



## The Effect of Work-Life Balance and Social Competence on the Psychological Well-Being of Public Service Employees

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Received : January 16, 2023

Revised : June 8, 2023

Accepted : June 14, 2023

Online : June 30, 2023

### Abstract

The psychological well-being of the employees is well deserved, as it has numerous positive effects on organisational performance. This understanding calls for research that would identify plausible precursors of psychological well-being. The outcome of such research activities would provide guides for the positive manipulation of psychological well-being to enhance organisational functioning. Therefore, this study aims to investigate whether there is an association between work-life balance and employee psychological well-being and whether social competence plays a role in this relationship. One hundred and fifty employees aged 23 to 56 comprised 52% of men and 76% of married. The survey was self-administered, and the study was cross-sectional. Established scales on work-life balance, social competence, and psychological well-being were used in the study. The data were subjected to regression analysis based on PROCESS Macro. Given the findings, work-life balance and social competence have a favourable relationship with an employee's psychological well-being. In addition, social competence accounted for more variation in employee psychological well-being than work-life balance. According to interaction statistics, social competence moderates the connection between work-life balance and psychological well-being. The findings indicate that the psychological well-being of employees is improved by work-life balance and social competence.

**Keywords:** *Inter-Role Experience; Work-Life Balance; Social Competence; Psychological Well-Being*

### INTRODUCTION

The workforce of any organisation is the most valuable resource (Chukwunonso, 2021; Daniel, 2019), not only for the direct contributions to production processes but because it is the instrumentality for the usefulness of every other organisation's resources. Employees must have physical, social, and psychological well-being to function correctly. Although the various forms of well-being are interrelated, the present study is limited to employee psychological well-being, defined as the happiness that results from optimal functioning (Stankevičienė et al., 2021). In several studies (e.g., Aryanti et al., 2020; Harshitha & Senthil, 2021; Thevanes & Harikaran, 2020), employee psychological well-being has been associated with effective organisational functioning. This understanding inherently demands searching for plausible precursors of employee psychological well-being to guide manipulation as desired.

Existing literature shows that work-life balance, described as a person's capacity to consistently balance the emotional, behavioural, and time demands of both paid work, family responsibilities, and personal obligations (Saraswati & Lie, 2020), is among the firmly identified precursors of employee psychological well-being (Okeya et al., 2020; Rahim et al., 2020). However, the literature review by Thilagavathy and Geetha (2021) showed that a study on the relationship between work-life balance and employee psychological well-being is lacking in developing countries. The literature on work-life balance and employee psychological well-being must be built on studies from various cultural settings, as there is a link between national culture, organisational culture, work-life balance, and employee psychological well-being (Adnan et al., 2021; Ansah & Louw, 2019; da Motta & Gomes, 2019; Stankevičienė et al., 2021). Consequently, the present study examined the relationship between work-life balance and employee psychological well-being. Jafri and Batra (2014) argued and called for understanding the intervening variables in the work-life

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balance and employee psychological well-being relationship. As the current literature shows, this call lacks a substantial empirical response. The organisational behaviour literature firmly establishes the value of addressing the third variable in any relationship tested. Consequently, and guided by the existing studies (e.g., Gómez-López et al., 2022), social competence, which expresses an individual's ability to organise personal and environmental resources to successfully create and maintain favourable social outcomes and peer relationships (Holopainen et al., 2012; Romppanen et al., 2021) was examined as a moderator in the relationship between work-life balance and psychological well-being. Therefore, the purpose of this study was (a) to determine the impact of work-life balance and social competence on psychological well-being and (b) to examine whether social competence moderates the relationship between work-life balance and psychological well-being among public service employees.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Work-Life Balance and Employee Psychological Well-Being

Work-life balance is the ability to bring harmony between work and non-work responsibilities, activities, and aspirations, which implies a balance between the amount of time and effort given to work and personal activities to have an overall sense of harmony (Saraswati & Lie, 2020). It is the ability of individuals, regardless of basic demographics, to successfully combine work, home, and other life responsibilities. Work-life balance refers to how a person engages and is equally satisfied with their work-life roles (Stankevičienė et al., 2021). Several opposing models of work-life balance exist that include segmentation, spillover, compensation, instrumental, and conflict, which have implications for the empirical literature. For example, the segmentation model proposes that work and non-work life do not influence one another, whereas the spillover model posits that one domain can positively or negatively influence the other (Bello & Tanko, 2020; Sen & Hooja, 2018).

Being psychologically well-adjusted means being healthy, well-adjusted, and completely functional. Relationships with others and self-referent attitudes like mastery and personal growth are inter- and intra-individual levels of positive functioning (Burns, 2015). There are two types of psychological well-being: hedonic and eudaimonic. Hedonic well-being is related to subjective experiences of happiness (Kraut, 1979). It has two components: an affective component (high positive affect and low negative affect) and a cognitive component (high positive affect and low negative affect) (satisfaction with life). The purposeful part of psychological well-being is referred to as eudaimonic well-being. It is expressed mainly by a sense of self-actualisation and expressiveness (Waterman, 1993). Eudaimonia well-being implies that the individual is satisfied with his existence and has what is desirable and desirable. Eudaimonia well-being is defined by expressive experiences such as unusually intense involvement in an undertaking, feeling fulfilled while engaged in an activity, having the impression that this is what one was meant to do, and having the impression that this is who one is (Waterman, 1990).

The inherent results of work-life balance and the interacting nomological networks of work-life balance and employee psychological well-being proposed that more work-life balance will reflect in high employee psychological well-being. Regarding innate characteristics, it is widely observed that work-life balance represents a harmonious interaction between work and non-work roles such as family, spirituality, and leisure. In this capacity, work-life balance leads to job satisfaction (Pathak et al., 2019; Sahrawat & Rawat, 2021). Job satisfaction has been associated with subjective well-being (Cannas et al., 2019), optimal well-being (Sironi, 2019), improved social relationships, and a reduction in depression (Nadinloyi et al., 2013). The above implies that job satisfaction results from work-life balance, which produces psychological well-being. In nomological networks, studies have revealed that work-life balance positively affects employee

psychological well-being (Okeya et al., 2020; Prasad & Sreenivas, 2020; Rahim et al., 2020; Saraswati & Lie, 2020). Work-life balance and employee psychological well-being played mediator and moderating roles for each other. For example, work-life balance mediated the relationship between workplace culture and employee psychological well-being (Stankevičienė et al., 2021), and employee psychological well-being mediated the link between work-life balance and job performance (Haider et al., 2018). Therefore, it was proposed that:

H1: Work-life balance would positively predict employee psychological well-being

### **Social Competence and Employee Psychological Well-Being**

Social competence effectively ensures positive social outcomes by organising personal and environmental resources. It is a bundle of social skills and abilities that allow people to communicate, interact, impress and influence others. Social competence implies getting along well with others, forming and maintaining close relationships, and responding adaptively in social settings, indicating the effectiveness of interpersonal interactions (Dirks et al., 2018; John et al., 2021; Rashed & Snoubar, 2020). Social competence is a higher-order construct with several components: social skills, emotional intelligence, social adaptability, social expressiveness, and social intelligence (Baron & Markman, 2003; Gómez-Ortiz et al., 2017). The argument is that the various elements representing social competence can potentially enhance an individual's relational life. Other things being equal, a life of cooperation and acceptance from others goes with less stress, a factor that is very detrimental to employees' psychological well-being (Kumar et al., 2020; Ravikumar, 2022). Therefore, social competence creates an environment where employee psychological well-being thrives. Therefore it was hypothesised that:

H2: Social competence would positively predict employee psychological well-being.

### **Social Competence as A Moderator**

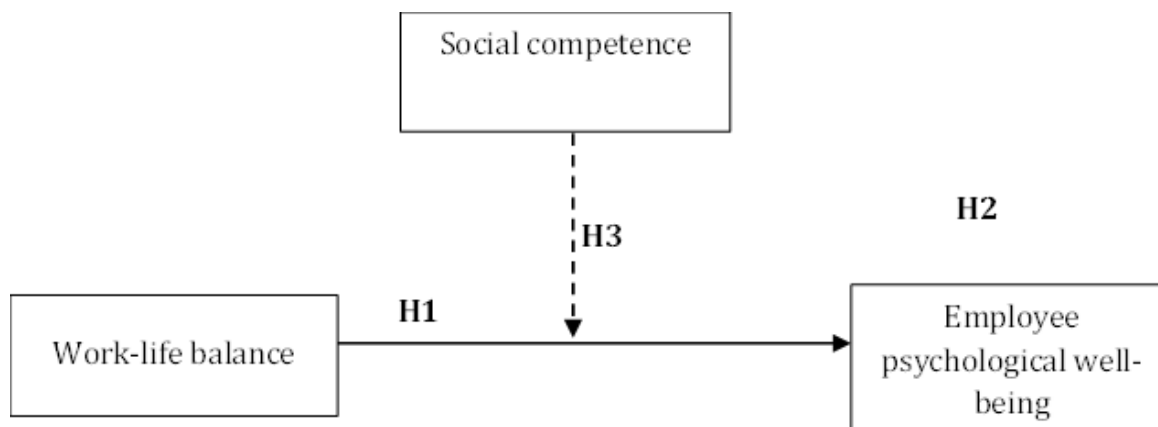
As presented earlier, work-life balance and social competence can directly impact employees' psychological well-being. Plausibly too, social competence could also moderate the relationship between work-life balance and employee psychological well-being. Several characteristics of work-life balance and employee psychological well-being are configured to endow the moderating role of social competence. For instance, work-life balance indicates an acceptable conflict at work and in other life activities. Social competence embodies social skills associated with the potential to reduce interpersonal conflicts. Several components of social competence (cultural intelligence, social intelligence) reduce work-family conflict (He et al., 2019; Kanbur, 2015). More so, people with more family-to-work conflict had less emotional intelligence (Zeb et al., 2021).

It is argued that a lessened interpersonal conflict resulting from social competence would reduce work-life conflict and enhance psychological well-being. Social competence ameliorates work-family conflict. Therefore a well-managed work-family conflict will increase work-life balance. Additionally, a work-life balance resulting from social competence is much more likely to strengthen well-being. In other words, more social competence means a higher work-life balance and employee psychological well-being. Based on the preceding, it was proposed that:

H3: Social competence would moderate the positive relationship between work-life balance and employee psychological well-being.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual model of the present study. The model depicts the relationship between work-life balance, social competence, and employee psychological well-being. That is,

work-life balance and social competence have a recursive relationship with employee psychological well-being. The effect flows only from work-life balance and social competence to employee psychological well-being, not vice versa. Furthermore, the framework depicts social competence as a moderating variable in the work-life balance and employee psychological well-being relationship.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual Model

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Sample

One hundred and fifty employees were selected from public sector organisations in two states in Nigeria. Participants were organisations in the health, education and information sectors. Public and private organisations have been reported to differ in work-life balance (Willem et al., 2010) and employee psychological well-being (Bansal et al., 2021; Khan, 2019). Therefore, this study sample was limited to government organisations to provide a defined and valuable understanding. Furthermore, the pioneering status of the present study, in terms of location, also justifies the delimitation. The adopted sample size is more than ten times larger than the number of study variables and, therefore, is satisfactory (Memon et al., 2020; Roscoe, 1975).

### Instruments

#### *Work-Life Balance Measure*

The work-life balance was measured with Daniels and McCarragher's (2003) 10-item scale. The scale was anchored in a five-point Likert format that ranged from (1= strongly disagree) to (5= strongly agree). A five-point scale produces substantial reliability indices, does not confuse respondents, and improves response and useable rates (Babalola & Nwanzu, 2022; Robinson, 2018). Sample items on the scale are "I have to take work home most evenings" and "I often work late or at weekends to deal with paperwork without interruptions." The authors and other scale users (e.g., Adnan et al., 2021; Saraswati & Lie, 2020) reported satisfactory psychometric properties. For the present study, Cronbach's alpha of 0.87 was observed.

#### *Social Competence Measure*

Social competence was measured with Kanning et al.'s (2012) 10-item scale. Since the scale was initially developed for teachers, some modifications were implemented. Two items (items 3 and 8) were not used in the data analysis, as the preliminary analysis revealed a high cross-loading of the items. Sample items on the scale are "I always have an open ear when people I know come to me with their problems" and "I am good at predicting how someone will behave in a certain situation." The scale items were anchored on a five-point Likert format (1 = strongly disagree, 2 =

disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). The scale received satisfactory psychometric indices from the authors, and for this study, Cronbach's alpha of 0.88 was obtained.

#### *Employee Psychological Well-Being Measure*

Employee psychological well-being was measured with Smith and Smith's (2017) 10-item scale. It was measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1= not at all true; 2, slightly true; 3, moderately true; 4, very true; and 5, extremely true). The scale items covered five aspects (job characteristics, coping, positive personality, organisation, and well-being). Some reflected the positive aspects of well-being, while others reflected the negative aspects. However, the analysis was conducted at the composite level, as some dimensions do not have the minimum three items required (Robinson, 2018). Sample items on the scale are "Do you have a high level of well-being" and "Do you and your employer have a good psychological contract." For the authors and other scale users (e.g., Stankevičienė et al., 2021), Cronbach's alpha of 0.76 was obtained for the present study. Data were collected and analysed at the individual level for all variables. Data analyses were performed on the mean scores of the participants. The mean score was derived by dividing the total score on each scale by the number of valid responses, resulting in scores ranging from 1 to 5.

#### **Procedure**

A purposive convenience sampling technique was adopted in the distribution of the questionnaires. The use of convenience samples is a common characteristic of organisational studies literature, particularly in this research location, where sampling frames are usually unavailable or too strenuous to access. However, for the present study, the convenience sampling technique enables the data collection from employees of several organisations with the associated value of having many organisations represented in the sample. One hundred and eighty questionnaires were distributed to participants on their worksites, and 160 completed questionnaires were received in one month. A physical check of the returned questionnaires revealed that ten copies were not adequately treated. Therefore, data analysis was performed on responses from 150 respondents. The response rate of 88% and usable rate of 83% could be adjudged satisfactory statistics (Luiten et al., 2020).

#### **Design and Statistics**

The data in this study were quantitative, and the design was cross-sectional. This technique is acceptable because the study focuses on interactions between latent components (Zaman et al., 2021). The cross-sectional design allows multiple factors to be evaluated simultaneously. The hypothesised associations were tested using regression analysis (together with PROCESS Macro). Regression analysis was appropriate because the current study predicted employee psychological well-being from work-life balance and social competence. Furthermore, PROCESS Macro has widespread use in organisational research and has proven reliable for evaluating moderation and mediation (Field, 2018). Because regression is a parametric statistical test, the design and preliminary data analysis revealed various assumptions (e.g., independent data, interval scaling, and linearity) related to its use.

#### **Common-Method Variance**

Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires. As a result, the study design included specific procedural control measures for common-method variance (CMV). The measures were to (a) ensure participants' anonymity and confidentiality, (b) present the items on the three

focal variables on separate sheets of paper to create a physical gap, and (c) provide a different response option for one of the three scales (agreement, reflective agreement) (Cooper et al., 2020; Rodríguez-Ardura & Meseguer-Artola, 2020). The Harman single-factor diagnostic test was used in addition to procedural controls to determine the presence of CMV. The results show that factors with an eigenvalue of 1 or higher accounted for 74% of the total variance, while the first component only explained 33%. CMV is not a problem in the data set because the first factor did not explain most of the total variation. (Martínez-Córcoles & Zhu, 2020; Rodríguez-Ardura & Meseguer-Artola, 2020).

### Control variables

Demographic variables that include gender (men = 0, women = 1), age (in years), and education (less than the first degree, = 0, the first degree and above, =1) were treated as covariates in the study. Covariate analysis is implemented as studies (e.g., Bisht & Khullar, 2016; Geldenhuys & Henn, 2017) noted the confounding characteristics of demographics in the relationship between work-life balance and employee psychological well-being. More so, some theories (e.g., social role theory (Becker, 2009) and human capital theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012) propose that gender, age, and education influence social behaviour. Consequently, this study treats these demographics as covariates in data analysis.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Demographic Characteristics

The participants comprise 52% men and 76% married, with an age range of 23 to 56 years ( $\bar{x} = 41.21$ ,  $SD = 7.15$ ). Thirty-three per cent of the participants hold certificates below the first degree, 56.33% hold a first degree and its equivalent, while 10,67% hold certificates higher than the first degree (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Characteristic		Number of participants	Percentage
Gender	Women	72	48
	Men	78	52
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>
Marital status	Married	51	76
	Single	49	24
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>
Educational Qualification	Below first degree	50	33.00
	First degree	85	57.00
	Above first degree	15	10.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>
Age	Range	23 to 56 years	
	Mean	41.21	
	Standard Deviation	7.15	

### Reliability and Validity

Although this study adopted established scales, several psychometric properties tests were also performed on the measures to establish the suitability of the scales at the present research location. Cronbach's alpha procedure was used to test for internal consistency reliability. The coefficient alphas obtained are presented in Table 1. The alpha statistics ranged between 0.71 and 0.87, which is satisfactory (Hair et al., 2019). The wide adoption of the work-life balance and

employee psychological well-being scales in the literature confirmed their validity in face and content (Karimi et al., 2020). Construct validity was tested with convergent and discriminant validity, the two sides of the concept. This study's Cronbach alpha statistics also supported the measures' convergence validity (Chikazhe et al., 2021; Zaman et al., 2021). The discriminant validity with factor structure (cross-load) was tested. Except for two items on the social competence scale, every other item was loaded higher into its construct than its cross-loading. This pattern of factor loading supports the discriminant validity of the measures. This pattern of item loading indicates that the items belonged solely to their factors (Chikazhe et al., 2021; Makhijaa & Akbarb, 2019). Durbin-Watson test statistics were between 1.55 and 1.74, a range within the acceptable level of collinearity.

Table 2 shows the means of the focal variables, standard deviations, coefficient alpha, and zero-order correlation coefficients. On a five-point Likert scale format, the observed mean is moderate. Zero-order correlations revealed a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and employee psychological well-being, social competence, and employee psychological well-being, and a non-significant negative relationship between work-life balance and social competence.

**Table 2.** Mean, Standard Deviation, Alpha, and Intercorrelation of Study Variables (N = 160)

	$\bar{x}$	<i>SD</i>	1	2
1 Work-Life Balance	3.67	0.52	1	
2 Social Competence	4.20	0.78	-0.02	1
3 Employee Psychological Well-Being	3.44	0.82	0.22**	0.44**

\*\* < .001

### Main-effect Analysis

A simple regression analysis predicts employee psychological well-being from work-life balance and social competence in Table 3. The statistics in the table supported Hypotheses 1 and 2. Work-life balance strongly predicted employee psychological well-being ( $\beta = 0.14$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) for Hypotheses 1 (Table 3, second and third rows). According to the observed b-value, a one-unit increase in work-life balance leads to a 0.14-unit increase in employee psychological well-being. According to the  $R^2$  figures, work-life balance is responsible for around 5% of the variation in employee psychological well-being. The relationship was statistically significant, as revealed by the analysis of variance (ANOVA) test  $F(1; 145)$ , 7.98  $p < 0.01$ , indicating that employee psychological well-being may be predicted by work-life balance. Social competence strongly predicted employee psychological well-being ( $\beta = 0.29$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) for Hypothesis 2 (Table 3, fourth and fifth rows). According to the observed b-value, a one-unit increase in work-life balance leads to a 0.29-unit increase in employee psychological well-being. Social competence accounts for around 20% of the variance in employee psychological well-being, according to  $R^2$ . The regression was statistically significant, as indicated by the ANOVA test,  $F(1; 145)$ , 35.78,  $p < 0.001$ . It means that employee psychological well-being may be predicted from SC. According to multiple regression, work-life balance and social competence have a combined  $R$  of 0.51 and  $R^2$  of 0.25. According to the latter figures, the two variables account for a quarter of the variance in employee psychological well-being, with semi-partial correlation indices of 0.12 and 0.20 for work-life balance and social competence, respectively. Thus, social competence explained more variance in employee psychological well-being than work-life balance.

**Table 3.** Simple Regression Analysis Showing the Effect of Work-Life Balance and Social Competence on Employee Psychological Well-Being

	B	Se	$\beta$	T	P	95%CI	
						LB	UB
Constant	3.17	0.18		17.56	0.001	2.82	3.53
Work-Life Balance	0.14	0.05	0.22	2.82	0.01	0.04	0.24
<i>R<sup>2</sup> = 0.05, F (1;145), 7.98, p &lt; 0.005. Dublin Watson, 1.74</i>							
Constant	2.43	0.27		11.57	0.001	2.02	2.85
Social competence	0.29	0.04	0.44	5.95	0.001	0.19	0.39
<i>R<sup>2</sup> = 0.198, F (1; 145), 35.78, p &lt; 0.001, Dublin Watson, 1.55</i>							

### Moderation Analysis

The statistics obtained from the test of Hypothesis 3 are shown in Table 4. Simple effect statistics revealed employee psychological well-being when work-life balance or social competence were kept constant for each other. When social competence was maintained constant, the connection between work-life balance and employee psychological well-being was ( $\beta = 0.18$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). When the work-life balance was maintained constant, the association between social competence and employee psychological well-being was ( $\beta = 0.31$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Although with a negative sign coefficient, the impact of work-life balance and social competence on employee psychological well-being was statistically significant. A simple slope analysis was performed because the moderation analysis was significant. A simple slope was used to find the employee's psychological well-being within high and low social competence in the work-life balance. When social competence was high (+1SD), there was no significant link between work-life balance and employee psychological well-being ( $\beta = -0.001$ , 95% CI -0.128, -0.126,  $t = -0.06$ ,  $p > 0.98$ ), but when social competence was low (-1SD), there was a significant relationship ( $\beta = 0.38$ , 95% CI 0.22, 0.53,  $t = 4.85$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The difference between the "primary effect only" model's squared multiple correlations (0.25) and the interaction model's squared multiple correlations (0.35) provided a squared semi-partial correlation of 0.10, indicating the intensity of the interaction effect. The interaction of work-life balance and social competence is responsible for 10% of the variation in employee psychological well-being.

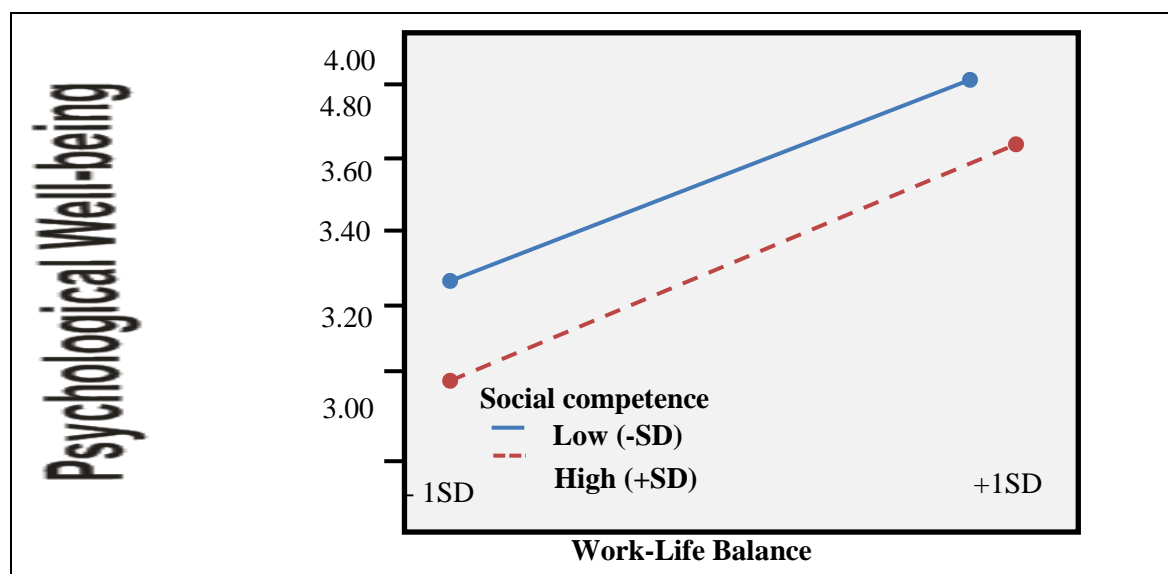
**Table 4.** Moderation Effect of Social Competence in The Work-Life Balance Employee Psychological Well-Being Relationship

	B	Se	t	p
Constant	3.48 {2.95; 4.02}	0.27	12.91	0.001
Work-Life Balance	0.18{0.09; 0.28}	0.07	3.82	0.001
Social Competence (SC)	0.31{0.22;0.41}	0.04	6.70	0.001
Work-Life Balance * SC	-0.23{-0.36; -0.10}	0.06	-3.69	0.001
Age	0.001{-0.009; 0.012}	0.005	0.26	0.78
Gender	0.13{-0.02; 0.28}	0.07	1.70	0.09
Education	-0.02{-0.12; 0.07}	0.05	-0.48	0.63
<i>R<sup>2</sup> = 0.35; F {6;130}, 11.99, p &lt; 0.001</i>				

The interaction was obtained by plotting the estimates plus and minus one standard deviation of the means of social competence to represent high versus low social competence in work-life balance, respectively. Simple slope analysis (Figure 2) revealed that when social competence was one standard deviation below the mean, the impact of work-life balance on



employee psychological well-being was stronger than one standard deviation above the mean. In other words, the positive effect of work-life balance on employee psychological well-being was more potent when social competence was low than when it was high.



**Figure 2:** The Interaction Effect of Work-Life Balance and Social Competence on Employee Psychological Well-Being

## Discussion

This study determined the relationship between work-life balance, social competence, and employee psychological well-being and whether social competence moderates the relationship between work-life balance and employee psychological well-being. These concerns were expressed and tested in three hypotheses. Hypotheses 1 and 2 expressed the central effect relationship, and the data supported them. For Hypothesis 1, the work-life balance was positively correlated with employee psychological well-being. This finding confirmed several existing studies (Okeya et al., 2020; Prasad & Sreenivas, 2020). The reported pattern of findings was expected for two main reasons. First, the work-life balance indicates a satisfactory alignment between an employee's work and other life roles. This experience can potentially breed contentment, satisfaction, and happiness representing employee psychological well-being.

Second, work-life balance symbolises an acceptable conflict between the work domain and other life activities. The literature has shown that several conflicts (e.g., work-family conflict, family-work conflicts, leisure-work conflict) damage employees' psychological well-being. Work-life balance creates a conflict-free environment where employee psychological well-being thrives by curtailing conflict at work. Data analysis also supported Hypothesis 2: social competence positively correlates with employee psychological well-being, confirmed in previous studies (Gómez-López et al., 2022). Social competencies plausibly positively relate to employee psychological well-being because it is a composite of social skills such as social adaptability, emotional intelligence, and social intelligence that have the potential to improve interpersonal relationships (Holopainen et al., 2012; Onyemaechi & Ikpeazu, 2020). People in cordial relationships with others are likely to express joy and happiness, fundamental components of psychological well-being.

Hypothesis 3 on moderation was confirmed. Social competence moderated the positive relationship between work-life balance and employee psychological well-being. However, the slope analysis result revealed that social competence's effect on the work-life balance and employee psychological well-being relationship was stronger when social competence was low than when it

was high. This finding is unexpected, as the opposite seems more logical since social competence embodies social intelligence with positive implications for effective interpersonal functioning. However, a plausible explanation for the greater influence of a low level on the high level of social competence in the relationship between work-life balance and employee psychological well-being is that a low social competence implies a lessened social network, which is essentially about the relationship. The relationship comes with costs, such as time, finances and energy. Therefore, the more positive an individual experiences, the greater the responsibility for the individual. Friendship-induced responsibility can interfere with the balance between work and other life activities. It is argued here that low social competence indicates less interference of social networks on work-life balance, a state of being that allows the work-life balance to exert its full influence on employee psychological well-being.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Employee psychological well-being is associated with desirable and organisationally valued outcomes; consequently, improving it on the job is necessary. The present study investigated the relationship between work-life balance and social competence with employee psychological well-being. Importantly, this study revealed that work-life balance and social competence are precursors of employee psychological well-being. The study builds the literature on work-life balance, social competence and employee psychological well-being. The study has some practical values as it identifies and points out the importance of work-life balance and social competence in enhancing employee psychological well-being. However, a caveat from the moderation result is that the two should not be improved for a particular intervention to strengthen employee psychological well-being, work-life balance, or social competence.

## **Theoretical Contribution**

Several theoretical contributions were made in this study. This research answers Thilagavathy and Geetha's (2021) observation, which asks for more research into the work-life balance and employee psychological well-being in developing nations. This concern is because national culture can influence organisational culture, work-life balance, and employee psychological well-being (Adnan et al., 2021; Ansah & Louw, 2019; Stankevičienė et al., 2021). Second, this research was the first to respond to Jafri and Batra (2014)'s call for research on third variables in the work-life balance and employee psychological well-being relationship. This study investigates the role of social competence moderation in work-life balance and employee psychological well-being relationships, addressing concerns (Jafri & Batra, 2014). When considering moderation in a connection, you may figure out "when" the variables are related. This knowledge is beneficial for the development of theories and practice. Third, while there is considerable research on work-life balance, social competence, and employee psychological well-being, no study has examined all three variables simultaneously.

Several studies have been conducted on the relationship between social competence and psychological well-being; this research contributes to the few studies that examined the relationship between social competence and employee psychological well-being. Previous research has focused primarily on adolescents and student populations (Gómez-López et al., 2022; Holopainen et al., 2012). Fourth, the results of this study were consistent with previous research. Both work-life balance and social competence predict employee psychological well-being, and social competence moderates the link between work-life balance and employee psychological well-being. As a result, this study's findings contribute to the literature's accumulation, ecological validity, and practical utility. Finally, the work-life balance, social competence, and employee psychological well-being measures were established in a situation unrelated to the current

investigation. However, the reliability and validity of the scales were examined during the adoption process. The study's findings added to the body of knowledge on the psychometric features of the scales and their applicability in the Nigerian setting.

### **Practical Implications**

The present study has some implications for organisational practices. Direct and simple effect statistics revealed that work-life balance and social competence were positively associated with employee psychological well-being. Both work-life balance and social competence independently and collectively have the potential to trigger employee psychological well-being. Psychological well-being is a highly sought-after employee experience associated with individual and organisational performance (Aryanti et al., 2020; Haddon, 2018; Harshitha & Senthil, 2021; Thevanes & Harikaran, 2020). Importantly, this study has implicated work-life balance and social competence in improving employee psychological well-being. Therefore, practitioners in public sector organisations are responsible for encouraging work-life balance and improving the social competence of their employees. Several organisational policies and procedures could lead to a work-life balance, while training and coaching could improve social competence. The effect size statistics revealed that social competence has tremendous potential to improve employee psychological well-being more than work-life balance. This observation for human resource professionals implies that social competence should be the option between work-life balance and social competence to improve employee psychological well-being. Simple slope statistics revealed that work-life balance positively correlates with employee psychological well-being. The interaction statistic shows that a low level of social competence strengthens the positive effect of work-life balance on employees' psychological well-being. The take-home message here for organisational practitioners is that the commitment to enhancing psychological well-being through work-life balance should have social competence deemphasised.

### **LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH**

Using a single source for data collection is a current limitation. Despite the precautions used in the study design, there is a chance that some common-method bias will affect the outcomes; as a result, future studies should include multi-source data (self-report and reports from others). This study's employee psychological well-being measure is limited to the idea's hedonic (pleasure) part. Future research should consider the hedonic and eudaimonic aspects of employee psychological well-being, as they might be accomplished using Ryff and Keyes's (1995) psychological well-being model, a predictor, a moderator, and a criterion variable from the study's conceptual framework. The framework is simple and could be considered underspecified, despite controlling several demographic variables. As a result, for future research, more inclusive models in terms of variables are recommended. The employees of government-owned companies make up most of the study sample. Similar studies should be conducted among private sector personnel for comparison.

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