

The Impact of Work-Life Balance Policies on Engagement and Satisfaction in Telecom Companies

Vikas Kumar Tiwari* Dr. Smita Sukhwai**

*Research Scholar, Vikram University, Ujjain (M.P.) INDIA

** Asst. Professor, Government Kalidas Girls College, Ujjain (M.P.) INDIA

Abstract: This systematic review investigates the impact of work-life balance (WLB) policies on employee engagement and job satisfaction within the telecom sector, a high-pressure industry marked by demanding schedules and continuous connectivity. A comprehensive literature search following PRISMA guidelines was conducted across Scopus, Google Scholar, and Consensus databases, resulting in the selection of twelve peer-reviewed empirical studies relevant to WLB outcomes in telecom and similar service sectors. Thematic synthesis revealed five core categories of WLB practices with consistent positive effects, including flexible scheduling, supportive leadership, and formalized leave policies, all shown to reduce burnout and improve morale. The review also highlighted the mediating influence of organizational culture and gender, as well as the challenge of digital overconnectivity. Practical implications emphasize the need for telecom companies to integrate WLB as a strategic priority through flexible work arrangements, inclusive leadership, mental health support, and responsive feedback systems. The study contributes original value by providing a sector-specific synthesis of WLB outcomes, offering both theoretical insights and practical guidance to improve employee wellbeing, engagement, and retention in dynamic, high-demand environments.

Keywords: Work-life balance, employee engagement, job satisfaction, telecom, flexible work, retention, wellbeing.

Introduction - Work-life balance (WLB) refers to the equilibrium between professional responsibilities and personal life activities, ensuring that neither domain overwhelms the other. In modern corporate environments, especially with the rise of remote work and digital connectivity, achieving sustainable WLB has become crucial for employee health and organizational success. According to a study by Al-Khateeb and Al-Louzi, 68% of employees in Jordan's telecom sector reported that inadequate WLB policies directly affected their job engagement and satisfaction levels. (Al-Khateeb & Al-Louzi, 2020) Globally, a 2021 Gallup survey found that employees with good WLB are 21% more likely to be more engaged and 27% less likely to leave their employers. (Sahni, 2019)

Companies that implement flexible working hours, remote work options, and supportive leave policies are better positioned to foster a committed and resilient workforce. Conversely, poor WLB often leads to heightened stress, burnout, absenteeism, and ultimately higher turnover rates — with the telecom sector particularly vulnerable due to its high operational demands and customer-facing roles. In fact, a study on Airtel Nigeria revealed that 55% of dissatisfied employees cited lack of WLB as a primary reason for considering resignation. (Jacob et al., 2024)

As the modern workforce increasingly values holistic well-being alongside career progression, WLB has shifted

from being a secondary concern to a strategic business priority. Organizations that ignore these needs risk not only higher attrition rates but also declines in productivity and brand reputation. (Munawar & Suriyanti, 2024)

In the highly competitive and technology-driven telecom sector, employee engagement and satisfaction are fundamental to organizational success. Telecom companies depend on a workforce that is not only technically proficient but also motivated to deliver high-quality customer service in a fast-paced environment. Research by Jaharuddin and Zainol highlights that effective work-life balance initiatives significantly boost engagement levels, reducing turnover intention by 30% among telecom employees. (Jaharuddin & Zainol, 2019) Similarly, Munawar and Suriyanti found that employee satisfaction correlated positively with organizational commitment, where highly satisfied employees were 40% more likely to engage in discretionary behaviours that benefit their firms. (Munawar & Suriyanti, 2024) In an industry where downtime, errors, and service disruptions can severely damage customer loyalty, maintaining a highly engaged and satisfied workforce is crucial for minimizing operational risks and sustaining competitive advantage. Furthermore, Latif and Choudhary underscore the need for personal-professional boundary support, noting that dissatisfaction stemming from poor work-life connectivity significantly hampers professional

women's performance in the telecom industry. (Latif et al., 2016) These findings collectively affirm that in telecom companies, engagement and satisfaction are not just human resource metrics — they are strategic imperatives for market leadership.

Despite the growing recognition of work-life balance (WLB) as a critical factor influencing employee outcomes, there remains a significant gap in understanding how WLB policies specifically impact employee engagement and satisfaction within the telecom sector. Telecom companies face unique challenges such as 24/7 service expectations, technological disruptions, and high customer interaction levels, making the need for effective WLB strategies even more pronounced. While previous research has explored the relationship between WLB and general organizational performance, limited studies have systematically reviewed how these policies translate into tangible improvements in engagement and satisfaction specifically in telecom settings. (Abubaker, 2015) Furthermore, rapid changes in workplace structures—accelerated by digitalization and post-pandemic hybrid models—underscore the urgency to re-evaluate traditional WLB frameworks. (Polnok et al., 2024) A systematic review focusing on this niche is therefore essential to bridge the knowledge gap, provide actionable insights for telecom management, and enhance strategic HR policies aimed at sustaining workforce resilience and organizational competitiveness.

Objectives:

1. To evaluate the effectiveness of work-life balance (WLB) policies in enhancing employee engagement and job satisfaction within the telecom sector.
2. To identify the most influential WLB practices—such as flexible scheduling, remote work, and family leave—that contribute to positive employee outcomes in telecom organizations.
3. To analyze the mediating role of organizational culture and leadership support in shaping the relationship between WLB policies and employee engagement/satisfaction.

Methodology

Study Design: This systematic review was conducted to evaluate the impact of work-life balance (WLB) policies on employee engagement and job satisfaction in the telecom sector. The review adhered to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to ensure methodological transparency and rigor.

Search Strategy: A comprehensive literature search was conducted using Scopus, Google Scholar, and the Consensus research database. The search strategy combined the following terms using Boolean operators: (“work-life balance” OR “WLB policies” OR “flexible work” OR “family leave”) AND (“employee engagement” OR “job satisfaction”) AND (“telecom sector” OR “telecommunication companies” OR “telecom employees”). No restrictions were placed on the year of publication, but

only studies published in English were included in the review.

Inclusion Criteria:

1. Studies examining the impact of WLB policies on employee engagement and/or job satisfaction.
2. Peer-reviewed empirical studies including quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method designs.
3. Studies conducted within the telecom industry or service sectors with telecom-relevant outcomes.
4. Articles reporting clear outcome measures related to satisfaction or engagement.

Exclusion Criteria:

1. Review articles, editorials, or opinion pieces without original data.
2. Studies not focused on WLB, engagement, or satisfaction.
3. Non-English language publications.
4. Research focused on non-telecom populations or unrelated sectors.

Study Selection: The selection process followed two sequential stages. In the first stage, titled Title and Abstract Screening, duplicate records and clearly irrelevant articles were removed based on the predefined inclusion criteria. In the second stage, referred to as the Full-Text Review, the remaining studies were thoroughly assessed to determine their eligibility for inclusion. The entire selection and screening process is summarized in the PRISMA flow diagram, which outlines the number of records identified, screened, excluded, and ultimately included in the final synthesis (n = 12).

The study selection process is presented in a PRISMA flow diagram.

PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for new systematic reviews which included searches of databases and registers only

Identification of studies via databases and registers

Records removed *before screening*:

Duplicate records removed (n = 30)

Records marked as ineligible by automation tools (n = 35)

Records removed for other reasons (n = 20)

Records identified from:

Databases (n = 320)

Registers (n = 35)

Identification

Records screened (n = 270)

Records excluded (n = 210)

Reports sought for retrieval (n = 60)

Reports not retrieved (n = 10)

Screening

Reports assessed for eligibility (n = 50)

Reports excluded:

Low Sample Size (n = 20)

Incomplete outcome measures (n = 18)

Studies included in review (n = 12)

Reports of included studies (n = 0)

Included

Data Extraction: Data from the 12 eligible studies were extracted into a standardized data collection sheet, capturing the following components:

1. **Study Characteristics:** Author(s), year of publication, country, study design, and sample size.
2. **WLB Policy Focus:** Specific work-life balance (WLB) interventions studied, such as flexible work hours, remote work, family leave policies, or wellness programs.
3. **Outcome Measures:** Levels of employee engagement and job satisfaction, as assessed through standardized surveys or qualitative interviews.
4. **Key Findings:** Summary of the reported impact of WLB practices on employee outcomes in the telecom sector.

Quality Assessment: The methodological quality of the included studies was assessed using the following tools based on study design:

1. Newcastle-Ottawa Scale (NOS): Applied to cross-sectional and observational studies.
2. ROBINS-I (Risk of Bias in Non-Randomized Studies of Interventions): Used for quasi-experimental and mixed-method studies.
3. Critical Appraisal Checklist for Qualitative Research: Applied to qualitative interviews and case studies.

Each study was independently rated as high, medium, or low quality based on criteria such as sample representativeness, validity of instruments, and transparency in reporting.

Data Synthesis: A narrative synthesis was conducted to summarize findings from the 12 included studies, grouped by the type of work-life balance (WLB) policies examined—such as flexible scheduling, remote work, paid leave, and family-supportive programs. The synthesis revealed consistent positive associations between WLB initiatives and both job satisfaction and employee engagement. Flexible work arrangements and supportive leave policies emerged as the most effective in enhancing employee morale, particularly in high-demand telecom environments. Some contextual variations were noted across regions, but overall, the findings underscore the strategic importance of integrating WLB into HR practices to improve employee outcomes.

Results

Table 1 (see in last page)

Table 2 (see in last page)

While the majority of included studies were rated as having low to moderate risk of bias, the presence of methodological limitations in a few studies may have influenced the overall findings. For example, narrative reviews such as that by Bello et al. (2024) carried a high risk of bias due to lack of empirical data and potential subjectivity in interpretation, reducing the reliability of its conclusions. Similarly, studies with moderate bias—particularly cross-sectional designs (Qadri, 2024; Pramana & Putra, 2022)—limited causal inference and were prone

to self-reporting bias, which may have inflated the perceived effectiveness of work-life balance (WLB) interventions. Although these studies provided valuable descriptive insights, their methodological constraints necessitate cautious interpretation of results. Therefore, while the review offers strong thematic patterns, the influence of design heterogeneity and varying levels of rigor should be acknowledged when generalizing the outcomes. Future research using longitudinal or experimental designs is needed to validate these associations more robustly.

Table 3 (see in last page)

Originality/Value: This systematic review offers original value by synthesizing empirical evidence on the impact of work-life balance (WLB) policies specifically within the telecom sector—an area often overlooked in WLB literature dominated by education, healthcare, and IT industries. By integrating findings from diverse geographical and organizational contexts, this review highlights not only the direct effects of WLB practices on employee engagement and job satisfaction, but also the mediating roles of leadership culture, job autonomy, and emotional wellbeing. Unlike previous reviews that examine WLB in general terms, this study provides a focused, sector-specific evaluation that telecom organizations can use to design practical, evidence-based HR interventions. It also identifies theoretical and methodological gaps, encouraging future longitudinal and cross-cultural research in high-demand, target-driven industries.

Discussion: The systematic review of twelve peer-reviewed studies confirms that work-life balance (WLB) policies play a critical role in shaping employee engagement and job satisfaction, especially in high-demand sectors like telecom. Across the reviewed literature, there was strong consensus that WLB initiatives—such as flexible scheduling, family leave, telecommuting, and support services—positively affect employee morale, emotional wellbeing, and retention outcomes.

Studies such as those by Wadhwa & Shetty (2017) and Qadri (2024) demonstrated that flexible work arrangements significantly enhance engagement, especially when implemented consistently across job roles. Similarly, Kumari & Selvi (2016) and Subarto & Solihin (2025) confirmed that autonomy over scheduling and reduced workload pressure were linked to greater employee satisfaction and reduced burnout. These findings align with Jacob et al. (2024) and Jaharuddin et al. (2019), who noted that poorly implemented or symbolic WLB policies often lead to disengagement, turnover intention, and absenteeism. (Jacob et al., 2024; Jaharuddin & Zainol, 2019)

Beyond direct outcomes, several studies emphasized the importance of organizational culture, leadership support, and communication mechanisms as key enablers of successful WLB integration. For example, Alkhateeb & Al-Louzi (2020) and Sumarno et al. (2024) identified that WLB efforts are most effective when backed by leadership

commitment and inclusive HR practices. These conclusions are reinforced by Erwin et al. (2019), who showed that leadership style significantly moderates the success of WLB policy adoption, especially in hierarchical and fast-paced industries.(Erwin et al., 2019)

However, some contradictions and variations also emerged across contexts. For instance, while Mashavira et al. (2023) and Bello et al. (2024) emphasized workload balance and organizational support, Shyamadhanthi & Kaluarachchige (2023) highlighted that engagement mediates the relationship between WLB and satisfaction, suggesting that satisfaction cannot be improved without actively involving employees in WLB planning. Additionally, studies such as Lo & Kartini (2012) noted public-sector success stories in WLB but warned about policy-practice gaps due to weak managerial enforcement.

Gender-specific challenges were also identified in several studies. Qadri (2024) and Shyamadhanthi & Kaluarachchige (2023) emphasized the additional burdens faced by women in balancing professional and personal roles, a concern echoed by Latif et al. (2016) and Munyeka et al. (2024) in related reviews. These studies call for telecom companies to provide childcare support, equitable promotion policies, and gender-sensitive leadership training as part of inclusive WLB strategies.(Latif et al., 2016; Munyeka & Maharaj, 2024)

In summary, the reviewed studies converge on the importance of treating WLB not as a peripheral benefit but as a strategic imperative. Well-structured WLB policies, reinforced by proactive leadership and organizational culture, can drive higher job satisfaction, reduce burnout, and enhance employee loyalty. Conversely, the absence of effective WLB mechanisms contributes to low morale, disengagement, and attrition. This review strongly advocates for telecom firms to embed WLB into their operational DNA, ensuring continuous feedback, flexibility, and equity in work practices to remain competitive in talent management and service delivery.

Conclusion: This systematic review confirmed that effective work-life balance (WLB) policies positively impact employee engagement, satisfaction, and retention in the telecom sector. Leadership support, flexible structures, and organizational culture were key enablers, while poor communication and rigid practices acted as barriers. Although most studies agreed on the value of WLB, variations in barriers and gender-specific needs were observed. The findings emphasize the need for telecom companies to integrate WLB into core strategies rather than treat it as an optional benefit. Future research should focus on longitudinal and global studies to address evolving workplace dynamics post-COVID-19.

Limitations:

1. The review was limited to English-language studies, potentially excluding relevant research from non-English-speaking regions.

2. Many studies had small sample sizes and relied on self-reported data, increasing the risk of response bias.
3. A majority of the included studies were cross-sectional, limiting the ability to draw causal inferences.
4. There was a lack of gender-specific and intersectional analysis, which restricts understanding of diverse employee experiences.
5. Some findings may have reduced applicability post-COVID-19, as evolving work models (e.g., hybrid or remote work) shift the nature of WLB practices.

Implications:

1. This review contributes to theory by expanding WLB frameworks to include sector-specific demands, leadership support, and digital boundary management.
2. There is a need for more longitudinal studies in the telecom sector to establish stronger causal relationships between WLB practices and employee outcomes.
3. Practically, the review confirms that formalized and structured WLB strategies lead to improved engagement, job satisfaction, and employee retention.
4. Telecom organizations should treat WLB as a core organizational value, not just a benefit.
5. Effective WLB should be supported through flexible work arrangements, proactive leadership training, mental health initiatives, and inclusive, gender-sensitive policies.
6. Strengthening feedback mechanisms and upward communication is essential for adapting WLB strategies to evolving workforce needs and maintaining long-term engagement.

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Table 1. Study Characteristics

Study	Authors (Year)	Country	Intervention Type	Outcome Measures	Key Findings
Work Life Balance Policy and its Impact on Employee Engagement	(Wadhwa & Shetty, 2017)	India	Flexible hours, telework	Employee engagement, job satisfaction	Flexible scheduling increased engagement and morale.
Exploring the Impact of Work-Life Balance on Job Satisfaction	(Qadri, 2024)	Saudi Arabia	Leave policies, flexible work	Job satisfaction	WLB policies improved job satisfaction among senior staff.
The Impact of Work-Life Balance on Employee Wellbeing in Telecom	(Kumari & Selvi, 2016)	India	Workload reduction, scheduling control	Wellbeing, job satisfaction	Supportive WLB reduced stress and increased satisfaction.
Work-Life Balance and Employee Engagement in Telecom & IT	(Alkhateeb & Al-Louzi, 2020)	Jordan	Remote work, job control	Engagement, retention	WLB practices boosted talent retention and engagement.
Impact of Work-Life Balance on Job Satisfaction with Mediators	(Shyamadhanthi & Kaluarachchige, 2023)	Sri Lanka	Family leave, remote options	Satisfaction, engagement	WLB improved satisfaction through engagement pathways.
Influence of WLB and Engagement on Performance via Satisfaction	(Subarto & Solihin, 2025)	Indonesia	Flexible shifts, leave options	Engagement, satisfaction	Indirect effect of WLB on performance via satisfaction.
The Effect of Work-Life Balance on Work Engagement	(Pramana Putra, 2022)	Indonesia	Scheduling autonomy	Engagement	Greater flexibility led to increased employee engagement.
Work-Life Balance in the Zimbabwe Retail Sector	(Mashavira et al., 2023)	Zimbabwe	Workload caps, culture change	Satisfaction, engagement	Job satisfaction mediated effect of WLB on engagement.
Work-Life Balance, Job Satisfaction, and Employee Performance	(Eddy Madiono Sutanto et al., 2024)	Indonesia	Telecommuting, flexi-time	Satisfaction, performance	WLB strengthened job satisfaction and productivity.
WLB and its Impact in Modern Organizations	(Bello et al., 2024)	Nigeria	General policies	Satisfaction, engagement	Employee satisfaction improved in WLB-inclusive workplaces.
Fostering Employee Wellbeing via WLB Policies	(Sumarno et al., 2024)	Indonesia	Support services, WFH	Wellbeing, morale	Comprehensive WLB reduced stress and improved wellbeing.
The Relationship Between WLB and Job Satisfaction	(Lo & Kartini, 2012)	Malaysia	Flexible scheduling, HR support	Job satisfaction	WLB policies linked to high satisfaction in public sector.

Table 2. Quality and Risk of Bias Table

Study	Authors (Year)	Study Design	Risk of Bias	Overall Quality
Work Life Balance Policy and its Impact on Employee Engagement	Wadhwa & Shetty (2017)	Quantitative survey	Low	High
Exploring the Impact of Work-Life Balance on Job Satisfaction	Qadri (2024)	Cross-sectional survey	Moderate	Medium
The Impact of Work-Life Balance on Employee Wellbeing in Telecom	Kumari & Selvi (2016)	Observational study	Moderate	Medium
Work-Life Balance and Employee Engagement in Telecom & IT	Alkhateeb & Al-Louzi (2020)	Mixed-method study	Moderate	Medium
Impact of Work-Life Balance on Job Satisfaction with Mediators	Shyamadhanthi & Kaluarachchige (2023)	Quantitative survey	Low	High
Influence of WLB and Engagement on Performance via Satisfaction	Subarto & Solihin (2025)	Quantitative survey	Low	High
The Effect of Work-Life Balance on Work Engagement	Pramana & Putra (2022)	Cross-sectional survey	Moderate	Medium
Work-Life Balance in the Zimbabwe Retail Sector	Mashavira et al. (2023)	Quantitative survey	Moderate	Medium
Work-Life Balance, Job Satisfaction, and Employee Performance	Eddy Madiono Sutanto et al. (2024)	Quantitative survey	Low	High
WLB and its Impact in Modern Organizations	Bello et al. (2024)	Narrative review	High	Low
Fostering Employee Wellbeing via WLB Policies	Sumarno et al. (2024)	Quasi-experimental	Moderate	Medium
The Relationship Between WLB and Job Satisfaction	Lo & Kartini (2012)	Cross-sectional survey	Moderate	Medium

Table 3: Common Themes Across Studies

Theme	Supporting Studies	Summary of Findings
Flexible Work Arrangements	Wadhwa & Shetty (2017); Qadri (2024); Kumari & Selvi (2016); Pramana & Putra (2022)	Flexible scheduling and remote work options were consistently linked to improved job satisfaction and employee engagement.
Leave and Family Support Policies	Qadri (2024); Shyamadhanthi & Kaluarachchige (2023); Subarto & Solihin (2025)	Paid leave, family support, and personal time-off were shown to boost employee morale, engagement, and organizational loyalty.
Workload and Schedule Control	Kumari & Selvi (2016); Mashavira et al. (2023); Lo & Kartini (2012)	Autonomy in managing workloads and shift flexibility improved job satisfaction and reduced burnout.
Organizational Culture and Leadership Support	Alkhateeb & Al-Louzi (2020); Bello et al. (2024); Sumarno et al. (2024)	A supportive work environment and leadership buy-in for WLB initiatives were essential to sustaining engagement and productivity.
Integrated Wellbeing Strategies	Sumarno et al. (2024); Eddy Madiono Sutanto et al. (2024); Mashavira et al. (2023)	Comprehensive WLB programs that address mental health, stress reduction, and work-life conflict improved employee wellbeing.
