

IMPACT OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE ON THE TURNOVER INTENTION WITH THE MEDIATION OF JOB SATISFACTION – A STUDY BASED ON THE EXECUTIVE LEVEL EMPLOYEES AT A LEADING APPAREL AND TEXTILE MANUFACTURING ORGANIZATION IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

At present, human resource has become the most valuable asset in any organization. Even though human resource is of such importance, one of the main issues faced by organizations is the employee turnover. Meanwhile, the increasing complexities in the business environment naturally force employees to become more and more task-oriented to achieve the expected results, which may ultimately cause dissatisfaction with their job as well as difficulties in maintaining their work-life balance. Having such a context, this study intends to examine the influence of work-life balance and job satisfaction on turnover intention, respectively, and whether job satisfaction mediates the effect of work-life balance on the turnover intention for executive-level employees in one of the leading apparel and textile manufacturing organizations in Sri Lanka. Following the deductive approach, the quantitative methods together with the survey strategy were used for this study. A sample of 97 executive-level employees out of 132 in the said organization was selected by using the simple random sampling method, and the questionnaire was administered through the online platform Google Forms for data collection. Regression analysis was the main statistical method used for analyzing the gathered data. The results of this study indicate that work-life balance and job satisfaction have a negative influence on employee turnover intention, respectively; and job satisfaction partially mediates the negative influence of work-life balance on turnover intention.

Keywords: Work-life balance, turnover intention, job satisfaction, executive-level employees, apparel and textile manufacturing organizations

Introduction

The Apparel Industry can be considered as the lifeblood of the economy of Sri Lanka as it plays a vital role in advancing the country's economy being the largest contributor to economic development. According to the Industry Capability Report of the Apparel Sector published by the Export Development Board, Sri Lanka (2022), the apparel industry gained US dollars 5 billion as export revenue in 2021 which was more than 45% contribution to the total merchandise exports earnings in Sri Lanka while showing a growth of 22% when compared to 2020.

Though the apparel industry carries such an importance to the economy of the country, employee turnover has become one of the major obstacles in achieving targets by the given deadlines in competitive business environments locally as well as globally. At present, the human resource of any organization is considered as a valuable asset rather than a cost. Therefore, reducing employee turnover is important as it is beneficial in ways that improve productivity, reduce recruitment costs, prevent skill drain, etc. (Ellepola, 2014). Since the workforce of the apparel sector consists of employees at the operational level, executive level, and managerial level, the retention of all such employees is important.

In such a context, the executive-level employees in one of the leading apparel and textile manufacturing organizations in Sri Lanka were selected for this study. According to the information provided by the Human Resource Manager of the said organization (personal communication, July 5, 2022), the annual turnover rates of the executive-level employees during the past five years are shown in below Table 1.

Table 1 - Annual employee turnover rate for executive-level employees

Year	Annual employee turnover rate(for executive-level)
2017	15.75%
2018	17.30%
2019	18.92%
2020	18.80%
2021	19.10%

Source: Human Resource Manager of the selected organization, personal communication, July 5, 2022

As per Table 1, an increasing trend in annual executive-level employee turnover rates can be observed during the past five-year period. This provides some sort of indication for the organization to pay adequate attention to reduce the executive-level employee turnover. Reducing executive-level employee turnover is important as they represent not only the skilled but also the knowledgeable workforce. The executive level includes the employees, who deal with the customers and bring businesses to the organization; who make extensive plans for the production of apparel on time and deliver to the customer without delays; who purchase the materials and other supplies for production; etc. Having managed said important tasks by the executive-level employees, if such critical employees are leaving, not only it will affect negatively for the performance and the productivity of the organization but also it will be a loss to the organization.

Even if the executives leave the organization at such a rate annually, the remaining employees may have to cover up their workload of them in addition to the assigned work until the time, suitable replacements are found. On the other hand, being an organization in the apparel industry, though it is important to achieve the daily targets as planned earlier, obviously it is not possible due to the unpredicted incidents. For example, the spread of the Covid-19 virus caused delays in receiving the materials, employees getting infected by Covid-19, and sudden restrictions imposed by the government such as lockdowns. In such cases, the originally made plans have to be revised which resulted in employees making more effort to re-do their work again and again. Even the existing economic instability in the country may cause customers to cancel their orders. For such instances, most executive-level employees have to try their level best to devise convincing strategies to retain the customers with the particular organization by spending more time in addition to their routine work. Having such a work load, the executive employees may become more and more task-oriented as they strive to achieve the results that the organization expects from them. Therefore, sometimes they may not be able to balance their work and life and finally may decide to leave the job after being dissatisfied.

Though there are many types of research based on the work-life balance and turnover intention of employees in different kinds of organizations with several mediating factors, less evidence is found in the existing literature that discusses the impact of work-life balance on turnover intention with job satisfaction as the mediator by referring to the executive-level employees of apparel sector organizations. Therefore, the objectives of this study in relation to the executive-level employees in the selected apparel and textile manufacturing organization in Sri Lanka are;

1. To determine the impact of work-life balance on turnover intention.
2. To determine the impact of job satisfaction on turnover intention.
3. To find out whether job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work-life balance and turnover intention.

Literature Review

If employee turnover is considered, the reasons why individuals leave a job vary from person to person. However, organizations invest a lot in their employees in terms of induction and training, developing, maintaining and retaining them

in their organization. Hence, it is important to identify the various reasons for people leaving their current jobs.

According to Rao (2007), individuals leave organizations due to individual-related factors, due to the role or job-related factors, organization-related factors, professional factors, and societal factors including socio-economic environment related and peer pressure, while Liyanage and Galhena (2014) found that civil status, residency, recognition, social image, job alternatives, work load, and work-life balance are significant determinants in predicting the turnover intention of sewing machine operators at a leading apparel company. Work-life balance has a variety of positive effects on workers, including a rise in commitment, job satisfaction, absenteeism, productivity, and autonomy at work, as well as a decrease in accidents at work, family problems, and the desire to change careers or quit their current position. (McDonald, Brown, & Bradely, 2005; Malik, Gomez, Ahmad, & Saif, 2010; Purohit & Patil, 2013; Dhas, 2015; Suifan, Abdallah, & Diab, 2016). Sturges and Guest (2004) mentioned that the main professional goal of many people is to integrate and balance their familial, personal, and professional requirements. As per Malik et al. (2010), job satisfaction and intentions to leave the organization are the indicators of how employees feel about their organization and also, when their working environment enables them to meet their needs, employees typically exhibit decreased desires to quit with higher levels of job satisfaction.

“Work Life Balance (WLB) is a wide concept which includes appropriate equilibrium between career and aspiration on one hand, compared with pleasure, vacation, and family life on the other” (AlHazemi & Ali, 2016, p.74). Brougha et al. (2014) described work-life balance as a subjective assessment of an individual on the compatibility of his or her work and personal activities, as well as overall life in general. For the purpose of this study, work-life balance is defined as the accomplishment of satisfactory experiences in all areas of one’s life distributing own resources such as time, energy and commitment across all such areas in a better way (Kirchmeyer, 2000).

Turnover Intention can be defined as the degree to which an individual plans to leave the company (Lacity, Iyer & Rudramuniyaiah, 2008). According to Sousa-Poza and Henneberger (2004), the likelihood that a person will change jobs within a specific time frame is reflected in turnover intention. Turnover intention of an employee is defined as "conscious and deliberate willfulness to leave the organization" (Tett & Meyer, 1993, p.262) for this study.

Sempene, Rieger and Roodt (2002) describe job satisfaction as the way an individual perceives and assesses his or her work, and the individual's particular requirements, values, and expectations influence it. Job satisfaction is an individual’s way of thinking about a job and the logical, affective, and evaluative responses to it (Baron & Greenberg, 2003). According to Anushi, Priyanath and Tennakoon (2022), job satisfaction simply means a feeling of being satisfied in a job individual which acts as an encouragement for the particular individual to work. In this study, the definition of Weiss, Dawis, England and Lofquist (1967) for job satisfaction is used as the degree to which people achieve and sustain correspondence with their environment, meeting both extrinsic and intrinsic requirements.

Kaushalya and Perera (2018); Sitorus, Raharjo and Kusumawati (2018); and Kundu, Mehra and Mor (2017) found that work-life balance has a negative influence on employee turnover intention from their respective studies. The results of several other studies revealed that there is a significant negative correlation or relationship between work-life balance and turnover intention (Fayyazi and Aslani, 2015; Noor, 2011; Malik, Gomez, Ahmad, & Saif, 2010). Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated for the relationship between work-life balance and turnover intention.

H₁: Work-life balance has a negative influence on the turnover intentions of the executive-level employees in the selected apparel and textile manufacturing organization.

According to Abeykoon and Perera (2019); Fiernaningsih, Nimran, Rahardjo and Arifin (2019); Sitorus et al. (2018); Kundu et al. (2017); and Azmi, Hanafi and Adam (2001), there is a significant positive influence of work-life balance on job satisfaction. The results of another study conducted by Fayyazi and Aslani (2015) revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction. Malik et al. (2010) found a positive correlation between work-life balance and job satisfaction. Accordingly, the hypothesis for the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction is developed as follows.

H₂: Work-life balance has a positive influence on the job satisfaction of the executive-level employees in the selected apparel and textile manufacturing organization.

A significant negative impact of job satisfaction on turnover intention was found respectively from the studies conducted by Verdana and Satrya (2022); Fiernaningsih et al. (2019); Sitorus et al. (2018); Kundu et al. (2017); and Azmi et al. (2001). Further, Fayyazi and Aslani (2015); and Mihelic (2014) found significant negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention while Malik et al. (2010) found a strong negative correlation between job satisfaction and turnover intention. Considering the above-mentioned literature evidence, the following hypothesis is formulated for the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention.

H₃: Job satisfaction has a negative influence on the turnover intentions of the executive-level employees in the selected apparel and textile manufacturing organization.

Nair, Jayabalan, Perumal, and Subraman (2021); and Fayyazi and Aslani (2015) found a full mediation of job satisfaction on the relationship between work-life balance and turnover intention while a partial mediation of job satisfaction on the relationship between work-life balance and turnover intention was found by Kundu et al. (2017) and Noor (2011). Accordingly, the hypothesis developed for the mediation of job satisfaction on the relationship between work-life balance and turnover intention is given below.

H₄: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work-life balance and the turnover intention of the executive-level employees in the selected apparel and textile manufacturing organization.

Methodology

Population and Sample

Since the population means the entire group of individuals, events or objects that the researcher intends to study; the target population of this study consisted of all 132 executive-level employees in the selected apparel and textile manufacturing organization in Sri Lanka.

A sample of 97 executive-level employees from 132 executive-level employees in the population was selected by referring to the study of Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Though there were several sampling techniques, simple random sampling was used for this study in which each element in the population has an equal chance of being selected for the sample. The sample frame of this study is the list of executive-level employees. Since the sample size is 97, that much of random numbers were generated by using excel to select the individuals to the sample from the sample frame.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework constructed for this study is shown in Figure 1

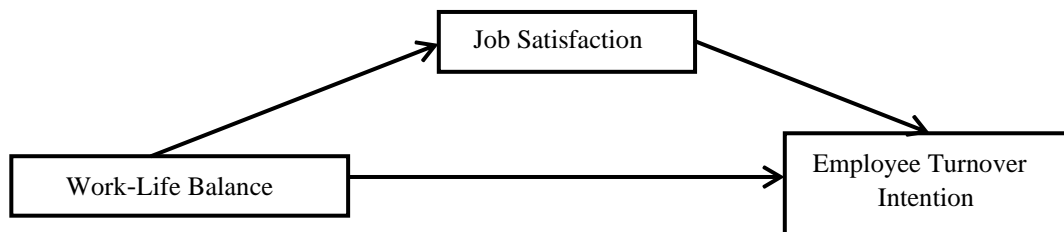


Figure 1 – Conceptual Framework

As per Fisher, Bulger and Smith (2009), there are four (04) dimensions of work-life balance named as, “Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL)”, “Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW)”, “Work Enhancement of Personal Life (WEPL)”, and “Personal Life Enhancement of Work (PLEW)”. According to Mobley, Horner and Hollingsworth (1978),

“Thinking to quit”, “Intention to search”, and “Intention to quit” are three (03) indicators of turnover intention. “Intrinsic Satisfaction”, “Extrinsic Satisfaction”, and “General Satisfaction” are three (03) dimensions of job satisfaction (Weiss et al., 1967).

Data Collection

Since this was a quantitative research and adapted the survey strategy, a questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire consisted of four main sections. The first section includes the statements relevant for gathering demographic data of the respondents. The second section included 17 statements developed according to the dimensions and indicators of work-life balance that were adapted from the study of Fisher et al. (2009). For job satisfaction, 16 statements were incorporated into section three of the questionnaire adapting from the shorter version of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ20) which originally had 20 statements developed by Weiss et al. (1967). The last section consisted of three statements with regard to turnover intention obtained from Mobley et al. (1978). A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the main concepts, work-life balance, turnover intention and job satisfaction.

After developing the questionnaire, a „Google Form“ was created with the finalized statements enabling the distribution of the questionnaire to the respondents online conveniently and receiving the responses via the same online platform.

Validity

Adikaram, Gooneratne and Udunuwara (2021) defined validity as the degree to which a concept, construct or variable of interest is reliably measured. Content validity ensures that the measure includes an adequate and representative set of items that tap the concept (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p.221).

Reliability

As per Sekaran and Bougie (2016), the reliability of a measure illustrates the degree to which a measure is free from biases or errors and it guarantees consistent measurement over time as well as across the different items in the survey instrument. Alternatively, the reliability of a measure is also a sign of the consistency and steadiness with which the instrument assesses the concept and provides help in determining the "goodness" of a measure (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Cronbach's alpha is one of the methods that is used commonly to measure reliability and if the results indicate 0.7 or above, it can be considered as a satisfactory score (Adikaram et al., 2021).

Data Analysis

Data analysis techniques used for this study are as follows.

Regression Analysis

Regression with a single independent variable or simple linear regression modelling involves finding the straight line that best fits the data that approximates to the true relationship between the response or the dependent variable Y and a single independent variable X. The statistical model for simple linear regression is given below.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + s$$

Where β_0 and β_1 are intercept and slope parameters of a straight line but in regression, β_1 is referred to as the regression coefficient. The term ε represents the random error which describes the difference between the observed value of Y and the fitted straight line.

Steps to check the mediation effect

The mediator function of a third variable “represents the generative mechanism through which the focal independent variable is able to influence the dependent variable of interest” (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The following three steps introduced by Baron and Kenny (1986) were used to check the mediation of job satisfaction on the relationship

between work-life balance and turnover intention.

1. First, a direct effect from the causal variable on the dependent variable needs to be checked. For that, a regression model should be fitted by keeping the work-life balance as the independent variable and turnover intention as the dependent variable and its significance should be checked.
2. In the second step, the impact of the causal variable on mediating variable should be assessed and in this context, it can be done by fitting a regression model keeping work-life balance as the independent variable and job satisfaction as the dependent variable. This relationship should be significant to proceed for the mediation.
3. As for the third step, the effect of the mediator variable on the dependent variable should be assessed. For that, a regression model should be fitted by keeping work-life balance and job satisfaction as independent variables and turnover intention as the dependent variable.

Depending on the significance of the regression models fitted as above, one of the following decisions can be taken with respect to this context.

- If the direct relationship is significant and the indirect (mediating) relationship is not significant, then there is no mediation.
- If both direct and indirect (mediating) relationships are significant, then there is partial mediation.
- If the direct relationship is not significant and the indirect (mediating) relationship is significant, then there is a full mediation.

Data Analysis

Reliability and Validity

The Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients for the scales used to measure the concepts of work-life balance, turnover intention and job satisfaction are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 – Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for the measurements of concepts

Concept	Number of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient
Work-life Balance (WLB)	17	0.894
Turnover Intention (TI)	3	0.922
Job Satisfaction (JS)	16	0.886

It can be observed from Table 2 that the Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for the measurement used for the concepts, work-life balance, turnover intention, and job satisfaction are greater than 0.7 indicating high reliabilities respectively. The content validity of the questionnaire was assured with the expertise knowledge in the field. The comments received for the improvements were incorporated before distributing the questionnaire for data collection.

Descriptive Analysis

A summary of the results received from the descriptive analysis is given in Table 3.

Table 3 – A summary of Descriptive Analysis

Construct	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
WLB	3.35	1.65	5.00	3.0158	0.72138
TI	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.8900	0.96911

JS	3.19	1.69	4.88	3.3270	0.74386
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Regression Analysis

The results of the ANOVA for the fitted regression models are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 - ANOVA of the fitted regression models

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1. WLB → TI	45.317	1	45.317	96.004	.000
2. WLB → JS	15.291	1	15.291	38.402	.000
3. JS → TI	22.584	1	22.584	31.749	.000
4. WLB, JS → TI*	47.143	2	23.572	51.508	.000

It can be observed from Table 4.3, that the p-values of the fitted regression models (0.000) is less than 0.05 implying a statistically significant prediction of the respective dependent variable by the overall regression model.

The results relevant to coefficients of the fitted regression models are given in Table 5

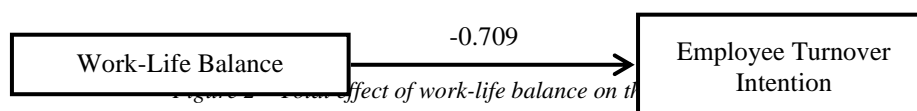
Table 5- Coefficients of the fitted regression models

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1. WLB → TI (H ₁)	Constant	5.762	.301		19.123	.000
	WLB	-.952	.097	-.709	-9.798	.000
2. WLB → JS (H ₂)	Constant	1.659	.277		5.993	.000
	WLB	.553	.089	.537	6.197	.000
3. JS → TI (H ₃)	Constant	5.059	.394		12.828	.000
	JS	-.652	.116	-.500	-5.635	.000
4. WLB, JS → TI*	Constant	6.127	.348		17.591	.000
	WLB	-.831	.113	-.618	-7.326	.000
	JS	-.220	.110	-.169	-1.998	.049

* The regression model was fitted as the third step of the method used by Baron and Kenny (1986) to check the mediation of job satisfaction on the relationship between work-life balance and turnover intention.

As shown in Table 5, the p-values of the coefficients of the independent variables in the fitted regression models are less than 0.05 respectively; the hypotheses H₁, H₂, and H₃ are accepted at the 5% level of significance. The results obtained for checking the mediation effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between work-life balance and turnover intention are as follows:

According to the 1st regression model fitted in Table 4.4, the standardized coefficient of work-life balance in the regression model is -0.709 and it represents the total effect of work-life balance on the turnover intention.



As per the 2nd regression model in Table 4.4, the standardized coefficient of work-life balance is 0.537 and it represents the effect of work-life balance on the job satisfaction. The fitted 4th regression model provides, the standardized coefficients

for work-life balance and job satisfaction as -0.618 and -0.169 respectively.



Figure 3 - Direct effect of work-life balance on the turnover intention and indirect effect of the job satisfaction

The total effect of work-life balance on turnover intention is the summation of direct effect and indirect effect. The indirect effect is called as the mediating effect as well.

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Indirect effect} &= 0.537 * -0.169 = -0.0908 \\
 \text{Total effect} &= \text{Direct effect} + \text{Indirect effect} \\
 &= -0.618 + (-0.0908) \\
 &= \underline{\underline{-0.709}}
 \end{aligned}$$

Since total effect obtained as in Figure 4.2 is equal to the total effect shown in Figure 4.1 and as per the 4th regression model in Table 4.4, the p-values of the coefficients of the independent variables in the fitted regression models are less than 0.05 respectively; the hypotheses H₄ is accepted at the 5% level of significance.

A summary of hypothesis testing by using regression analysis is given in Table 6.

Table 6 – A summary of hypothesis testing by using regression analysis

Hypothesis	Rejecting/ Accepting the hypothesis
H ₁ : Work-life balance has a negative impact on the turnover intention	Accepted
H ₂ : Work-life balance has a positive impact on the job satisfaction	Accepted
H ₃ : Job satisfaction has a negative impact on the turnover intention	Accepted
H ₄ : Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work-life balance and turnover intention	Accepted

Discussion And Implications

According to Table 4.2, the mean values of work-life balance, turnover intention and job satisfaction are slightly varied around the average of the scale which is around 3 indicating the perception of the executive-level employees of the selected organization on work-life balance, turnover intention and job satisfaction are on moderate or average levels. If the standard deviation is considered, it is around 0.7 for work-life balance and turnover intention while it is approximately 1 for turnover intention. That means the dispersion of values around the mean for work-life balance and job satisfaction is almost at the same level while it is a little bit higher level for turnover intention. According to a descriptive analysis of the study conducted by Nair et al. (2021) for married female academics in Malaysia work-life balance has a mean of around 3.04 with a standard deviation of about 0.82 indicating a slight disagreement of having work-life balance while having a mean about 4.13 with an approximate standard deviation of 0.93 for the turnover intention that indicates a higher level on it. At the same time, job satisfaction has a mean value of about 2.35 with a standard deviation of around 0.62 reflecting a

moderate disagreement on job satisfaction.

Kaushalya and Perera (2018) found mean values of about 3.65 and 2.60 with standard deviations around 0.52 and 0.46 for work-life balance and turnover intention respectively from a study conducted for the employees in the selected private banks in Colombo, Sri Lanka that indicates the above average level of work-life balance and slightly below average level of turnover intention. As per the study conducted by Kundu et al. (2017) for the employees at 226 organizations operating in India, work-life balance has a mean of 4.33 with a standard deviation of 0.58 and job satisfaction has a mean of 4.36 with a standard deviation of 0.55 reflecting higher levels while turnover intention has a mean of 1.79 with a standard deviation of 0.86 implying lower levels of it.

When considering the descriptive analysis of the study with the analyses available in the literature as mentioned above, it can be understood that the mean values and the standard deviation values differ depending on the kind of study while indicating different levels for the constructs of work-life balance, turnover intention and job satisfaction.

Though the perceptions of the executive-level employees of the selected organization on work-life balance, turnover intention, and job satisfaction are on moderate levels as per the descriptive analysis, since the results of the regression analyses reveal that both work-life balance and job satisfaction have negative impacts on turnover intention, it is wise enough for this particular organization to implement more new practices relevant to work-life balance as well as to job satisfaction of the executive-level employees to retain the best talent in the organization for a longer period of time.

It is discovered from the regression analysis of this study that work-life balance has a negative influence on turnover intention. This is in line with the findings on work-life balance and turnover intention indicated through past studies conducted by Kaushalya & Perera (2018), Sitorus et al. (2018), Kundu et al. (2017), and Fayyazi & Aslani (2015).

The results of the regression analysis performed in respect of work-life balance and job satisfaction show that there is a positive influence of work-life balance on job satisfaction. Similar results were found by Anushi et al. (2022), Verdana & Satrya (2022), Nair et al. (2021), Nurdin & Rohaeni's (2020), Abeykoon & Perera (2019), Fiernaningsih et al. (2019), Sitorus et al. (2018), Kundu et al. (2017), and Fayyazi & Aslani (2015).

The results of the regression analysis in this study further reveal that job satisfaction has a negative influence on turnover intention as similar to the results of previous studies in this regard found by Nair et al. (2021), Nurdin & Rohaeni (2020), Sitorus et al. (2018), Kundu et al. (2017), and Fayyazi & Aslani (2015).

Furthermore, as per the regression analysis, job satisfaction partially mediates the impact of work-life balance on turnover intention, in line with the findings of past studies conducted by Kundu et al. (2017) and Noor (2011). Though the results of this study indicate a partial mediation of job satisfaction on the relationship between work-life balance and turnover intention, Verdana and Satrya (2022), Lebang and Ardiyanti (2021), Nair et al. (2021), Fayyazi and Aslani (2015) found a full mediation of job satisfaction on the relationship of considered two constructs from their respective studies.

Conclusions

This research was conducted to achieve three main objectives in relation to the executive-level employees at one of the leading apparel and textile manufacturing organizations in Sri Lanka. According to the respective regression analysis performed to test the formulated hypotheses, the following conclusions can be made with respect to the executive-level employees in the selected organization;

- Work-life balance has a significant negative influence on the turnover intention.
- Job satisfaction has a significant negative impact on the turnover intention.
- Job satisfaction partially mediates the negative impact of work-life balance on the turnover intention.

Limitations

This research is limited to study the impact of the work-life balance on turnover intention of the executive-level employees in the selected apparel and textile manufacturing organization in Sri-Lanka with the mediation of job satisfaction. However, there can be other factors influencing to the turnoverintention of the executive level employees.

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