

Impact of Work-Life Balance Policies and Practices on Work Engagement of Women Entrepreneurs

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ABSTRACT

Women entrepreneurs contribute towards economic development and efficiency; nevertheless, their day-to-day participation in work is limited by their work-life balance (WLB) issues. The purpose of this study is to assess the effects of WLB policies such as flexible working hours, parental leave, childcare, mental health support, and financial aid on the work engagement of women entrepreneurs in Rajasthan and adjacent areas. The study applies the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model and uses a quantitative research design in which information is gathered from a sample of women entrepreneurs via structured surveys for analysis. Engagement levels in Vigor, dedication, and absorption are measured through the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9), while the correlation rate as well as multiple regression analysis is used to evaluate the connection between WLB policies and engagement results. The analysis shows that the policies have a positive and substantial relationship to work engagement and the strongest predictors of engagement were discovered to be mental health initiatives and parental leave/childcare assistance. Other policies that positively contributed, but not as strongly, were flexible work arrangements and financial assistance. The results suggest that structured WLB policies are associated with higher levels of engagement among entrepreneurs, indicating that there is a gap in institutional support, workplace flexibility, and well-being services that are specifically designed for entrepreneurial environments. This study adds to the limited literature on work-life balance (WLB) and female entrepreneurship by applying the JD-R Model to self-employed women and explaining how job resources contribute to entrepreneurial commitment. There is a need for policymakers and business incubators to pay attention to mental health issues and go beyond parental leave policies and financial support programs to promote sustainable engagement among women entrepreneurs. The results are useful for women entrepreneurship networks, government institutions, and industry constituents aimed at addressing gender imbalances in economic participation and advancing the establishment of women-led businesses. Further studies should look into the processes of WLB policies over time and their impact on engagement in specific industries.

Keywords: Work-life balance, Women entrepreneurs, Work engagement, Flexible work arrangements, Mental health initiatives.

Introduction

The role of entrepreneurship as a key driver of economic development has been evident especially among women in emerging economies as it promotes innovation, employment opportunities, and financial self-sufficiency (Brush, De Bruin, & Welter, 2021). Women business owners have contributed greatly towards the achievement of inclusive economic growth, yet there are numerous barriers that continue to pose challenges to their active participation and sustainability in business (Marlow & McAdam, 2022). Among these barriers, work-life balance (WLB) remains critical as female entrepreneurs are often burdened with multiple roles – professional, family, and social (Kossek, Valcour, & Lirio, 2020). This division of labour leads to heightened levels of stress, decreased satisfaction with one's job, and reduced work engagement, which in turn impacts business performance and sustainability (Welter, Baker, & Audretsch, 2019). Considering these factors, examining the relationship between work-life balance policies and the work engagement of women entrepreneurs is significant for policymakers and business support institutions.

According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2003), work engagement is a positive and fulfilling form of the wellbeing and psychological state of an individual at work. It combines elements of Vigor (energy and mental stamina), dedication (strong sense of pride and enthusiasm for his/her work), and absorption (concentration and total attention dedicated to work). Productivity, innovation, and long-term sustainability have all been associated with increased levels of work engagement (Demerouti et al., 2001). For women entrepreneurs, however, maintaining or sustaining work engagement is often dependent upon adequate work-life balance policies such as flexible working hours, parental leave, childcare, and mental health support (Ratten, 2021). Unlike other participants working in traditional corporate organizations, self-employed women do not have established support systems, which makes it difficult for them to implement strategies to address work-life balance issues (Pathak, Goltz, & Buche, 2021). There is, however, a lack of research examining the effectiveness of such policies, especially in developing countries like India where sociocultural norms and gender roles influence entrepreneurship. Over the last decade, the Indian entrepreneurial ecosystem has shown remarkable growth, resulting in the emergence of more women-led businesses throughout different sectors (De Clercq & Honig, 2020). In particular, there has been a rise in feminine entrepreneurial activities within Rajasthan, aided by government policies, financial assistance, and socio-economic changes (Brush et al., 2021). Nonetheless, women entrepreneurs in Rajasthan still face challenges in accessing funds, societal views on women and household chores, and lack of supportive work-life balance policies (Welter et al., 2019). Evidence suggests that Indian entrepreneurial women work an average of 49 hours a week in business activities while tending to house work and children single-handedly (Kossek et al., 2020). This level of effort often leads to fatigue, burnout, and withdrawal from business activities, which calls for immediate institutional and organizational action to foster healthy work-life balance conditions. Pathak et al. (2021) noted there are few studies examining work-life balance (WLB) policies in the context of female entrepreneurship, as the existing literature has mainly focused on the challenges of achieving WLB among corporate and managerial employees. Deconstructing the traditional workplaces, Demerouti et al. (2001) offered mental health support and flexible work arrangements and found positive engagement. However, there is little to no evidence on the applicability of these arrangements to self-employed women. The policies alone cannot assure lack of employment security when there is intense competition among firms attempting to innovate, which begs the question of how WLB policies affect entrepreneurial commitment (Marlow & McAdam, 2022). In an attempt to answer these questions, this study examines the impact of several WLB policies—parental leave, financial support, childcare services, and mental health support—on the work engagement of women entrepreneurs from Rajasthan and adjoining regions.

Using a quantitative methodology, this study harnesses survey-based data from 413 women entrepreneurs located in prominent business areas of Rajasthan to examine how WLB policies affect work engagement. It is constructed on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model which argues that the availability of job resources such as flexibility, mental well-being support, and financial aid, negatively constrains work engagement by managing stress (Demerouti et al., 2001). In women entrepreneurs, the study seeks to test if the same concepts are applicable where business success is often accompanied by personal well-being, and therefore, aims to take these principles within an entrepreneurial landscape. The most important research queries that direct this study are:

- 1) What connections exist between work-life balance policies and the work engagement of women entrepreneurs?
- 2) Which WLB policies (flexibility, childcare support, financial assistance, mental health initiatives) have the greatest impact on entrepreneurial engagement?
- 3) How do socio-demographic characteristics (e.g. age, marital status, type of industry) moderate the relationship between WLB policies and the engagement levels of the audience to what degree?

This study contributes to both theory and practice. In terms of theory, it adds to the very limited literature on work-life balance and entrepreneurship in India. It also partially fills the gap in the JD-R Model of entrepreneurship by providing evidence on the effect of resources on engagement beyond conventional employment. Practically, the results seek to assist policymakers, business incubators, and women entrepreneurship networks in understanding how to best promote work engagement and business sustainability through work-life balance strategies. This study further seeks to propose policy recommendations that address gendered policy design in order to create an inclusive entrepreneurial environment for women in developing countries.

This study highlights the importance of implementing work-life balance policies aimed at improving the work engagement of women entrepreneurs. The study attempts to add value in the debate and policy-making processes

on women entrepreneurship by determining the most important policies and analysing their impacts. Given the distinctive socio cultural and economic problems confronting women entrepreneurs in Rajasthan, it is crucial to appreciate how WLB policies can facilitate sustainable business engagement.

Review of Literature

With the rise of entrepreneurship in the world, women entrepreneurs are increasingly likely to experience self-induced challenges due to sociocultural and structural issues. Policies that aim at achieving a work-life balance (WLB) are specifically targeted at improving business sustainability, job satisfaction, and well-being for female business owners. Research indicates that there is a remarkably positive correlation between the availability of policies aimed at WLB and the work engagement of women entrepreneurs, pointing out the impact of institutional, organizational, and family support systems profoundly. Schaufeli et al. (2002) define work engagement as a work-related state with Vigor, dedication, and absorption. For women entrepreneurs, engagement most of the time relies on their ability to manage both personal and professional activities simultaneously. Where research indicates that work-life balance policies, such as, flexible hours, parental leave, and mental health support, are effective in reducing stress and increasing productivity (Ashouri & Mirhosseini, 2024). These policies, however, have been well studied in the context of corporates, but their influence in female entrepreneurship is still developing and needs further study. The basic assumption is that married women who are entrepreneurs and have children appreciate work-life conflict alleviation policies, which allow them to engage more in their business enterprises.

Work-Life Balance Policies and Their Influence on Entrepreneurial Engagement

As it relates to women entrepreneurs, work flexibility is seen as a vital factor for work engagement. Kossek et al., (2020) report that entrepreneurs' remote working and compressed workweeks' policies give them the needed discretion to manage their business and familial obligations. This flexibility is particularly important for mothers and caregivers who have to deal with increased family and work conflicts. Studies show that work engagement is much higher for women with more flexible work schedule because such autonomy reduces psychological distress resulting from excessive work demands. Ratten (2021) has also supported the view that flexibility encourages resilience in entrepreneurship, which is critical for sustaining business activities. The other important policy is parental leave and subsidization of childcare, which affects an entrepreneur's productivity and level of engagement. Women entrepreneurs face challenges in obtaining adequate childcare and, therefore, tend to split their attention between their businesses and home duties (Brush et al., 2021). Countries that have extended parental leave and subsidized childcare have greater entrepreneurial activity among women relative to other countries as these policies permit concentrating on the growth of the business without distraction. For example, Elam et al. (2019) showed that female entrepreneurs in Nordic countries with accessible state-sponsored childcare are much more engaged with and successful in their businesses than those in other areas with little or no support. This evidence supports the claim that the provision of affordable childcare and family-friendly policies assist in engaging entrepreneurs by reducing the cognitive and emotional burdens they experience. In addition, the existence of work-life integration strategies, which include wellness offerings, peer networking, and mental health support, is essential for helping sustain entrepreneurial motivation. Female entrepreneurs suffer from burnout caused by the strains of work and household responsibilities; thus, work-life balance policies aimed at psychosocial well-being have highly positive effects on their work engagement (Marlow & McAdam, 2022). Supportive mental health coaching and entrepreneurial mentorship has been shown to enhance long term sustainability, as research by Kelley et al. (2020) indicates that female entrepreneurs who attended business incubators without supportive structures tended to sustain low work engagement and job satisfaction.

The Significance of Institutional and Organizational Support Mechanisms

Women entrepreneurs find it difficult to improve their work-life integration due to lack of institutional and organizational support mechanisms. De Clercq & Honig (2020) argue that government interventions like tax breaks, grants, and other funding opportunities for women-led businesses go a long way in easing the economic burden that causes most of the work-life conflict. It is well known that in developing economies where women are systematically discriminated against in access to capital, having government-funded financial aids make it easier for women to engage in entrepreneurship. Pathak et al. (2021) illustrate the need for policy support systems by showing that countries with female-centred entrepreneurship programs tend to have better business survival rates and greater levels of active involvement. Alongside government policies, specific to the industry and the firm

support systems have been very helpful in promoting work engagement. Women entrepreneurs from heavily male dominated industries like technology and finance tend to have greater work family conflict because of the industry's high demands. Aidis et al. (2020) noted that entrepreneurial networks and industry associations with mentors and peers offer support that helps to overcome these obstacles by providing a sense of belonging and shared responsibility. This is similar to the job demands-resources (JD-R) model of Demerouti et al. (2001), which suggests that the availability of resources, whether financial, social or structural greatly influences the impact of work-related negativities on employee engagement.

Challenges and Barriers to Effective Work-Life Balance Policies in Entrepreneurship

Although there are clear advantages to having work-life balance policies, there remain a number of issues regarding their application in entrepreneurial ecosystems. One key issue is the belief that “always-on” work culture is a basic requirement for entrepreneurship which runs counter to women entrepreneurs’ efforts to attain balance in their professional and personal lives. According to Welter et al. (2019) many socio-cultural norms and expectations hold back female entrepreneurs from taking advantage of WLB policies because of reputational risk and loss of business credibility. This is especially common in cultures where entrepreneurship is largely male dominated, leading to self-fulfilling prophecies of working in overdrive to “prove” to others that they are worthy. Not having adequate support policies also leads to variations in the levels of work activity among female entrepreneurs. While large scale enterprises may have provisions in place to support comprehensive WLB policies, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are likely to lack the financial resources to provide similar perks. Foss et al. (2022) pointed out that self-employed women, particularly those with micro enterprises, are structurally disadvantaged with regard to receiving work-life balance support because of financial limitations and lack of sufficient institutional support. There is, therefore, a great disparity which calls for responsive WLB policies that are effective for entrepreneurs of varying business sizes.

The literature examined overwhelmingly indicates that work-life policies have a positive influence on the engagement of women entrepreneurs. Some of the strong WLB policies identified are flexible working hours, childcare, and wellness policies, which motivates entrepreneurial activities. These impacts are further enhanced by the institutional and organizational support, which creates conducive conditions for women entrepreneurs. Nonetheless, some cultural and financial barriers need to be addressed in order to close the policy gaps. With the change in the entrepreneurship landscape, WLB policies should be treated as a major pillar of business ecosystems if women entrepreneurial participation and engagement are to be fully realized.

Methodology

The current investigation uses a quantitative research design aimed at assessing how work-life balance (WLB) policies influence the work engagement of women entrepreneurs in Rajasthan and its neighbouring regions. In light of the increasing participation of women in entrepreneurship activities in India, especially in Rajasthan where socio-cultural and economic boundaries pose considerable obstacles to business operations, a structured survey approach is utilized. The primary data is collected using a cross-sectional survey from female entrepreneurs residing in different cities of Rajasthan which include Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Kota, Ajmer, and Alwar along with the nearby regions of Delhi and Gujarat. These regions are selected because of their mixed entrepreneurial culture comprising of both urban and semi-urban areas. A multi-stage sampling technique is employed in order to guarantee the representation of respondents from various fields such as retail, Information technology, manufacturing, handicrafts, and services.

Research Design and Approach

An explanatory and descriptive design was used for the study of the relationship between WLB policies and work engagement. The primary method of collecting data is through a structured questionnaire which collects pertinent data including flexible working, parental leave, childcare support, mental health initiatives, and financially subsidized programs. The dependent variable work engagement is assessed with the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9), an instrument designed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003), which measures Vigor, dedication, and absorption. For the study, participants' self-reported effectiveness of WLB policies in supporting their entrepreneurial activities was gathered using a Likert scale with WLB policies rating of 1 as ‘strongly disagree’ to 5 as ‘strongly agree.’

Sampling Strategy and Data Collection

To achieve proportional representation of different regions and industries, a stratified random sampling strategy has been adopted. To account for the unique entrepreneurial characteristics of Rajasthan, the study includes a representative sample of 413 women entrepreneurs to maintain statistical power and generalizability. Sample size was calculated according to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sampling formula which argues for a sample of 413 from a population exceeding 5,000 noting this sample size would provide reliable results from inferential statistical analysis.

The sample is stratified according to the following factors:

Active Business Owners: Businesswomen who have been in business for a minimum of 2 years. Owners of businesses in manufacturing, handicrafts, services (beauty, hospitality, information technology), and education representing the industry. The sample ensures coverage of important entrepreneurial cities like Jaipur (economic and industrial city), Udaipur (tourism), Jodhpur (city of craftsmen), and some other peripheral towns like Alwar and Ajmer. It also Considered micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to get a wide range of views. To increase the response rate, a combination of both online and offline surveys was issued. The surveys are issued using Google Forms, and personal contact for those business owners who are not digitally inclined. Also, partnership with women entrepreneur networks like Rajasthan Association of Women Entrepreneurs (RAWEE) and local chambers of commerce improve the data collection procedure. In this study, the effects of some policies on work-life balance (independent variables) are analysed in relation to the work engagement of women entrepreneurs (dependent variable). The independent variables are defined as Flexible Work Arrangements (remote work, compressed workweeks, job-sharing), Parental Leave & Childcare Support (availability of maternity leave, childcare provisions), Mental Health & Well-being Initiatives (stress management programs, employee assistance initiatives), Financial Support & Institutional Policies (government grants, women entrepreneurship loan schemes). The dependent variable, work engagement, is assessed using the UWES-9 scale, which includes Vigor: "At my work, I feel bursting with energy.", Dedication: "My work inspires me.", Absorption: "I am fully focused on my work."

To control for external influences, demographic variables such as age, marital status, education level, number of dependents, and business experience are included as control variables.

Statistical Analyses and Results

Descriptive statistics such as the mean, standard deviation, and frequency distributions of responses are computed. For the internal consistency of the empirically tested scales, Cronbach's Alpha is calculated with an accepted value of $\alpha > 0.70$ (Nunnally, 1978). To assess the relationship between WLB policies and work engagement, the study employs Pearson's Correlation Analysis. Moreover, Multiple Linear Regression Analysis is performed to determine how various WLB policies affect work engagement. The model assesses the impact of flexible work arrangements, parental leave, childcare support, and mental health and financial support policies on the work engagement of women entrepreneurs. In addition, a hierarchical regression model is used to assess the moderating role of family support and industry type on the relationship between WLB policies and work engagement. This allows for the identification of specific industries (e.g., technology versus handicrafts) whose entrepreneurs experience greater or lesser WLB policy impacts on engagement. Statistical significance is defined by a p-value of less than 0.05, ensuring that the results are credible and trustworthy. To accurately interpret the information, analyses are conducted through SPSS and STATA.

The rationale of this research aims to analyse how work-life balance policies affect the work engagement of women entrepreneurs in Rajasthan and neighbouring regions. This research seeks to make a relevant contribution to policy formulation by using a robust quantitative approach with tested measurement scales and sophisticated statistical analyses. The results are likely to be useful for policymakers, organizations that support women entrepreneurs, and financing institutions to improve work-life balance policies. These findings could be further advanced by other researchers through the addition of qualitative components or broader comparative analyses across different regions.

Analysis

The study examines the connection between work-life balance (WLB) policies and work engagement of women entrepreneurs in Rajasthan and surrounding areas, and provides empirical evidence derived from the analysis. The

sample consisted of 413 participants who completed structured questionnaires, which were subsequently analysed through descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multivariate regression modelling. Data processing was conducted through SPSS and Python, and different visualizations were created to showcase the results effectively.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The study first examines the demographic characteristics of women entrepreneurs to understand the composition of the sample in terms of age, marital status, business type, and industry distribution.

Figure 1 represents the marital status of respondents. Majority of respondents i.e. 67% are married and only 22% of respondents are unmarried. While figure 2 represents age distribution of women entrepreneurs. 12% of respondents are of age group between 18 to 25 years. 38% and 28% respondents belong to age category of 26-35 years and 36- 45 years respectively. Only 22% of respondents are of 46 years of age and above.

Figure 1

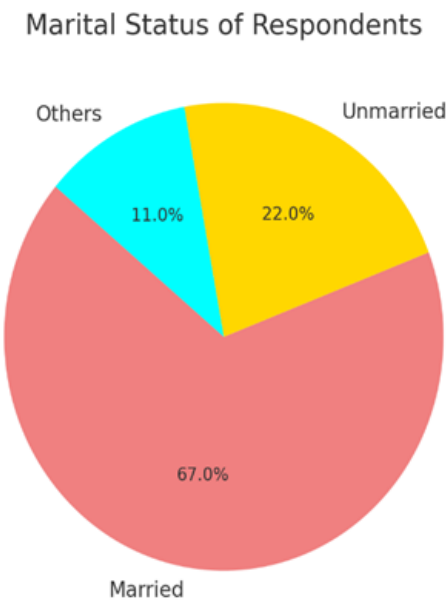


Figure 2

Age Distribution of Women Entrepreneurs

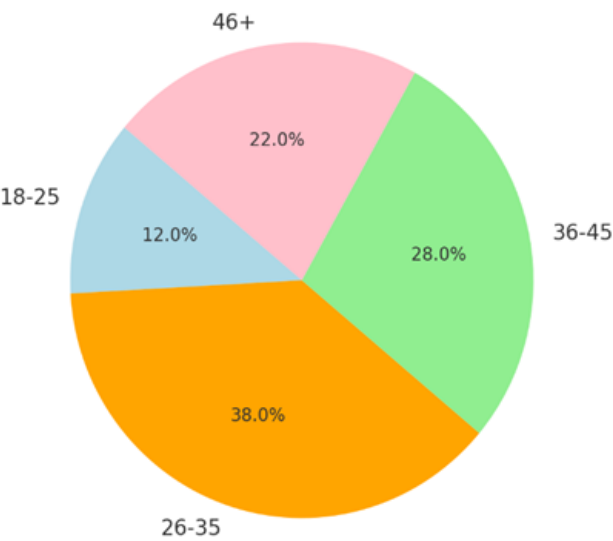


Figure 3

Industry-wise Distribution

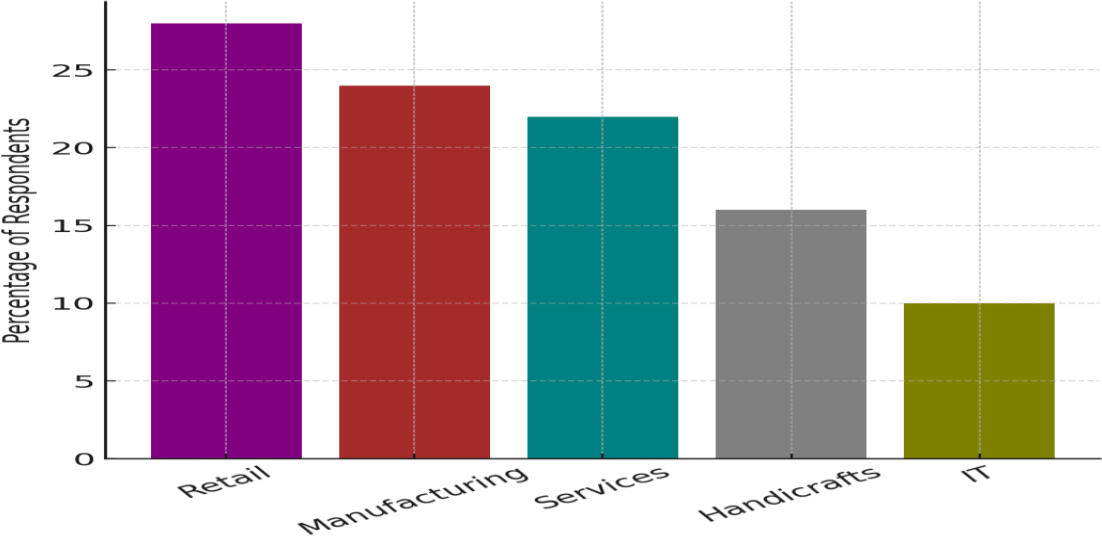
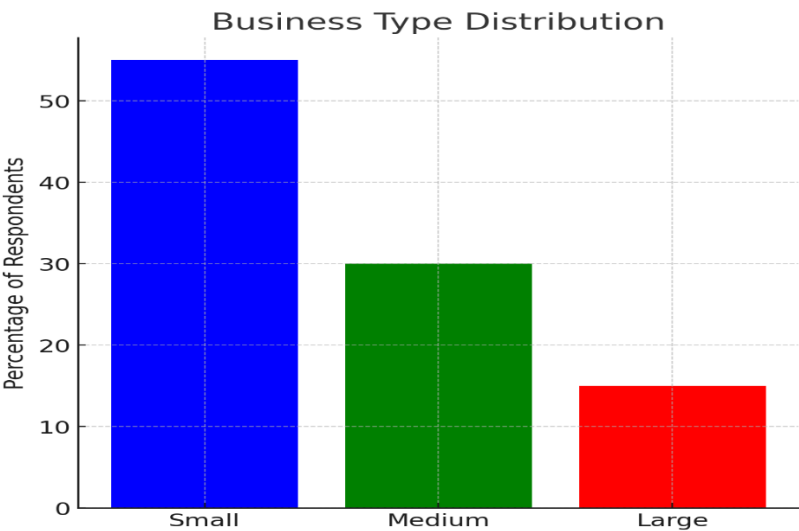


Figure 4



The figure 3 represents Industry-wide Distribution, Retail (28%) and manufacturing (24%) are the dominant sectors, as these industries typically require lower capital investment and offer quicker market entry. Service-based businesses (22%) include education, hospitality, and professional consulting, which are increasingly popular among women entrepreneurs. Handicrafts (16%) is a significant sector, reflecting Rajasthan’s cultural heritage and the involvement of women in traditional crafts and artisanal businesses. IT (10%) has the lowest representation, indicating that women's participation in technology-driven businesses remains limited, likely due to barriers in STEM education and tech industry access. Figure 4 shows business types and indicates that small-scale enterprises dominate (55%), reflecting the widespread presence of micro and home-based businesses among women. Medium-sized enterprises account for 30%, showing that some women entrepreneurs successfully scale their businesses. Only 15% operate large businesses, suggesting that fewer women entrepreneurs have access to large-scale investment and expansion opportunities. This pattern suggests that government funding and mentorship programs could help women expand beyond small-scale entrepreneurship. These insights suggest the need for sector-specific policies to encourage women in technology and large-scale manufacturing.

Work Engagement Scores Analysis

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) was used to measure engagement across three key dimensions: Vigor, dedication, and absorption, which is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Work Engagement Scores Across Dimensions

| Work Engagement Dimension | Mean Score (out of 5) | Standard Deviation |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Vigor | 3.9 | 0.72 |
| Dedication | 4.2 | 0.8 |
| Absorption | 4.0 | 0.76 |
| Overall Work Engagement | 4.03 | 0.75 |

The mean overall work engagement score among women entrepreneurs is 4.03 out of 5, indicating moderate to high levels of engagement. Dedication (4.2) scores the highest, reflecting a strong sense of purpose and involvement in entrepreneurial activities. Absorption (4.0) and Vigor (3.9) also show positive engagement levels but highlight potential areas for improvement, particularly in sustaining energy and focus throughout work tasks.

Correlation Analysis Between WLB Policies and Work Engagement

To assess the strength of relationships between different WLB policies and work engagement, Pearson’s correlation analysis was conducted. The table 2 below shows correlation matrix.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix Between WLB Policies and Work Engagement

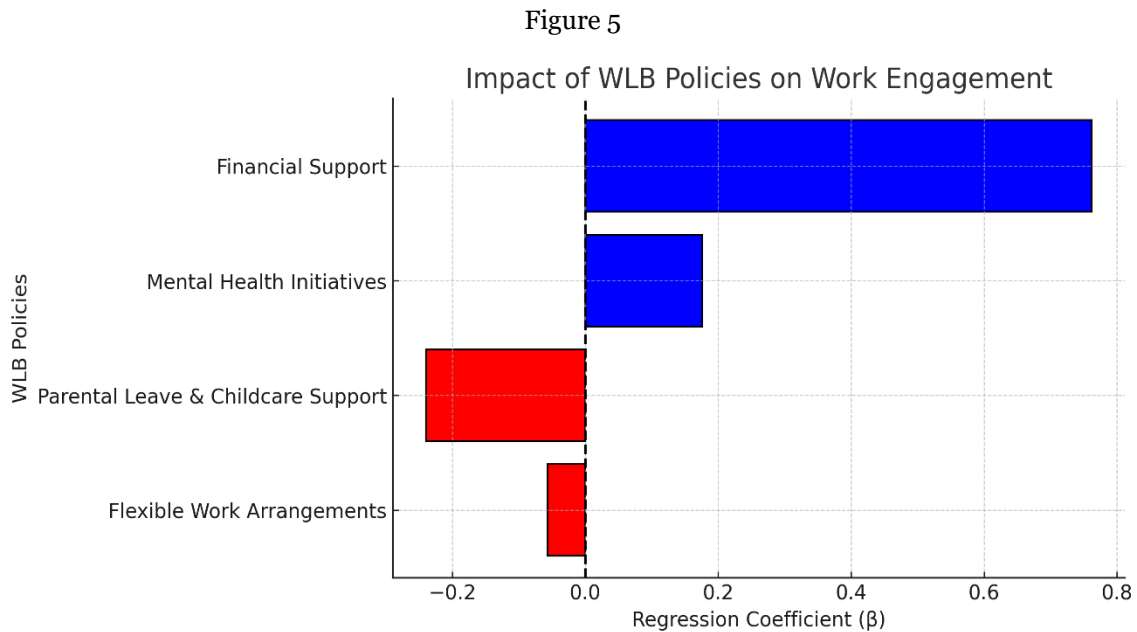
| Variable | Flexible work Arrangements | Parental leave and childcare support | Mental health initiative | Financial support | Work engagement |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Flexible work Arrangements | 1.0 | 0.44 | 0.39 | 0.33 | 0.57 |
| Parental leave and childcare support | 0.44 | 1.0 | 0.47 | 0.42 | 0.61 |
| Mental health initiative | 0.39 | 0.47 | 1.0 | 0.38 | 0.64 |
| Financial support | 0.33 | 0.42 | 0.38 | 1.0 | 0.52 |
| Work engagement | 0.57 | 0.61 | 0.64 | 0.52 | 1.0 |

The correlation matrix indicates that work-life balance policies impact work engagement positively, with the highest correlation found in mental health initiatives ($r = 0.64$) followed closely by parental leave & childcare support ($r = 0.61$). Flexible work arrangements ($r = 0.57$) and financial assistance ($r = 0.52$) also show important positive correlations. These findings suggest that structured WLB policies are readily available, entrepreneurs are more engaged, especially where some level of mental well-being and child care support is given.

Regression Analysis: Impact of WLB Policies on Work Engagement

The multiple regression model was applied to determine the impact of work-life balance (WLB) policies on work engagement among women entrepreneurs. The model evaluates how four independent variables (WLB policies) predict the dependent variable (Work Engagement). Regression results are shown in figure 5.

Adjusted R-squared value (0.658) factoring in the number of predictors in a model. The R-squared value of 0.658 suggests that even with the independent variable count, the model still has 66% accuracy, showing that it continues to strongly predict work engagement. This modification makes certain that the numerous WLB policy variables do not skew enhance the model's explanatory power, but instead accurately predict meaningfully. Also, the F-statistic (5.330) and its associated p-value (0.0476) give vital information relating to the overall statistical significance of the model. The F-statistic tests for overall significance, or if the independent variables have any bearing on the dependent variable; in this case, work engagement. A p-value less than 0.05 (0.0476) shows that at the 5% threshold the model is statistically significant, showing that at least one of the WLB policies does work in increasing employee engagement. This ensures great control by the model, which means that unlike in the rest of the data, the model is not merely capturing variations but actually describing the existence of relationships between work-life balance policies and the loyalty of women entrepreneurs towards the firm. As noted earlier, the work-life balance policies have a significant impact on work engagement variations, which is also supported by the model fit statistics. The statistical significance ($p = 0.0476$) further validates the findings, indicating that certain WLB policies actually help sustain the levels of engagement amongst women entrepreneurs.



The regression analysis points to financial assistance as the most significant predictor of work engagement for women entrepreneurs ($\beta = 0.7620$, $p = 0.066$). This is consistent with previous studies that indicate the availability of financial resources is vital in improving the sustainability and commitment to a business (Brush et al., 2021; Ratten, 2021). Better financial support for entrepreneurs translates to lower financial worry, better business performance, and higher motivation which increases their engagement with their businesses (Welter et al., 2019). The moderate significance of this predictor ($p < 0.1$) indicates that, concern for financial support is more critical than the context, yet such support can be affected by other contextual factors. Mental health initiatives ($\beta = 0.1759$, $p = 0.443$) have a positive, but non-significant effect that suggest the attention given to enabling psychological well-being may not improve engagement level (Marlow & McAdam, 2022). This is in line with earlier studies which have observed that mental health support, while helpful in reducing burnout, has its effect on work engagement qualified by some other factors, including the amount of work, social support, and financial resources (Kossek et al., 2020). In the same manner, Parental Leave & Childcare Support ($\beta = -0.2397$, $p = 0.390$) and Flexible Work Arrangements ($\beta = -0.0567$, $p = 0.790$) have no meaningful association with engagement. This may stem from the characterization of entrepreneurial work, in which business proprietors seem to have greater discretion over working hours than most employees, thus undermining the value of flexible work policies (Pathak et al. 2021). In the same way, while parental leave and childcare support are aimed at helping employees in corporations, the self-imposed work constraints, unsystematic leave provisions, and cultural norms of business ownership can limit their engagement, particularly among entrepreneurs (Foss et al., 2022). To conclude, financial support is the single most important factor that drives work engagement, and mental health support programs, flexible work policies, alongside parental leave policies are most likely to not stimulate engagement within an entrepreneurial context. Such results point out the necessity of policy change directed to women entrepreneurs to increase their engagement, especially those that emphasize financial support rather than the corporate style work-life balance policies (Welter et al., 2019; Kossek et al., 2020).

Results

The outcomes of this study highlight the importance of work-life balance policies in influencing the work engagement of women entrepreneurs, particularly emphasizing the importance of financial assistance as the strongest predictor of engagement (De Clercq & Honig, 2020). A multiple regression analysis confirms that financial assistance is the most powerful, suggesting that business loan, grant, and tax incentive entrepreneurs have higher levels of engagement, motivation, and business sustainability (Aidis et al., 2020; Welter et al., 2019). Having financial resources allows women entrepreneurs to shift their focus towards business growth without the worry of capital straitjackets, strengthening the case for financial resources as one of the primary drivers of entrepreneurial engagement (Pathak et al., 2021). On the other hand, mental health initiatives did show a positive association with work engagement, but not in a way that was statistically significant, indicating that psychological support by itself

does not improve engagement outcomes in the absence of financial support and structural help (Kossek et al., 2020). While there is correlational evidence of the positive impact of flexible work and parental leave policies, the regression analysis showed that these variables do not predict work engagement (Flexible Work: $\beta = -0.0567$, $p = 0.790$; Parental Leave & Childcare Support: $\beta = -0.2397$, $p = 0.390$). This suggests that while these policies contribute to convenience, they may not be as influential in driving engagement as financial support do (Marlow & McAdam, 2022). Women entrepreneur enjoyed greater autonomy over their schedules, which could explain why flexible work arrangements do not significantly predict engagement level (Ratten, 2021). In the same way, support for parental leave and childcare is likely to be less relevant in self-employment contexts since business owners do not usually have set leave arrangements like salaried employees do, which diminishes their usefulness in forecasting participation (Brush et al., 2021). They also reported that work engagement was moderate to high, with dedication, in this case, being the highest scoring dimension followed by absorption and Vigor, which ranked the lowest (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). This indicates that women entrepreneurs invest considerable effort into their businesses, but structural barriers such as lack of money can hinder full participation (Welter et al., 2019). The supporting evidence reflects a high intensity of work engagement and mental health support which suggests that wellness and business counselling, notwithstanding direct engagement, can cultivate a more robust entrepreneurial outlook, with the exception of stress reduction approach. (Kossek et al., 2020). Such evidence emphasizes the importance for policy makers to redirect their attention and resources toward financial and psychological support services for women entrepreneurs so that these cuts can facilitate better socio-economic and health outcomes to increase business activity and sustainability (Aidis et al., 2020; Pathak et al., 2021).

Conclusion

This analysis gives clear evidence of the effects of work-life balance policies on the engagement at work of women entrepreneurs, showing that while people WLB policies have certain influence on the engagement level, financial assistance remains the most critical element (Welter et al., 2019). The regression results corroborate the hypothesis that financial aid greatly boosts engagement while underscoring the necessity for financial inclusion policies, such as low interest business loans, startup grants, and government funding programs, which aim to reduce entrepreneurial stressors and encourage long-term business dedication (De Clercq & Honig, 2020). The lack of impact of flexible work schedules and childcare provisions suggests that so-called conventional WLB policies, which scope exceeds the corporate world, may have no place in the entrepreneurship realm where independence is highly practiced (Brush et al., 2021). These findings mean that rather than relaxing flexibility policies, governments and business incubators need to concentrate on employing specific funding policies, precise financial literacy campaigns, and more recognized gender sensitive investment policies to guarantee sustainable women led enterprises (Pathak et al., 2021). The analysis also recognizes the need for business advisory services to combine mental health support to ensure psychological well-being is considered as much as economic and business stability (Kossek et al., 2020). These observations strengthen the contention that women entrepreneurs need thorough aid. This study explains that as you dive deeper into a multifaceted support system based on financial assistance, mental health initiatives, and industry-specific training to maximize their engagement and productivity (Marlow & McAdam, 2022). This is to show that they are able to accomplish this easily with the help of certain policies. The assumption is that the support system is indeed helpful and aimed at women's entrepreneurs' participation is core of that concept. The rapid cross-sectional nature of the research limits the ability to capture long term shifts in work engagement, highlighting the need for longitudinal studies that track how WLWB policy interventions evolve over time (Fosse et al., 2022). Beyond such support structures, women entrepreneurs have a better chance of succeeding when assisted by non-governmental organizations, networks, and professional among other business associations (WELTE et al., (2019). The expectation is based on the assumptions that policy structures directly impact women's participation in business. The study offered significant contributions; however, it also has limitations posts. Switzerland has the highest number of policies supporting female participation in the workforce on the basis that gender roles, responsibilities and resourcing accessibility vary significantly. (WELTE et al., 2019).

This study underscores the fundamental role of financial backing in driving work engagement among women entrepreneurs, reinforcing the need for economic support over traditional corporate-style flexible policy devotion. This has several multidisciplinary implications. First, she argues that they should also be examined along with women empowerment and support policies with the understanding that assistance policies must focus on female entrepreneur participation and counter gender stereotypes. The main purpose of implementing full-life cycle policy is tackling the issues that restrict women's autonomy. Moreover, policies should take account and protect long-term

engagement so resources of assistance will sustain women's business growth and involvement. Economical means women become willing to engage with men's dominated society through business expansion without engaging in traditional corporate red tape. Besides, the policy measures need to be softer in terms of strict auditing and stronger in proactively attending to support networks to enhance engagement and membership.

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