



Impact of Job Stress on Work-Life Balance among Employees in the Banking Sector: A Study of Licensed Commercial Banks in Kurunegala District

Somathilaka, H.P.A.D.^a and Pratheepan, N.^b

^{a, b} Department of Finance and Accountancy, University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka.

avindudbananjaya98@gmail.com^a, n.pratheepan@vau.ac.lk^b

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the relationship between Job Stress and work-life balance (WLB) among employees working at Licensed Commercial Banks in the the Kurunegala District, Sri Lanka. Four independent variables, namely Work Overload (WO), Role Conflict (RC), Role Ambiguity (RA), and Working Environment (WE) were examined as the independent variables that measure job stress. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a sample of 100 employees working at Licensed Commercial Banks in the Kurunegala district. The data were analysed using multiple regression analysis in SPSS. Results indicated that Work Overload and Role Ambiguity have a significant negative impact on the Work-Life Balance of employees working at Licensed Commercial banks in the Kurunegala district. Furthermore, the findings revealed that bank employees in the Kurunegala district are working under a higher level of stress, with workload being the primary factor. However, they are experiencing a positive working environment. Furthermore, the findings highlighted the importance of addressing employees' issues in order to reduce job stress, which results in higher employee turnover, lower productivity, and an increase in work-life balance, benefiting both employers and employees. Ultimately, this research will serve as a blueprint for determining the optimal level of job stress and work-life balance in the banking sector, thereby maintaining both productivity and employee satisfaction, and ensuring operational sustainability.

Keywords: Role Ambiguity, Role Conflict, Working Environment, Work Life Balance, Work Overload

Introduction

Job and family are among the most important topics, especially nowadays, when living costs are very high and everyone has to work to support their families. Compared to other jobs, banking sector employees have to spend a large number of hours in their workplace. Licensed Commercial banks play a crucial role in the financial system. In the Sri Lankan financial system, the banking industry plays a crucial role in maintaining price and economic stability by managing the money supply. According to the annual report of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL), these banks held 61.5% of the total assets of the financial sector. Bank employees can become stressed more quickly than other employees because the banks are fast-paced financial institutions that are involved in financial services like safekeeping of deposits, granting loans, providing credit facilities, cash deposit and withdrawal services and financial advice to individuals, corporate organisations, clubs, Societies, and the government. After office hours, they are still busy with work. They have responsibilities for their families. Sometimes that job stress can negatively affect their family life. Significant operational and structural changes have recently occurred in Sri Lanka's banking industry, placing more duties and strain on staff members. High customer volumes, long working hours, and a constant need for service excellence are all challenges facing licensed commercial banks, especially in areas such as the Kurunegala District. Customers' continued reliance on conventional means puts additional strain on bank staff, even in the face of technological advancements and the introduction of digital banking services. There may be conflicts between work and personal commitments due to the growing difficulty in balancing professional and personal obligations. Work-life balance is considered a vital issue in many organisations nowadays for both individual and firm health. Many employees are suffering from the lack of a perfect balance between work life and Family Life. Long-term workplace stress can have a negative impact on workers' overall happiness, job performance, and well-being, ultimately reducing the banking industry's effectiveness. Nevertheless, little research has been conducted on the subject of how job stress affects work-life balance in this specific context. The purpose of this study is to examine the connection between work-life balance and job stress among employees of Licensed Commercial banks in the Kurunegala District.

Research Problem

Numerous studies are available on the topics of work-life balance and job performance, as well as job stress and its impact on job performance. There are a lack of studies on the topic of the relationship between Job Stress and work-life balance. Although there are a few studies, we were unable to find any that involved Licensed Commercial banks, particularly in the Kurunegala District. This study is important for researchers, scholars, and organisations. This contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing insight into the relationship that exists between job stress and work-life balance among employees in licensed commercial banks.

Research Questions

Is there a relationship between job stress and work-life balance?

Research Objectives

To find out the relationship between job stress and the work-life balance.

To find out what type of strategies can be used to minimize job stress and maximize the work-life balance.

Literature Review

The workforce is directly impacted by stress as an issue. Reduced productivity, higher absenteeism, and turnover are all linked to increased stress. Because of these factors, maintaining a work-life balance is considered a crucial motivator.

Role Theory

Role theory is a sociological and social psychological framework that examines how individuals behave in society based on the roles they occupy. It suggests that people's actions are primarily determined by the expectations associated with their social positions, such as parent, employee, or student. When one person plays multiple roles, they may experience role conflict and an excessive workload, which can lead to stress and imbalance.

Person-environment fit theory

Person-environment (PE) fit theory, rooted in interactional psychology, posits that individuals' behaviour and well-being are significantly influenced by the compatibility between their personal characteristics and the environment in which they are. The better the fit between a person and their environment, the more likely they are to experience job satisfaction.

Job Stress

Stress occurs when there is an inequity between the employees' perception of restrictions imposed by the working environment and their resources to cope with it (Siegrist, 2015). Several researchers argue that moderate stress can enhance focus and motivation, suggesting that an optimal level of stress improves performance (Bowen et al., 2013). Bhatti et al. (2011) found that workload pressure, home interface, role ambiguity, and performance pressure had a significant direct effect on job stress.

Excessive Workload

Work overload occurs when job demand exceeds an individual's ability to handle it. Work overload represents the weight of hours, the sacrifice of time, and the sense of frustration that arises from the inability to complete tasks within the given time. One of the primary factors suggested to impact work-life balance is workload. Work overload refers to the perception that one has too much to do (Leiter & Schaufeli, 1996). According to Malik (2011), employees become ambivalent about predicting their supervisor's reactions to their tasks as either "success" or "failure". Finally, long hours, work overload, time pressure, difficult or complex tasks, lack of breaks, lack of variety, and poor work conditions (such as space, temperature, and light) are causes of occupational stress.

Role Conflict

Role conflict occurs when an individual is faced with incompatible demands related to their job or position. People experience this when they find themselves pulled in various directions as they try to respond to the many statuses they hold. Role conflict refers to the incompatible requirements and expectations that employees receive from their supervisor or coworkers (Rosen et al., 2010).

Role Ambiguity

Researchers have defined both work and family demand concepts to include variables such as number of hours worked, schedule, role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, stress from work, marital status, family work hours, number of children at home, and dependents at home (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000)

Work-Life Balance

According to Kalliath and Brough (2008), work-life balance is defined as how an individual's insight into the compatibility between work and non-work functions is important and how their current life priorities are balanced. Increasing work will likely also have indirect effects on work-life balance, which can help reduce academics' turnover intentions (Chiew et al., 2018). Kumari et al. (2019) demonstrated that work-life balance and working environment have a positive impact on the job satisfaction of working women in different private and public banks. Priya et al. (2023) recommended work-life balance (WLB) practices, including flexible work arrangements and designated personal time, to enhance well-being. Additionally, cognitive coping strategies such as problem-solving and positive reappraisal, where individuals reframe challenges as opportunities for growth, can help professionals manage stress more effectively. The demand between work and home responsibilities has assumed increased relevance for employees in commercial banks in recent years. This is due to demographic and workplace changes, such as transformation in family structures, growing reluctance to work long hours, acceptance of a different work culture, and a greater number of women in the workforce, as well as technological advancements. Workers are experiencing an increase in their average income, resulting in a rise in their living standards, which has consequently led to a growth in interest in work-life balance issues.

Research Methodology

The population of the study consists of employees who work in Licensed Commercial banks in the Kurunegala District. The sample consists of 100 employees working in Licensed Commercial banks in the Kurunegala District. The data are collected using a structured questionnaire based on random sampling. The primary data gathered through a structured questionnaire, analysed using statistical techniques, include demographic data analysis, descriptive data analysis, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. SPSS software was used to analyze the data.

Conceptual Framework

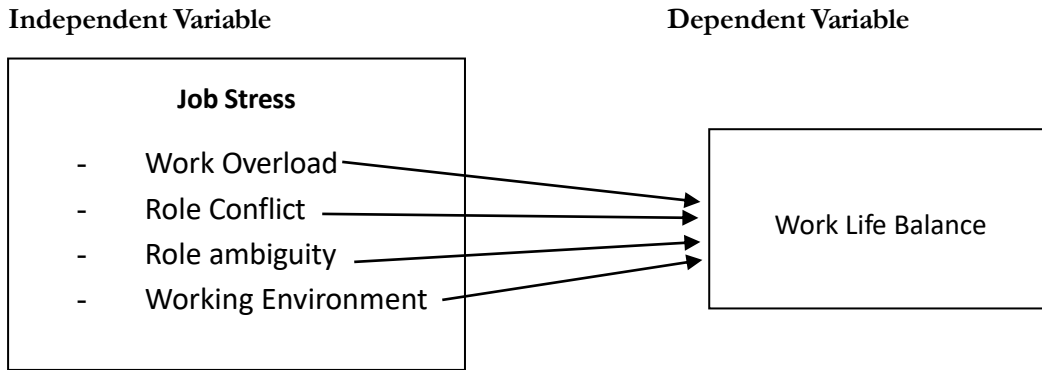


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework
Source: Deduced from the Literature

Hypotheses Development

H₁: Job Stress has a significant impact on Work-Life Balance

The hypothesis has been divided into four parts as follows;

H_{1a}: Work Overload has a significant impact on work-life balance.

H_{1b}: Role Conflict has a significant impact on work-life balance.

H_{1c}: Role Ambiguity has a significant impact on work-life balance.

H_{1d}: Working Environment has a significant impact on work-life balance.

Results and Discussions

Reliability Statistics

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

Key Variables	Cronbach Alpha
Work Overload (WO)	0.837
Role Conflict (RC)	0.707
Role Ambiguity (RA)	0.716
Working Environment (WE)	0.893
Work Life Balance (WLB)	0.859

The Cronbach's Alpha value illustrates that all variables are acceptable for the analysis, which demonstrates internal consistency. All constructs are reliable based on Cronbach's Alpha since all these are more than 0.7

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were conducted to describe the data properties and describing unusual observations.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
WO	100	3.5140	.80416	-.201	.241	-.420	.478
RC	100	3.4460	.64939	.222	.241	-.254	.478
RA	100	3.3820	.71129	-.043	.241	-.049	.478
WE	100	3.8220	.81595	-.449	.241	-.306	.478
WLB	100	3.2907	.59888	.052	.241	-.071	.478
Valid N (listwise)100							

Mean and standard deviation values show the average and variation of the study variables. Work overload has a mean value of 3.514 and a standard deviation of 0.804. Work overload is slightly negatively skewed with a value of -.201. Role conflict has a mean value of 3.446 and a standard deviation of 0.649. Role conflict is slightly positively skewed with a value of 0.222. The working environment shows a mean value of 3.822 and a standard deviation of 0.815. The working environment is negatively skewed, with a value of -.449. The mean values of role ambiguity and work-life balance are 3.382 and 3.290, respectively.

Summary Statistics

Table 3. Summary Statistics

Title	Category	Numbers Number Respondents	of Total
Gender	Male	41	100
	Female	59	
Age	Under 25	22	100
	25-34	60	
	35-44	17	
	45-54	1	
	55 and above	0	

Marital status	Single	61	100
	Married	38	
	Divorced	1	
Current job position/role	Junior Executive	65	100
	Executive Officer	23	
	Manager	7	
	Senior Manager	5	
Experience in the Banking Sector	Less than 1	18	100
	1-5	47	
	6-10	15	
	11-15	10	
	More than 15	10	
Approximate Present Monthly Income	Below LKR 100,000	56	100
	LKR 100,001 - LKR 200,000	37	
	LKR 200,001 - LKR 300,000	5	
	Above LKR 300,000	2	

Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 4. Coefficients of Regression

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.865	.248	.001		
	WO	-.499	.055	.000	.766	1.305
	RC	-.063	.076	.411	.609	1.643
	RA	-.136	.067	.046	.647	1.546
	WE	.000	.054	.995	.750	1.334
R square = 0.6		P = 0.000	F = 37.136			

The Coefficient of determination (R-squared) equals 0.610, which indicates that 61% of the variation in the dependent variable (work-life balance) is described by the independent variables (work overload, role conflict, and role ambiguity). Therefore, this value exceeds the accepted limit of 0.6. The overall model is adequate for the study, as the p-value is 0.01 ($p = 0.000$, $F = 37.14$). None of the four independent variables exhibit a multicollinearity problem, since the VIF values are less than 10.

According to the table above, there is a statistically significant negative impact of work overload (WO) on work-life balance (WLB), as indicated by a probability value of 0.00, which is less than 0.05. There is a statistically significant negative impact of role ambiguity (RA) and work-life balance (WLB), with a probability value of 0.046, which is less than 0.05.

The other two independent variables, namely role conflict (RC) and work environment (WE), show no statistical significance since the probability values are greater than 0.05.

The following model explains the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

$$Y = a + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \epsilon$$

$$WLB = 0.865 - 0.499 WO - 0.063 RC - 0.136 RA$$

Correlation analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to determine whether a relationship exists between work overload, role conflict, role ambiguity, and the working environment, as well as work-life balance.

Table 5. Correlations

		WO	RC	RA	WE	WLB
WO	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	100				
RC	Pearson Correlation	.460**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				.000
	N	100	100			
RA	Pearson Correlation	.360**	.529**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
	N	100	100	100		
WE	Pearson Correlation	.278**	.420**	.448**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.000	.000		
	N	100	100	100	100	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.004	
	N	100	100	100	100	100
WLB	Pearson Correlation	-.759**	-.461**	-.438**	.286**	1

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

The results of the correlation analysis revealed a strong negative and statistically significant correlation between work overload and work-life balance ($r = -0.759$). There is a weak negative correlation between role conflict and work-life balance ($r = -0.461$). There is a negative correlation between role ambiguity and work life balance ($r = -0.438$). There is a positive correlation between the work environment and work-life balance ($r = 0.286$). Those relationships are significant at the 0.05 level.

The findings are consistent with the following prior research findings;

According to the findings of Ganewatta et al. (2023), research was conducted on the impact of work overload as a job stressor on employees' intention to leave. The study revealed that work overload has a positive influence on work-family conflict, indicating challenges in balancing work and family responsibilities. Weerasinghe et. al (2018) found that work stress has a significant

negative relationship with the work-life balance of customs officers. Jessica et al. (2022) found a significant fact that emerged from the study: a strong negative correlation between job stress and work-life balance.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study aimed to examine the effects of work overload, role conflict, role ambiguity, and the work environment on work-life balance. The study found that work overload and role ambiguity have statistically significant negative relationships with work-life balance. Specifically, increased work overload and unclear role expectations appear to diminish favourable work-life balance, possibly due to heightened stress and uncertainty among employees. In contrast, role conflict and work environment did not show statistically significant effects within the model, suggesting their influence may be more nuanced or context-dependent.

Based on these results, it is recommended that organisations prioritise reducing work overload and addressing role ambiguity. Strategies such as clearer task delegation, improved communication, and regular feedback mechanisms may help employees better understand their responsibilities and manage their workloads more effectively. Although role conflict and work environment did not emerge as significant predictors in this model, they remain important dimensions of the workplace experience. They should be considered in future research, particularly when employing qualitative or longitudinal approaches that may reveal deeper insights into their impact over time.

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