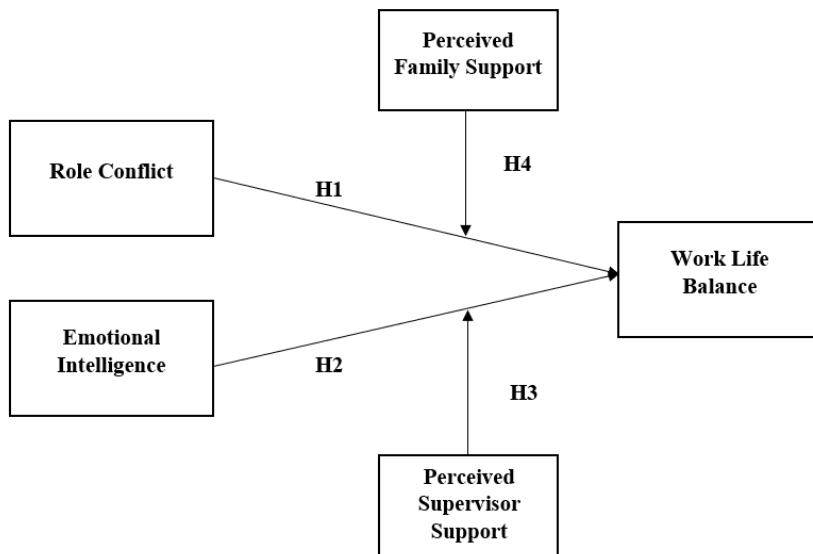


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

DATA ANALYSIS

Reliability Analysis

The reliability of a test is defined as its capacity to give results that align with the provided data consistently. Since this research relies heavily on data accuracy, the Cronbach Alpha value will be used to assess the consistency of responses. The reliability test was conducted for the dependent variable of work-life balance, independent variables of emotional intelligence and role conflict, and the moderating variables of perceived family support and perceived supervisor support using Cronbach's alpha indicator. The Cronbach Alpha value for work-life balance was 0.821. The Cronbach Alpha value for role conflict was 0.625. Emotional intelligence was tested by adopting five dimensions such as self-awareness, self-management, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills. The Cronbach Alpha values for those were 0.883,

0.939, 0.973, 0.758, and 0.594, respectively. The Cronbach Alpha values for perceived family support and supervisor support were 0.808 and 0.719. Therefore, it is acceptable; hence all the above Variables are reliable. Therefore, the result can be concluded as the variable's reliability is good. The results are reflected in the table below.

Table 1: Reliability Analyze on Variables

Variable	Dimensions	Cronbach Alpha	No of Items
Work-Life Balance		0.821	15
Role conflict		0.625	5
Emotional intelligence			32
	Self-Awareness	0.883	4
	Self-Management	0.939	8
	Self-Motivation	0.973	5
	Empathy	0.758	8
	Social Skills	0.594	7
Perceived family support		0.808	4
Perceived supervisor support		0.719	13

According to the 4.8 reliability analysis table it tested the internal consistency of the Likert-scale items before the variables were operationalized. All the Cronbach Alpha valves are more than 0.7 level. Therefore, the variables of work-life balance, emotional intelligence, role conflict, and the moderating variables of perceived family support and perceived supervisor support, as indicated by Cronbach's alpha, have high internal consistency. The researcher operationalized the variables using a five-point Likert scale.

Carl Pearson's Correlation Analysis (r)

A correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between variables of emotional intelligence and role conflict on work-life balance. This study's objective was to use correlation analysis to determine the correlation between emotional intelligence and role conflict over the work-life balance of female academics in state universities in Sri Lanka. The correlation analysis determines the relationship between three variables, and the result is used to accept the alternative hypothesis or reject the null hypothesis. The correlation between the two variables quantifies the intensity of their association. As a numeric value (between -1 and +1), the correlation coefficient quantifies the direction and strength of the linear relationship between two variables. In this investigation, Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated using bivariate correlation. The Correlation analysis of the study is placed below in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

		WLB_Ave	RC_Ave	EI_Ave	PFS_Ave	PSS_Ave
WLB_Ave	Pearson	1	-.361**	.437**	-.692**	-.097
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.302
	N	116	116	116	116	116
RC_Ave	Pearson	.361**	1	-.673**	-.424**	.926**
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	116	116	116	116	116
EI_Ave	Pearson	.437**	-.673**	1	.096	-.558**
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.304	.000
	N	116	116	116	116	116
PFS_Ave	Pearson	-.692**	-.424**	.096	1	-.623**
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.304		.000
	N	116	116	116	116	116
PSS_Ave	Pearson	-.097	.926**	-.558**	-.623**	1
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.302	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	116	116	116	116	116

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis Testing

According to the conceptual framework developed, the researcher analyzes the relationship between role conflict and work-life balance. The P value of the relationship between role conflict and work-life balance is - 0.361, and the P value is more than 0.01. According to the results, hypothesis one, "There is a significant negative relationship between role conflict and the level of work-life balance," is accepted.

According to the conceptual framework developed, the study analyzes the relationship between emotional intelligence and work-life balance. The P value of the relationship between emotional intelligence and work-life balance is 0.000. Hence it is clear that the correlation is highly significant on those variables. As per the results accordingly, hypothesis two, "there is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and the level of work-life balance," is accepted.

As per the conceptual framework developed, the study analyzes the moderating relationship of perceived family support between role conflict and work-life balance. The P value of the relationship is 0.692. Hence, the correlation is significant on those variables and is significant at 0.000. Hence, there seems to be a strong positive relationship between moderating relationship

of perceived family support between role conflict and work-life balance. As per the results accordingly, the hypothesis of "perceived family support moderates the relationship between role conflict and work-life balance" is accepted.

Finally, according to the result of the table, the researcher analyzes the relationship between perceived supervisor support and the relationship between emotional intelligence and work-life balance 0.926. The P value of the relationship is 0.000. Hence, the correlation is highly significant on those variables. Thus, it seems to have a positive effect on the relationship between emotional intelligence and work-life balance by the moderating variable of perceived supervisor support. According to the results, the hypothesis of "perceived family support moderates the relationship between role conflict and the level of work-life balance" is accepted.

Defining Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is a powerful method that examines the relationship between two or more variables of interest. The regression analysis model will be used as the value is highly significant in the regression ANOVA table.

Table 3: The Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.653 ^a	.426	.405	.57938	2.024

Note: Predictors: (Constant), EI_Ave, RC_Ave
Dependent Variable: WLB_Ave

The researcher tested the impact of role conflict and emotional intelligence on work-life balance by applying a multiple regression model. According to the model summary, the coefficient of determination is 0.426. It expresses 42.6% of the work-life balance explained by the model. As the value is less than 60% model is less fitted. According to the adjusted R square, the model explains 40.5% of work-life balance. There is no significant gap between the R square and the adjusted R square, so the model has no unnecessary independent variable. The multiple correlation value is 0.653, explaining that all the independent variables are strongly jointly correlated with the work-life balance of female academics in state universities in Sri Lanka. Also, Durbin-Watson statistics is 2.024, and the value range between 1.5 and 2.5. Therefore, residuals are independent, and the model is valid.

Table 4: The ANOVA Table

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.535	2	.768	14.076	.000 ^b
	Residual	6.162	113	.055		
	Total	7.697	115			

Note: Dependent Variable: WLB_Ave

Predictors: (Constant), EI_Ave, RC_Ave

According to regression ANOVA, the probability of F-test statistics is 0.000. As this value is highly significant, it can explain all the independent variables jointly influenced work-life balance. The impact of individual variables on work-life balance has been tested using an individual coefficient table.

Coefficient Analysis

Table 5: The Coefficient Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-2.260	2.617		-.864	.390		
	RC_Ave	-.203	.190	-.121	-1.066	.289	.547	1.829
	EI_Ave	1.415	.453	.356	3.126	.002	.547	1.829

Note: Dependent Variable: WLB_Ave

As per the data reflected in the above Coefficient table, individual significance values, the P value of the role conflict is 0.390, which has a negative effect as the B value of -0.203. It shows that role conflict criteria have a highly significant negative impact on female academics' work-life balance. Accordingly, hypothesis one is accepted. The P value of emotional intelligence is 0.002 and is significant. It shows that emotional intelligence individually impacts work-life balance but has a combined effect. As it is individually insignificant, hypothesis two is accepted.

According to the Standardized Coefficients Beta, the most impact variable is emotional intelligence. Secondly, role conflict on work-life balance. Concerning the Collinearity Statistics, all the Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) are less than ten. Therefore, independent variables are not mostly correlated.

The regression model does not have a multi-collinearity problem. Hence, the results are more valid.

Hypothesis Testing Summary

Table 6: The summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Structural model	(β)	P- Value	Decision
H1	Role Conflict → work-life balance	-0.361	0.000	Accepted
H2	Emotional Intelligence→ Work-life balance	0.437	0.000	Accepted
H3	Perceived family support →role conflict and work-life balance	0.692	0.000	Accepted
H4	Perceived supervisor support → emotional intelligence and work-life balance	0.926	0.000	Accepted

Moderating Effect

The Moderating Effect of Perceived Family Support on the Relationship Between Role Conflict and Work-Life Balance

Table 7: The Summary of Moderating Effect

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.355	.114		3.147	0.001
	RC_Ave	0.633	0.70	0.693	8.009	0.000
	PFS_Ave	-.424	.000	0.223	2.927	0.003
	MOD	.230	.000	0.16	0.277	0.082

Note: Dependent Variable: WLB _ Ave

As per the conceptual framework, the study examines the perceived family support on the relationship between role conflict and work-life balance. Perceived family support does have a significant moderation effect on the relationship between role conflict and work-life balance. Moderation impacts β value is 0.16 and a p-value of 0.082 at the 95% confidence level. Hence, this moderating effect is accepted. The following structural model will be developed to test the impact of perceived supervisor support on the relationship between emotional intelligence and work-life balance.

The Moderating Effect of Perceived Family Support on the Relationship Between Role Conflict and Work-Life Balance

Table 8: The Summary of Moderating Effect

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	Model	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.433	134		2.147	0.000
	EI_Ave	0.333	0.70	0.793	7.009	0.002
	PSS_Ave	-.624	.000	0.123	1.827	0.003
	MOD	.130	.000	0.14	0.267	0.001

Note: Dependent Variable: WLB_Ave

As per the conceptual framework, the study examines the perceived supervisor support on the relationship between emotional intelligence and work-life balance. Perceived supervisor support does have a significant moderation effect on the relationship between emotional intelligence and work-life balance. Moderation impacts β value is 0.14 and a p-value of 0.001 at the 95% confidence level. Hence, this moderating effect is also accepted.

DISCUSSION

As per the descriptive analysis, regarding gender, it's purely female academics, and 55.2 % are married with no children. Further, when it comes to educational qualifications, most of the female academics (44.8%) who responded to this survey were qualified with a master's degree. Also, 44.8% of the respondents are in the level of lecturer category in their respective departments and state universities.

Role conflict is a form of inter-role conflict in the shape of negative spillover from work-to-family domains (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Mäkelä & Suutari, 2011; Byrne & Barling, 2017) as cited in (Soomro & Breitenacker, 2017). The conflict between the two roles, work, and family, is inevitable because both pull in opposite directions, which are simply incompatible with each other as the two realms invoke different demands, priorities, norms, expectations, and requirements (Fredriksen & Scharlach, 2001; Shaffer et al., 2016). It can be very demanding to rush through urgent tasks and realign schedules to handle opposing demands (Barnett, 1994). The situation is one where an employee is likely to find it challenging to establish a satisfactory work-to-family balance. According to the conceptual framework developed, the researcher analyzes the Relationship between role conflict and work-life balance. The P value of the Relationship between role conflict and work-life balance is - 0.361, and the P value is more than 0.01. Therefore, it can conclude

that "There is a significant negative relationship between role conflict and the level of work-life balance."

Work performance – in one's personal or work life – depends on how well a person can cope with the negative or positive information that influences his or her emotional state of mind (Koubova & Buchko, 2011). Having this, the role of emotions in the work-life balance framework further proved that the level of EI is viewed as central to developing an individual's work-work balance. Emotions are vital in understanding the life and work relationship, and their mutual influence and high levels of EI are crucial for achieving life-work balance since it helps to harness emotions and regulate behavior in both work and family roles (Koubova & Buchko, 2011). According to the conceptual framework developed, the study analyzes the Relationship between emotional intelligence and work-life balance. The P value of the Relationship between emotional intelligence and work-life balance is 0.000. Hence it is clear that the correlation is highly significant on those variables. According to the results, it can conclude that "there is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and the level of work-life balance".

The family, as the primary socializing unit, determines each member's social practice, defines their duties, and affects their perceptions (Uppalury & Racherla, 2014). Family support networks have become a critical WLB resource because of a dramatic rise in female participation in the workforce coupled with a definite preference for full-time employment. In particular, family support, instrumentally or emotionally or both, has been found to influence their partner's experience of juggling family and job responsibilities considerably (Bröckel, 2018) as cited in (Caudle, 2020). In addition, results of research by Abendroth and den Dulk (2011) suggest that family support has a positive impact on one's work-life balance. Also, Ashkanasy and Daus (2002) argue that workplace conflicts can be buffered if family, friends, and colleagues are supportive (Koubova & Buchko, 2011).

As per the conceptual framework developed, the study analyzes the moderating Relationship of perceived family support between role conflict and work-life balance. The P value of the Relationship is 0.692. Hence, the correlation is significant on those variables and is significant at 0.000. Hence, there seems to be a strong positive relationship between moderating Relationship of perceived family support between role conflict and work-life balance. According to the results, it can be concluded that "perceived family

support moderates the relationship between role conflict and work-life balance."

Work-life balance as an employee perception of the balance experienced across personal and professional domains, noting that a satisfactory work-life balance depends on how each situation is perceived, not objective measures of the concept of balance (Kalliath & Brough, 2008) as cited in (Dimitra & Lamprinou, 2021). Managerial behavior, PSS, is expected to affect employee perceptions of work-life balance because supervisors bring organizational policies to life (Kehoe & Han, 2020). Line managers are instrumental in enacting leadership intentions and bridging the gap between intended and actual organizational policies (Wright & Nishii, 2006).

According to the result of the table, the researcher analyzes the Relationship between perceived supervisor support and the Relationship between emotional intelligence and work-life balance 0.926. The P value of the Relationship is 0.000. Hence, the correlation is highly significant on those variables. Thus, it seems to have a positive effect on the Relationship between emotional intelligence and work-life balance by the moderating variable of perceived supervisor support. According to the results, it can be concluded that "perceived family support moderates the relationship between role conflict and the level of work-life balance."

CONCLUSION

This study illustrated the work-life balance impacted by role conflict and emotional intelligence of female academics in state universities in Sri Lanka. The proposed study adopted a longitudinal study to measure changes in the work-life balance of the target population. The objectives of this study were to examine the impact of role conflict and emotional intelligence on work-life balance at the current level of work-life balance and to determine the moderating effect of perceived supervisor support on the Relationship between emotional intelligence and work-life balance and the moderating effect of perceived family support on the Relationship between role conflict and work-life balance.

IMPLICATIONS

This study focused on studying the work-life balance of female academics in state universities in Sri Lanka regarding their role conflicts and the level of emotional intelligence in managing their work-life balance. As said in the literature, work-life balance (WLB) has been identified as a challenging

problem for female professionals (Johanim et al., 2018) since educated women who participate in professional work have increased more than previously (Welmilla, 2020). As per Naseem et al. (2022), there is a shortage of research from developing economies that encompasses women as a sample, causing the disregard of females in the mainstream work-life interface literature. Therefore, this study provides evidence to support female academics implementing and managing resources that increase their work-life balance while managing role conflict and their level of emotional intelligence.

The decision-making bodies in the higher education system and the leaders in the university system in Sri Lanka can focus on the decisions related to female academics' work-life balance issue. They can propose and implement the relevant solution to enhance the level of emotional intelligence to minimize the role conflicts and to implement possible work-life balance initiatives. Moreover, the moderating impact of perceived family support and supervisor support can be implemented in practice to have those two concepts more practical rather than producing them as concepts. Moreover, female academics can be directed toward enhancing their coping and emotional intelligence skills at work.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

While the research was being conducted, normally, any researcher had to face any difficulties within the data collecting process and data analytical process. Therefore, when conducting the current study, the researcher had to face difficulties at the time when access to the respondents when collecting accurate data from the samples. The data corresponding to different variables being collected from the same source is another study limitation, leading to the same source biasness. Further, the study adopted a cross-sectional design where the responses are self-reported based on the respondents' perceptions, leading to further biasness. Therefore, the entire limitation in generalizing the findings to the population is unavoidable, even though statistical remedies such as the test of common method bias and acceptable level of normality of data were ensured. The present study is conducted for female academics in state Universities in Sri Lanka. Hence, there is a possibility that some research findings could be unique to a particular context. Thus, this could limit the generalizability of the results to the general social behavior or the general respondent behavior.

In addition, since “*emotional abilities may operate or manifest differently for men and women*” (Brackett et al., 2006, p. 791), it is suggested to adjust for gender dissimilarities further when testing for the level of emotional intelligence. Regardless of the limited resources, one can manage to have both a satisfactory personal life as well as be a high performer delivering excellent results. These two goals are complementary if one realizes the power of emotional intelligence in regulating emotions and avoiding conflicting behavior. No matter from which roles these emotions come, emotions are part of our life, and the better it is monitored, discriminated among, and use information about emotions to guide the thinking and actions (Salovey and Mayer, 1990) in other professions.

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