

# Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Work–Life Balance Among Married Women Healthcare Professionals in Select Cities of Karnataka

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2026.1304000100>

Received: 06 April 2026; Accepted: 12 April 2026; Published: 04 May 2026

## ABSTRACT

This conceptual paper examines the impact of Emotional Intelligence (EI) on Work-Life Balance (WLB) among married women professionals in healthcare sector. The study proposes a model that links key EI dimensions – motivation, self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy and social skills to work-life outcomes, based on existing literature and theoretical frameworks. It also highlights the role of Emotional Intelligence (EI) as a vital resource for handling stress, lowering work-life conflict, and enhancing general wellbeing. It considers demographic and contextual factors that influences this relationship. It provides valuable insights for enhancing employee well-being in healthcare settings as well as an organized foundation for upcoming empirical research.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Work–Life Balance, Married Women, Healthcare Professional, Karnataka

## INTRODUCTION

In the recent times, the concept of Work–Life Balance (WLB) has gained widespread attention. Work–Life Balance refers to an individual’s capacity or ability to manage both work and personal life in a way that minimizes stress. The study on work-life balance has gained momentum in both organizations and academic research, specifically in fields with high emotional demands and immense work pressure. The healthcare sector represents one such domain where professionals must handle exhaustive workloads, long working hours, and emotionally demanding circumstances. The challenge of dual role by balancing work and family obligations becomes even more strenuous for married women in the healthcare sector, which frequently leads to poor job performance, decreased wellbeing and burnout.

In this context, Emotional Intelligence (EI) has emerged as a core competence that enables individuals to understand, regulate, and manage emotions effectively. EI encompasses dimensions such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Individuals with higher levels of EI are more capable of handling stress and maintaining balance between their professional and personal roles.

The relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Work–Life Balance can be understood through various theories, including Role Theory and Conservation of Resources Theory, which suggest that individuals with higher emotional stability are better in managing work and personal demands. Emotional labour is high in the healthcare domain and EI plays a vital role in helping professionals to cope with stress and maintain balance.

Even though there is increasing interest in this topic, the conceptual framework that integrates Emotional Intelligence and Work-Life Balance is less explored, especially of married women in healthcare sector. This gap in research is significantly noticeable in the growing economy such as Karnataka, India. This gap emphasizes the need for a structured framework that explains the impact of EI on WLB in this demographic group.

This conceptual paper aims to develop a theoretical framework that links Emotional Intelligence to Work–Life Balance among married women healthcare professionals. The paper helps in understanding of how emotional can enhance well-being and job performance in high pressure work environment. It does so, by combining

existing literature and conceptual perspectives. This paper adopts a conceptual approach to develop a framework linking Emotional Intelligence and Work–Life Balance.

## Research Gap

Previous studies have examined the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Work–Life Balance. However, most of these studies focus only on direct relationships between the two variables. They are mainly conducted in general workforce settings. Very few studies have developed a combined conceptual framework. Earlier research does not integrate multiple theoretical perspectives to explain this relationship in a comprehensive way.

In addition, limited attention has been given to contextual and demographic factors. This study addresses these gaps by developing a theory-driven conceptual framework. It provides a broader and more structured understanding of the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Work–Life Balance.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Understanding how Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Work–Life Balance (WLB) are related, requires basic knowledge of organizational and psychological theories. This study is based on important theories that explain how individuals handle different roles in life. It also throws light on how people deal with stress. Additionally, it focuses on how they maintain balance between professional and personal life.

### Emotional Intelligence Theory

The concept of Emotional Intelligence was introduced by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and later made popular by Goleman (1995). EI refers to the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and utilize emotions effectively in oneself and others.

EI is commonly conceptualized through five core dimensions:

- **Self-awareness** – understanding and recognizing one’s emotions
- **Self-regulation** – controlling and managing emotional responses
- **Motivation** – using emotions to achieve goals
- **Empathy** – understanding others’ emotions
- **Social skills** – managing relationships effectively

Emotional Intelligence helps people handle stress, build strong relationships, and adapt to difficult situations. Individuals with higher EI are better at managing their emotions and interactions. Consequently, they experience better mental well-being and use more effective coping tactics.

### Work–Life Balance Theory

Work–Life Balance is defined as the ability to maintain a healthy balance between work and personal responsibilities. This ensure that people have enough time for work, family, rest and leisure. According to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), work–family conflict arises when the demands of work and family roles are incompatible. WLB is often understood through three dimensions:

- Work interference with personal life (WIPL)
- Personal life interference with work (PLIW)
- Work–life enhancement (WLE)

For married women healthcare professionals, achieving WLB is particularly challenging due to dual role expectations and conventions.

### **Role Theory**

**Role Theory** explains that individuals perform multiple roles such as employee, spouse and parent. Each role has its own expectations and responsibilities. Conflict arises when these roles compete for person's time and energy.

Married women professionals working in healthcare sector often experience role conflict and role **overload**, which negatively impacts their Work–Life Balance. Emotional Intelligence can help them manage these challenges by improving emotional control and decision making. It also enables them to prioritize their roles, responsibilities and regulate emotions.

### **Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory**

The **Conservation of Resources Theory** proposed by Hobfoll in 1989 explains how individuals try to gain, maintain, and protect valuable resources. These resources include emotional and psychological resources.

Emotional Intelligence is considered a capacity that helps individuals:

- Manage stress
- Prevent burnout
- Maintain energy across multiple roles

Individuals with higher EI can manage and conserve their energy and resources more effectively. Thereby helping individuals in maintain better Work–Life Balance.

### **Affective Events Theory**

**Affective Events Theory** proposed by Weiss & Cropanzano in 1996 explains how workplace events influence employees' attitudes and behaviors.

In healthcare sector:

- Frequent emotional interactions affect an individual's well-being
- EI enable individuals to respond positively to such situations

Thus, EI influences how professionals understand and respond to job stress. This in turn affects their Work–Life Balance.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Based on the above-mentioned theories, this study proposes that Emotional Intelligence is an important psychological resource. It enables married women healthcare professionals to manage both work and personal life demands effectively.

While Role Theory explains the conflict arising from multiple responsibilities, Conservation of Resources Theory provides deeper insight into how Emotional Intelligence helps individuals preserve psychological resources under stress. Although Affective Events Theory captures emotional reactions in workplace settings, it may not fully explain long-term work–family balance challenges, which are better addressed through Role Theory. These theories complement each other by addressing role conflict, emotional regulation, and stress adaptation, making them appropriate for analyzing healthcare professionals' work–life experiences.

## Framework Description

The proposed framework explains the relationship between key concepts in the study:

### Independent Variable (IV):

Emotional Intelligence and its dimensions

- Self-awareness
- Self-regulation
- Motivation
- Empathy
- Social skills

### Dependent Variable (DV):

Work–Life Balance

- Work interference with personal life
- Personal life interference with work
- Work–life enhancement

### Contextual / Moderating Variables:

- Age
- Work experience
- Number of children
- Working hours
- Type of healthcare institution

### Relationship Explanation

- Emotional Intelligence improves emotional regulation and coping skills, reducing work–family conflict (Role Theory).
- EI acts as a vital resource that protects against stress and burnout (COR Theory).
- EI influences how individuals' respond to workplace emotions, improving overall well-being (Affective Events Theory).

Thus, higher Emotional Intelligence is expected to:

- Reduce work–life conflict
- Improve work–life enrichment
- Enhance overall Work–Life Balance

## Conceptual Model Development

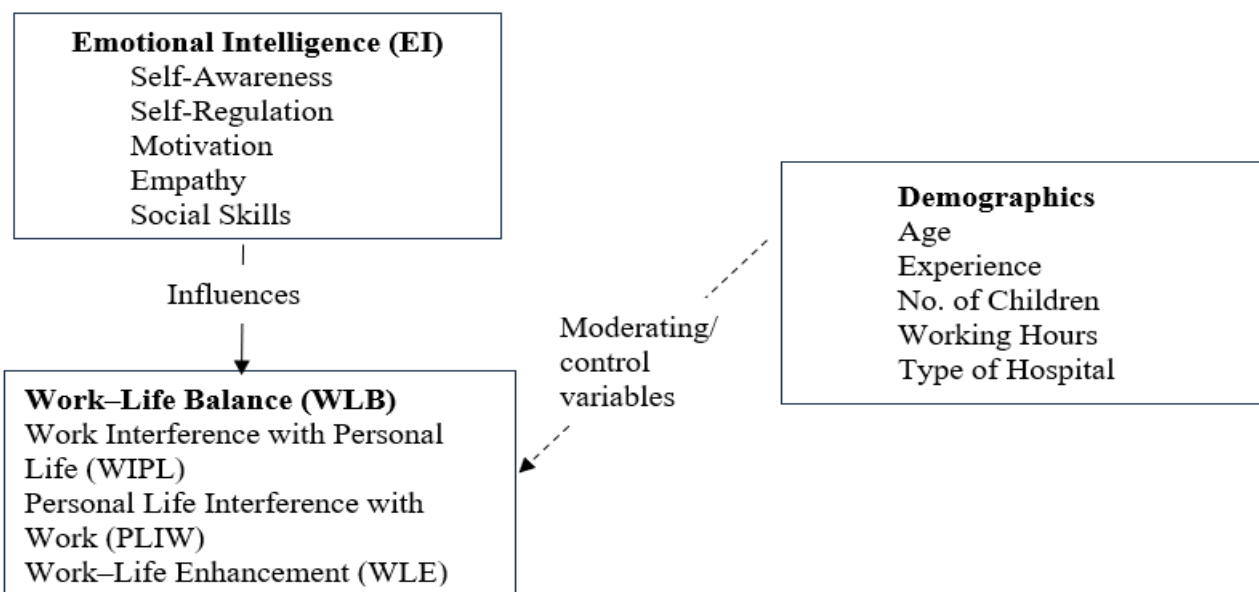
The conceptual model positions Emotional Intelligence (EI) as the independent variable influencing Work–Life Balance (WLB) among married women healthcare professionals. EI is conceptualized through its core dimensions: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills which shape an individual’s ability to manage emotions, respond to workplace demands, and balance professional and personal responsibilities effectively. In the healthcare context, where emotional demands and role pressures are high, these competencies serve as essential psychological resources that support resilience and adaptive coping.

Work - Life Balance is treated as the dependent variable, reflecting the extent to which individuals are able to maintain equilibrium between work obligations and family or personal life. Higher levels of Emotional Intelligence are expected to reduce work–family conflict, improve emotional coping, and enhance overall well-being, thereby contributing positively to WLB outcomes.

Demographic factors such as age, working hours, number of children, work experience, and type of hospital are incorporated as contextual variables that may influence the strength and nature of the EI–WLB relationship. These factors are important because they shape personal and professional demands differently across individuals, thereby affecting how Emotional Intelligence is applied in balancing multiple roles.

The proposed model takes theoretical perspectives from Role Theory, Conservation of Resources Theory, and Affective Events Theory, which together explain how emotional capabilities help individuals manage competing role expectations, conserve psychological resources, and respond effectively to emotionally demanding situations.

The visual representation below illustrates the relationships among the main variables, their dimensions, and the overall structure of the proposed conceptual framework.



## Hypothetical Statements

- **H1:** Emotional Intelligence positively influences Work–Life Balance.
- **H2:** Self-regulation reduces work–family conflict.
- **H3:** Empathy and social skills improve interpersonal relationships and WLB.
- **H4:** Motivation enhances the ability to balance professional and personal roles.
- **H5:** Demographic variables moderate the EI–WLB relationship.

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## DISCUSSION

The framework suggests that EI helps in better emotional control and stress management. This leads to improved Work–Life Balance. In healthcare sector, where emotional demands are high, EI is essential for maintaining well-being and performance.

### Implications

#### Theoretical Implications

- Integrates multiple theories into one model
- Extends EI–WLB research in a specific context

#### Practical Implications

- Need for EI training programs
- Flexible work policies
- Employee well-being initiatives

#### Future Research Directions

Future research should empirically test the proposed framework using advanced and robust statistical techniques such as structural equation modeling to examine the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Work–Life Balance. Longitudinal study can help examine changes over time. Comparative studies across different sectors and cultures can help improve applicability. Further research may also look at other factors such as job stress and organizational support and also use these factors as mediating and moderating variables. Additionally, intervention-based studies on Emotional Intelligence development can provide practical ways to improve Work–Life Balance. In addition, intervention-based research focusing on Emotional Intelligence training programs can help assess practical strategies for enhancing Work–Life Balance among healthcare professionals and improving organizational outcomes.

## CONCLUSION

This conceptual paper highlights the important role of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in shaping Work–Life Balance (WLB) among married women healthcare professionals. In the demanding healthcare environment, balancing work, personal, and family responsibilities is a major challenge. The study suggests that Emotional Intelligence such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills helps individuals manage stress, control emotions, and maintain balance between work and personal life.

By using theories like Role Theory, Conservation of Resources Theory, and Affective Events Theory, the paper develops a framework explaining the link between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Work–Life Balance (WLB). The model suggests that higher Emotional Intelligence reduces work–family conflict, improves work–life enrichment, and supports overall well-being. It also considers factors like age, work experience, and family responsibilities as important influences on this relationship.

The paper adds to existing research by providing a clear, theory-based framework that can be tested in future studies. It also offers practical suggestions for healthcare organizations, such as Emotional Intelligence training and supportive work policies to improve employee well-being. In conclusion, developing Emotional Intelligence is important for achieving better Work–Life Balance, improving job performance, and enhancing quality of life. Future research can further test and apply this framework in different settings and populations.

This paper is conceptual in nature and does not include empirical validation, which may limit its immediate contribution to evidence-based research. However, the proposed framework provides a strong theoretical foundation for future empirical studies.

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