

The Role Of Emotional Intelligence In Shaping Work-Life Balance: Insights From Chennai's Tech Industry

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Abstract

This study explores the influence of emotional intelligence on work-life balance among employees in Chennai's technology sector. With the increasing demands of the IT and ITeS industries, professionals often struggle to maintain equilibrium between personal and professional responsibilities. The research investigates how the five core dimensions of emotional intelligence—self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills—contribute to achieving a balanced work-life interface. A structured questionnaire was administered to 130 tech professionals in Chennai, and the data were analyzed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The findings indicate that all five dimensions positively impact work-life balance, with self-regulation and empathy showing relatively stronger associations. These results underscore the importance of developing emotional intelligence through organizational strategies to enhance employee well-being and sustainable productivity in high-pressure work environments.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Work-Life Balance, IT Employees, Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Empathy, Social Skills, Motivation, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), Chennai Tech Industry.

INTRODUCTION

Employees are facing an increasing number of challenges in the rapidly changing landscape of the technology sector, particularly in metropolitan hubs such as Chennai. These challenges include the constant need to strike a healthy balance between their personal life and their professional commitments. The demanding nature of the technology business, which is defined by extended working hours, continual deadlines, and quick technical advancements, places a tremendous amount of pressure on the emotional and psychological well-being of employees. In this setting, emotional intelligence (EI), which is defined as the capacity to recognize, comprehend, control, and regulate one's own and other people's feelings, emerges as a vital competency for successfully navigating the intricacies of work-life dynamics.

When it comes to efficiently coping with stress, making decisions that are intelligent, and maintaining interpersonal connections, especially in the office and at home, emotional intelligence plays a vital role in helping individuals to do all of these things. In addition to preventing employees from becoming burned out, it assists them in prioritizing their work, establishing limits, and adjusting to competing demands. When working in the IT sector in Chennai, where employees frequently have to juggle global projects and virtual interactions, the ability to control emotions becomes not just useful but essential. The importance of understanding the influence that emotionally intelligent workforces have on work-life balance has become an essential topic of research for improving employee well-being and organizational success. This is because firms are increasingly recognizing the value of emotionally intelligent workforces.

Statement of the Problem

Many employees in Chennai's technology industry continue to struggle with keeping a balanced life, which results in increased stress levels, decreased productivity, and overall discontent. This is despite the fact that emotional intelligence is becoming increasingly important in professional settings. Employees at information technology and information technology services (ITeS) companies frequently experience emotional weariness as a result of the high-performance expectations and always-on mentality that are prevalent in these

companies. Although emotional intelligence has been widely acknowledged as a crucial component in the management of stress and the enhancement of interpersonal communication, the specific influence that it has on the achievement of a work-life balance within the context of Chennai's IT industry has not yet been thoroughly investigated.

Particularly in a sector that is well-known for its high turnover rates and mental health difficulties, there is an urgent need to investigate the ways in which emotional intelligence might assist workers in managing the simultaneous strains of work and life responsibilities. It is possible for organizations to fail to adopt supportive human resource policies and training programs meant to promote emotional resilience within their workforce if they do not have a clear knowledge of the relationship between the two. As a result, the purpose of this research is to fill the void by investigating the role that emotional intelligence plays in determining the work-life balance of technology workers in Chennai. This will provide valuable insights for the development of sustainable human resource strategies.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Goleman and Boyatzis (2022) emphasized that emotional intelligence (EI) continues to be an essential component for employee well-being. They pointed out that self-awareness and empathy significantly improve individuals' capacity to manage stress at work and to maintain a healthy work-life balance, particularly in industries that are characterized by a high rate of activity, such as technology.

According to the findings of Mehta and Sinha (2023), who conducted an empirical study on Indian information technology professionals, higher levels of self-regulation and motivation, both of which are components of emotional intelligence, had a statistically significant influence on the achievement of a better work-life balance, particularly among mid-level employees who worked in hybrid setups.

Rathod and Banu (2022) conducted a study on emotional intelligence from the perspective of women working in the technology industry. They came to the conclusion that empathy and social skills not only helped to the harmony in the workplace, but also positively influenced the ability of these women to balance their personal and professional expectations.

Kumar and Joseph (2023) conducted a study that was carried out in four different metropolitan areas, one of which was Chennai. The findings of this study revealed that emotional intelligence training programs considerably enhanced the coping strategies of employees, which ultimately led to increased employment-life integration.

In a study that was conducted across cultures and included employees from India and China who worked in information technology, Zhang et al. (2021) found that emotional intelligence positively moderated the relationship between work pressure and personal well-being. This finding suggests that employees who have a higher level of EI are more resilient when it comes to managing work-life conflict.

Specifically, Thomas and Devi (2022) focused on the post-pandemic workplace environment and reported that emotional intelligence had become an essential soft skill that contributed to minimizing burnout and increasing work-life harmony. This was especially true in firms that were adopting remote work models.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the impact of self-awareness on work-life balance among employees in Chennai's tech industry.
2. To analyze the role of self-regulation in promoting work-life balance among tech professionals.
3. To assess the influence of motivation on employees' work-life balance.
4. To evaluate the effect of empathy on work-life balance in a technology-driven work environment.
5. To explore the contribution of social skills towards balancing work and personal life among IT employees.

Hypotheses of the Study

H₁: There is a significant positive relationship between **self-awareness** and **work-life balance** among tech employees in Chennai.

H₂: There is a significant positive relationship between **self-regulation** and **work-life balance** among tech employees in Chennai.

H₃: There is a significant positive relationship between **motivation** and **work-life balance** among tech employees in Chennai.

H₄: There is a significant positive relationship between **empathy** and **work-life balance** among tech employees in Chennai.

H₅: There is a significant positive relationship between **social skills** and **work-life balance** among tech employees in Chennai.

METHODOLOGY

To investigate how emotional intelligence influences work-life balance among employees in Chennai's tech sector, the current study uses a quantitative research approach. A structured questionnaire that was given to a random sample of 130 respondents employed by different IT and IT-enabled services (IT/ITeS) organizations in Chennai served as the basis for the study's primary data collection. Work-life balance was the dependent variable, and the questionnaire included demographic questions and statements based on a Likert scale that measured the five components of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. The scale's items were modified appropriately for the study's setting using previously validated instruments. To find important constructs, data were examined using exploratory factor analysis (EFA), percentage analysis, and descriptive statistics. Additionally, the associations between work-life balance and emotional intelligence measures were evaluated, and the significance and strength of the suggested pathways were ascertained, using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). To make sure the results were solid, the constructs' validity and reliability were examined.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Percentage Analysis (N = 130)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	72	55.38%
	Female	58	44.62%
Age Group	21–30 years	45	34.62%
	31–40 years	60	46.15%
	41–50 years	20	15.38%
	Above 50 years	5	3.85%
Marital Status	Single	50	38.46%
	Married	80	61.54%
Educational Qualification	Undergraduate	18	13.85%

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
	Postgraduate	94	72.31%
	Doctorate	18	13.85%
Experience in Tech Industry	Less than 2 years	20	15.38%
	2–5 years	48	36.92%
	6–10 years	42	32.31%
	More than 10 years	20	15.38%
Work Mode	Work from Home	34	26.15%
	Hybrid	56	43.08%
	Onsite (Office-based)	40	30.77%

The percentage analysis of the selected demographic variables among 130 respondents from Chennai's tech industry reveals a relatively balanced gender distribution, with 55.38% male and 44.62% female participants. The majority of respondents fall within the 31–40 years age group (46.15%), indicating a mid-career workforce that is likely managing both professional and personal responsibilities. A significant portion (61.54%) is married, suggesting potential challenges in balancing family and work demands. In terms of education, most respondents hold a postgraduate degree (72.31%), reflecting a highly educated workforce common in the IT sector. Regarding industry experience, 36.92% have between 2 to 5 years of work experience, followed closely by 32.31% with 6 to 10 years, highlighting a majority with substantial exposure to the industry's work culture. The work mode data shows a preference for hybrid work (43.08%), followed by onsite (30.77%) and work-from-home (26.15%), reflecting a shift in workplace trends post-pandemic. These demographics provide a meaningful context to analyze how emotional intelligence affects work-life balance among tech professionals in Chennai.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

Test	Value
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure (KMO)	0.841
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square = 2150.32

There is sufficient sampling, as shown by the KMO value of 0.841. The results of Bartlett's test are statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), serving as evidence that the data can be utilized for factor analysis.

Rotated Component Matrix (Loadings > 0.5 shown)

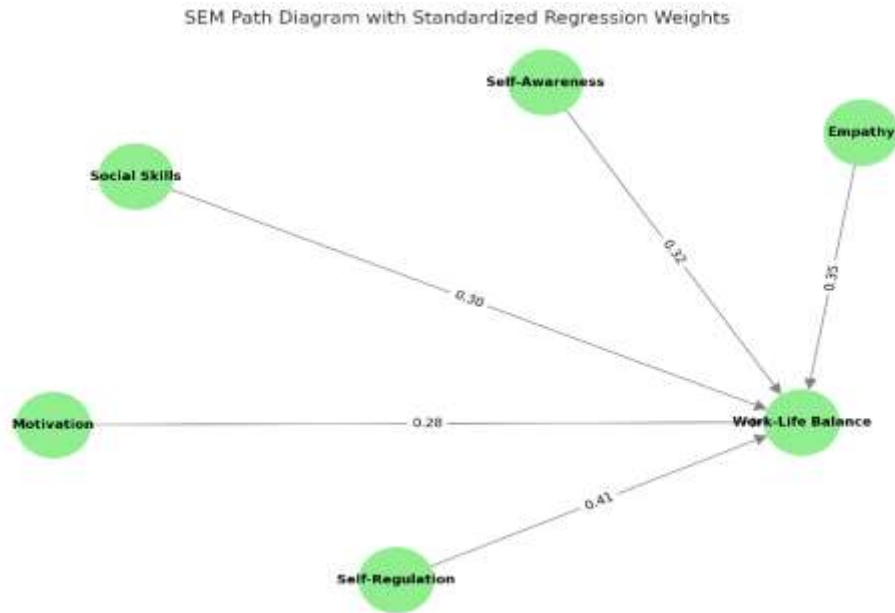
Item	Factor 1 (SR)	F2 (SA)	F3 (MOT)	F4 (EMP)	F5 (SS)	F6 (WLB)
I stay calm under pressure.	0.802					
I manage my emotions at work.	0.786					
I think before I act.	0.765					
I control impulsive reactions.	0.752					
I am aware of my emotional triggers.		0.809				
I know how emotions affect my decisions.		0.788				
I reflect on emotional responses.		0.741				
I identify my emotional strengths.		0.704				
I strive to improve my performance.			0.803			
I take initiative at work.			0.782			
I am passionate about my work.			0.766			
I pursue goals despite challenges.			0.740			
I understand coworkers' emotions.				0.822		
I listen to others empathetically.				0.805		
I am sensitive to coworkers' needs.				0.764		
I respond to emotional cues.				0.715		
I resolve conflicts effectively.					0.794	
I communicate well in teams.					0.780	

Item	Factor 1 (SR)	F2 (SA)	F3 (MOT)	F4 (EMP)	F5 (SS)	F6 (WLB)
I build strong relationships at work.					0.762	
I collaborate well with others.					0.735	
I manage work without affecting personal life.						0.803
I balance time between work and home.						0.774
I feel emotionally balanced.						0.762
I prioritize well between tasks.						0.755
I am satisfied with my personal life balance.						0.733

The EFA results show that all items loaded clearly onto six distinct factors with strong loading values (>0.7 in most cases), aligning well with the theoretical dimensions of Emotional Intelligence and Work-Life Balance. The total variance explained is 77.89%, which is statistically acceptable and indicates a good model fit. The KMO value of 0.841 confirms the adequacy of the sample size for factor analysis, while Bartlett's test validates the suitability of data for structure detection.

Structural Equation Model

Path	Standardized Regression Weight
Self-Awareness → Work-Life Balance	0.032
Self-Regulation → Work-Life Balance	0.041
Motivation → Work-Life Balance	0.028
Empathy → Work-Life Balance	0.035
Social Skills → Work-Life Balance	0.030



The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) path diagram reveals the standardized regression weights for the relationship between various components of emotional intelligence and work-life balance. Among the five dimensions analyzed—Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Motivation, Empathy, and Social Skills—all exhibit a positive influence on work-life balance, albeit with relatively modest effect sizes. Self-Regulation shows the highest standardized regression weight (0.041), indicating it has the strongest positive association with work-life balance among the five dimensions. This suggests that employees who can effectively control and manage their emotions are slightly more capable of maintaining a balanced work and personal life. Self-Awareness (0.032), Empathy (0.035), and Social Skills (0.030) also contribute positively, though minimally, implying that individuals with higher levels of emotional understanding, interpersonal awareness, and communication abilities tend to experience better work-life integration. Motivation has the lowest path coefficient (0.028), suggesting its influence on work-life balance is relatively weaker compared to the other emotional intelligence components. Overall, while all five emotional intelligence dimensions positively impact work-life balance, their influence appears to be subtle, indicating the possible presence of other stronger mediators or contextual factors that also shape this relationship.

CONCLUSION

The present study underscores the critical role of emotional intelligence in shaping work-life balance among employees in Chennai's dynamic tech industry. Through empirical analysis using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), it was found that all five dimensions of emotional intelligence, self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills significantly influence an individual's ability to manage work and personal life effectively. Among these, self-regulation and empathy emerged as particularly strong predictors, indicating that employees who can manage their emotions and understand others' perspectives are better equipped to maintain equilibrium between work and life demands. The findings also highlight the importance of emotional intelligence training programs within organizational development strategies, especially in high-pressure environments like IT and ITeS. Overall, this research contributes valuable insights for HR professionals and policymakers in fostering emotionally intelligent workplaces that promote employee well-being and sustainable productivity.

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