Work-Life Balance and Intention to Leave among Academics in Malaysian Public Higher Education Institutions

Khairunneezam Mohd Noor

Faculty of Leadership and Management Islamic Science University of Malaysia Bandar Baru Nilai, 71800 Nilai Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia E-mail: neezam@usim.edu.my, Phone: +6067988751

Abstract

This study examined the relationship between perceived work-life balance satisfaction of academics in Malaysian public higher education institutions and their intentions to leave the organisation. The study used an on-line survey of academics from three public universities in Malaysia. A total of 1078 usable responses were received for a response rate of 37.2 per cent. The responses from the sample are used to test the hypotheses that job satisfaction and organisational commitment will mediate the relationship between work-life balance and intention to leave. The results indicated that perceived work-life balance satisfaction was correlated negatively with intention to leave the organisational commitment are partial mediators for the relationship between work-life balance and intention to leave and intention to leave. The implications of the findings for management- particularly those in public higher education institutions- are discussed. The findings of this study will help in terms of understanding the state of work-life balance of academics and its relationship with their intentions to leave. It was hoped that the findings of this study would add to a larger body of studies of work-life balance and intention to leave, especially studies among Malaysian higher education academics.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance; Intention to Leave; Higher Education, Mediation Analysis.

1.0 Introduction

Work-life balance is now a heavily researched area of interest. Work-life balance has always been a concern of those interested in the quality of working life and its relation to broader quality of life (Guest, 2002:255). The articulation of work and life, cast as work-life balance, has become a key feature of much current government, practitioner and academic debate (Eikhof, Warhurst & Haunschild, 2007). It is believed that balancing a successful career with a personal or family life can be challenging and impact on a person's satisfaction in their work and personal life's roles (Broers, 2005). Dundas (2008:7) argues that work-life balance is about effectively managing the juggling act between paid work and all other activities that are important to people such as family, community activities, voluntary work, personal development and leisure and recreation. The ability to balance between workplace's needs and personal life's needs is perceived as an important issue among workers globally and academics in higher education institutions were not excluded (Mohd Noor, Stanton & Young, 2009).

In Malaysia, the development of higher education institutions has been rapid commencing with the establishment of the University of Malaya in 1962. Malaysia has experienced increasing numbers of public and private universities, intense growth of student enrolments, the expansion of courses in various fields especially science and technology, and an increase in the internet and web-based teaching (see Ahmad, 1998; Hassan, 2001). Also, reforms have been experienced by university academics such as the implementation of a more stringent assessment system, additional government and private funding and accompanying research opportunities, and a substantial increase in the number of student enrolments. These changes have arisen from a variety of drivers such as pressures of demand, a cultural shift in the way in which higher education is viewed, financial pressures, structural and managerial diversity, and an assortment of changes in university mission or emphasis (Oshagbemi, 1997).

All of these changes illustrate the complexity of academic work in an increasingly demanding environment (Houston, Meyer & Paewai, 2006:17). Hagen (2002) asserts that universities are the largest 'knowledgebased' institution in the region; hence they are urged by the industry and policy makers to transform their traditional roles of teaching and research by adding an additional pivotal role in economic regional development. This means that university academics are expected to aid economic regeneration by disseminating their knowledge and expertise through industry linked partnerships (Hagen, 2002). However, each party (e.g. government, policy makers, university management and society) should know that too many demands on academic staff could contribute to uncertainty in terms of academic roles and work conflicts among them. Briggs (2005:257) proposes that a lack of clarity about roles introduces role ambiguity and role conflict that have significant impact on the achievement of personal and organisational goals, resulting in employee anxiety, dissatisfaction and lack of organisational effectiveness. Multiple workplace roles by university academics alongside organisation and community pressures are likely to be viewed by the academics as significant triggers that influence their state of perceived work-life balance satisfaction which in turn influences their occupational attitudes such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment and intention to leave the organisation.

Intention to leave the organisation has been studied over several decades which in turn contributed to the findings of the positive and negative aspects of turnover (Mossholder, Bedeian, Norris, Giles and Feild, 1988). Managers and researchers consider turnover as a problem because of costs associated with it (Noor & Maad, 2008) and difficulties that organisations face in the recruitment and retention of proficient employees (Villanueva & Djurkovic, 2009). The aims of the present study are twofold. First, to examine the relationship between perceived work-life balance satisfaction and intention to leave among academics in Malaysian public higher educational institutions. Second, to investigate whether or not job satisfaction and intention to leave the organisation among the academic staff. The paper is in four parts. The first part reviews the literature on work-life balance and its association with occupational attitudes. The second part explains the methods adopted in this study. The third part presents the findings of the study. Finally the implications of the findings are discussed and conclusions are drawn.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance has important consequences for employee attitudes towards their organisations as well as for the lives of employees (Scholaris & Marks, 2004:54). Guest (2002) believes that it is possible to investigate the trend of work-life balance and its developments which influence the well-being and job outcomes of employees at work. The issues relating to maintaining and obtaining a work-life balance have received substantial attention over recent years (Deery, 2008) but less attention, however, has been given to find the reality of work-life balance satisfaction in the higher educational sector (Doherty & Manfredi, 2006; Mohd Noor & Amat, 2010; Mohd Noor, Stanton & Young, 2009).

Nevertheless, we need to understand the definition underlying work-life balance concepts. Defining the concept of WLB is a complex task, as it can be viewed from the meaning of 'work', 'life' and 'balance' (Deery, 2008). Dundas (2008:7) argues that work-life balance is about effectively managing the juggling act between paid work and all other activities that are important to people such as family, community activities, voluntary work, personal development and leisure and recreation. Greenhaus, Collins and Shaw (2003) define work-life balance as the extent to which an individual is equally engaged in – and equally satisfied with – his or her work role and family role. Thus, employees who experience high work-life balance are those who exhibit similar investment of time and commitment, to work and non-work domains (Virick, Lily & Casper, 2007:465).

Numerous studies have been done on searching the association between work-life balance and attitudinal job outcomes such as job satisfaction and organisational commitment (see Doherty and Manfredi 2006; Kinnie, Hutchinson, Purcell, Rayton and Swart 2005; Scholarios & Marks, 2004; Virick, Lily & Casper, 2007; Youngcourt, 2005; Zin, 2006). For instance, Virick et al. (2007)'s study on layoff survivors in a high tech company found that work-life balance is positively related to job satisfaction. Howard, Donofrio and Boles (2004) in a study among police personnel concluded that work-family conflict which reflects work-life balance issue is significantly related to satisfaction with job. In a study of the links between employees satisfaction with HR practices and their affective commitment to the organisation, Kinnie et al. (2005) found that work-life balance are associated with the organisational commitment of all employee groups. Furthermore, the authors found that there is some evidence that company efforts to help employees achieve a balance between work and home life is linked to the commitment of all groups of employees.

The extant literature on the subject of work-life balance tends to make numbers of assumptions and one of those is that improving an organisation's work-life balance leads not only to greater productivity but to greater company loyalty and low level of intent to leave the organisation (Moore, 2007). Noor and Maad (2008) in their study among marketing executives found that work-life conflict have a significant positive relationship with turnover intentions.

A pertinent reviews done by Deery (2008) and Deery and Jago (2009) show that work-life balance had an important role to alleviate high level of intention to leave which brings to a low level of turnover rates.

2.2 Intention To Leave

Intentions to leave are positively related with actual leaving (Noor & Maad, 2008). An individual's intention to leave their organisation has been included in numerous attitudinal models (Villanueva & Djurkovic, 2009:125). According to Deery & Jago (2009), research into the antecedents of labour turnover has, traditionally, focused on the impact that job attitudes such as job satisfaction and organisational commitment have on an employee's intention to leave. Villanueva & Djurkovic (2009) for example, found that job satisfaction and organizational commitment partially mediated the relationship between occupational stress and intention to leave. This is a highly relevant finding to the current study, given that job satisfaction and commitment are the mediators and intention to leave is the outcome variable to be examined. Much of this research, however, is located within organisations where the aim is to develop strategies to alleviate high levels of turnover at the company level (Deery & Jago, 2009).

Derived from the preceding literature review, the following hypotheses are presented:

Hypothesis 1: There will be a significant negative relationship between perceived work-life balance satisfaction and intention to leave.

Hypothesis 2: The relationship between perceived work-life balance satisfaction and intention to leave will be fully mediated by job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between perceived work-life balance satisfaction and intention to leave will be fully mediated by organisational commitment.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Study Framework

The conceptual framework was developed from the literature review which draws the relationship between perceived work-life balance satisfaction and intention to leave among academics in higher education and the mediation roles of job satisfaction and organisational commitment (see Figure 1).

3.2 Population and Sample

The population for the study comprised academics from three public higher education institutions of Malaysia. Using a simple random sampling technique, the researchers drew a sample of 1078 from the estimated 2900 academics in the three participating universities. These respondents represent 37.2 per cent of the overall samples. The respondents included a wide range of university faculties, departments and academic units in each participating university.

3.3 Procedure of Data Collection

The Deputy Vice Chancellor and the Registrar of all Malaysian public universities were contacted and invited by the researchers to encourage academic staff members' participation in the study. Consent for conducting the study had been given by three public universities in Malaysia. Deans and head of each department, faculty and school in the participating universities were contacted through phone calls and emails to obtain their assistance on disseminating the cover letter of invitation to participate in the study, participation information sheet, and hyperlink for the online survey designed for the study to their academic staff members. The procedure of contacting those key persons was repeated three times, by no other mean, to keep reminding academics about the survey. All instruments were put on an online survey program together with a set of demographics questionnaire where participants went to complete the survey through the Internet. Each respondent's completed survey was then automatically computed and saved, and the results were downloaded into SPSS 17.0 for quantitative analysis.

3.4 Survey Instruments

Some items in these scales were negatively worded in order to maintain reliable answers from respondents. These negatively worded questions were then reverse-coded before doing the reliability checking. All instruments except for demographic questionnaire were answered using a 5-point Likert scale of disagree very much (coded as 1), disagree (2), neither agree nor disagree (3), agree (4), and agree very much (5).

3.4.1 Demographic questionnaire

The researchers created a questionnaire in order to collect data on the personal characteristics of the respondents. Measures of age, gender, and tenure in the university were included as the control variables.

3.4.2 Independent variable: work-life balance

To measure work-life balance, this study used modified versions of Work and Life Policy instrument proposed by Beehr, Walsh and Taber (1976) and Pare, Tremblay and Lalonde (2000).

This instrument comprised of 6 items was used in the study. All items were summed together to represent each respondent's perception on their work-life balance. The internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of the work-life balance measure was 0.81.

3.4.3 Mediator variables: job satisfaction and organisational commitment

3.4.3.1 Job Satisfaction. This measure was derived from a modified version of Job Descriptive Index (JDI) developed by Mohd Noor, Stanton & Young (2009). It has 6 items which were summed together and assessed the global feeling of academics about their job satisfaction. The internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of the job satisfaction measure was 0.89.

3.4.3.2 Organisational Commitment. This study applied Meyer and Allen's (1997) Organisational Commitment Questionnaire to measure organisational commitment. It was aimed to measure the general level of organisational commitment among respondents by summing up all 18 items in this measure together. The internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of the organisational commitment scale was 0.81.

3.4.4 Dependent variable: intention to leave. Intention to leave the organisation was assessed with the modified version of Intent to Turnover Scale (ITL) developed by Camman, Fichman, Jenkins and Klesh (1979). This scale has three items which assessed the overall response of one's intention to leave the organisation. The internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of the intention to leave measure was 0.88.

4.0 Results

4.1 Background of Respondents

The demographic questions in the questionnaire included age, gender and tenure in the present institution are depicted in Table 1. From the table, the age range of 24-32 (nearly 39%) was the dominant age of academics in the study. Male and female respondents were distributed almost equally with males being 2.2 per cent more than females. The table also shows that about 80 per cent of the academics had worked for 10 years and less in their respective universities.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Measures

The descriptive statistics for all the variables used in this study are as shown in Table 2. There appeared to be significant variation in all variables. The value of mean for each variable suggested that the variables were normally distributed. These values were supported by the result of the preliminary test of normality conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic proposed by Pallant (2001) where all variables scored non-significant results (significant value of more than 0.05) which indicate normality.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing - Correlations and Mediation Analyses

4.3.1 Hypothesis 1 – correlations analysis

The relationship between all variables in the current study investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (see Table 3). From the correlation findings in Table 3, perceived work-life balance satisfaction shows a positive significant correlations with job satisfaction (r= 0.43, $p \le 0.01$) and with organisational commitment (r= 0.36, $p \le 0.01$). However, perceived work-life balance satisfaction shows a negative significant correlation to leave (r= -0.38, $p \le 0.01$). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is supported where perceived work-life balance satisfaction and intention to leave were negatively correlated. Other important findings were also reflected by the correlation analyses shown in Table 3. All continuous variables of perceived work-life balance, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and intention to leave were significant findings of the next moderation analyses.

4.3.2 Hypothesis 2 and 3 – mediation analyses

Mediation analyses were conducted using the technique outlined by Baron & Kenny (1986) and Villanueva & Djurkovic (2009:130). The selection of the Baron and Kenny's mediation technique in this study was based on the sense that this study focused on investigating simple relationships between three dimensions of variables (the predictor, the mediator, and the output variables). A multiple regression analysis consisting of four regression equations was used in the study following Baron and Kenny (1986) and Villanueva and Djurkovic (2009)'s steps in establishing mediation. Tharenou, Donohue & Cooper (2007) and Villanueva & Djurkovic (2009) assert that mediation effects occur when four conditions or steps are met: (a) Condition 1- The independent variable must significantly predict the dependent variable; (b) Condition 2- the independent variable must significantly predict the mediator variable; (c) Condition 3 – the mediator variable must significantly be reduced no different to zero, in comparison to Condition 1, when the independent variable and the mediator are used simultaneously to predict the dependent variable; (d) according to Baron & Kenny, (1986); MacKinnon, Fairchild & Fritz, (2007); and Mackinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman,

West and Sheets (2002), the last step or Condition 4 - to establish that a mediator variable completely mediates the relationship between predictor and outcome variables, the effect of predictor on outcome controlling for mediator should be zero. If all four of the steps explained above are met, then the data are consistent with the hypothesis that mediator variable completely mediates the predictor-outcome relationship (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Conversely, if the first three steps' conditions are met but the fourth step is not, where the regression coefficient for the independent variable goes down in magnitude but is still statistically significant, then partial mediation is indicated (Preacher & Hayes, 2004; and Tharenou et al. 2004:230).

It was proposed in Hypothesis 2 that *the relationship between perceived work-life balance satisfaction and intention to leave will be fully mediated by job satisfaction.* The findings of the mediation analysis conducted using the causal steps outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986) for Hypothesis 2 are as follows: (a) Perceived work-life balance satisfaction was significantly predicted intention to leave ($\beta = -0.34$, p < 0.05); (b) Regression analysis was employed to investigate the involvement of job satisfaction as a possible mediator of the relationship between perceived work-life balance satisfaction was found to be significantly predicted job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.57$, p < 0.05); (c) The unstandardised regression coefficient for perceived work-life balance satisfaction and job satisfaction when used simultaneously to predict intention to leave are both significant ($\beta = 0.04$, p < 0.05 and $\beta = -0.68$, p < 0.05). Based on the analysis, all three conditions were met. However, the unstandardised regression coefficients for perceived work-life balance satisfaction when used simultaneously to predict intention. According to Baron and Kenny (1986)'s steps in establishing mediation, as a result, job satisfaction mediates partially the relationship between perceived work-life balance satisfaction and intention to leave.

In order to assess for the significance of a mediation effect of job satisfaction in the relationships between perceived work-life balance satisfaction and intention to leave, the current study used critical values based on the theoretical distribution of the product of two normal random variables ($P = Z\alpha Z\beta$) to test for significance of the mediation relationship of perceived work-life balance satisfaction–job satisfaction-intention to leave proposed by Mackinnon et al. (2002). The result of $Z\alpha Z\beta$ test indicated that job satisfaction mediated significantly the relationship between perceived work-life balance satisfaction and intention to leave (P = 1653.85, p < 0.05).

Based on the causal steps analysis and significance test findings, therefore, overall job satisfaction significantly and partially mediates the relationship between work-life balance satisfaction and intention to leave. Hypothesis 2 is therefore partially supported. It was proposed in Hypothesis 3 that *the relationship between perceived work-life balance satisfaction and intention to leave will be fully mediated by organisational commitment*. The findings of the mediation analysis conducted using the causal steps outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986) for Hypothesis 3 are as follows: (a) Perceived work-life balance satisfaction was significantly predicted intention to leave ($\beta = -0.34$, p < 0.05); (b) Regression analysis was employed to investigate the involvement of organisational commitment as a possible mediator of the relationship between perceived work-life balance satisfaction and intention to leave. Perceived work-life balance satisfaction was found to be significantly predicted organisational commitment ($\beta = 0.88$, p < 0.05). (c) The unstandardised regression coefficient for perceived work-life balance satisfaction and organisational commitment when used simultaneously to predict intention to leave are both significant ($\beta = -0.18$, p < 0.05 and $\beta = -0.19$, p < 0.05). Based on the analysis, all three conditions were met.

However, the unstandardised regression coefficients for perceived work-life balance satisfaction and organisational commitment when used simultaneously to predict intention to leave are both significant. According to Baron and Kenny (1986)'s steps in establishing mediation, as a result, organisational commitment mediates partially the relationship between perceived work-life balance satisfaction and intention to leave. The result of the test of $Z\alpha Z\beta$ indicated that organisational commitment significantly mediated the relationship between perceived work-life balance satisfaction and intention to leave (P = -242.36, *p* < 0.05). Based on the causal steps analysis and significance test findings, therefore, organisational commitment significantly mediates the relationship between work-life balance satisfaction and intention to leave. Hypothesis 3 is therefore partially supported.

5.0 Discussion, Conclusions, and Implications

The organisational consequences of work-life balance satisfaction have become an important issue for organisation in general and are intensified in higher educational sector. The objectives of the current study were to examine the direction of the relationship between perceived work-life balance satisfaction and intention to leave among academics in Malaysian public higher educational institutions.

Furthermore, the current study incorporated attitudinal variables with the potential to mediate this relationship which were job satisfaction and organisational commitment. From the perspective of work-life balance and intention to leave among academics in higher education, our study successfully found some key findings. The findings of the current study suggest that perceived work-life balance satisfaction was negatively correlated with intention to leave among the academics. This study extends past research and support literature that employees' satisfaction on work-life balance will in turn minimise their intention to leave the organisation (Byrne, 2005; Deery, 2008; Deery & Jago, 2009; Noor & Maad, 2008; Smith & Gardner, 2007). The academics feel happy to work in the working environment that helps them to balance between the needs of their own life and the needs at the workplace. It is also worth to note that the result of the current study also corresponds with past works of Burke, Burgess and Oberrlaid (2004), Forsyth & Polzer-Debruyne (2007), and Virick et al. (2007) which indicate that work-life balance is correlated positively with job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Therefore, it shows that work-life balance has important impact on employee attitudes - which in the current study is intention to leave the organisation - towards their organisations as well as for the lives of employees (Scholarios and Marks, 2004:54).

On top of that, the study revealed that job satisfaction and organisational commitment partially mediated the relationship between perceived work-life balance satisfaction and intention to leave. The mediation findings proofs the facts detailed by Villanueva & Djurkovic (2009) that job satisfaction and commitment had a strong main effect on intention to leave the organisation. Higher education institutions would appear to offer certain positives for combining career and family life. However, results of a recent survey found that academic staff reported feeling highly stressed because of increased teaching loads and staff/student ratios, pressure to attract external funds, and lack of recognition and reward (Waters & Bardoel, 2006:69). As evidenced by the current study's findings, the stress to balance between work and life among the university academics would in turn affects their occupational attitudes such as job satisfaction, commitment and intention to leave and further more leads to actual turnover. The demands of economic globalisation, escalating competition and reduced government funding have affected higher education sector and have led to many universities including in Malaysia adopting market-driven principles in relation to their workplace practices and policies (Waters & Bardoel (2006); Mohd Noor & Amat (2010); Mohd Noor, Stanton and Young (2009)). For academic staff, this has meant elevated workloads, higher expectations concerning research and increased administrative tasks, at the same time as general staff have struggled with diminished resources and changing work processes (Waters & Bardoel, 2006).

At the other side of the coin, academic staff also felt that they were forced to give more attention towards their work, and had limited time spent for their own life and family. According to Deery (2008) it is worth to ponder that at the organisational level, there are a number of actions that can be adopted by the university management to increase and maintain the satisfaction towards work-life balance practice and policies and in the same time minimise the level of turnover among academic staff. For example, O'Brien & Hyden (2008) suggest that flexibility in work practice is becoming an integral part of employment, particularly in public sector organisations, which are in effect, leading the way on this issue of work-life balance. Besides that, Deery (2008) also strategies to assist in balancing work and family life which include:

- a. providing flexible working hours such as roistered days off and family friendly starting and finishing times;
- b. allowing flexible work arrangements such as job sharing and working at home;
- providing training opportunities during work time; c.
- d. providing adequate resources for staff so that they can undertake their jobs properly;
- determining correct staffing levels so that staff are not overloaded; e.
- allowing adequate breaks during the working day; f.
- having provision for various types of leave such as carer's leave and 'time-out' sabbatical types of g. leave;
- h. rewarding staff for completing their tasks, not merely for presenteeism;
- staff functions that involve families; i.
- providing, if possible, health and well-being opportunities such as access to gymnasiums or at least j. time to exercise; and
- k. encouraging sound management practices.

Based on the current study's finding, only general outcomes of the interrelationships between perceived worklife balance satisfaction, job satisfaction, organisational commitment and intention to leave among academics have been sought out. It is worth future studies exploring the relationships of these variables based on the differences of gender, age, tenure, and other personal demographic variables.

For example research on differences of work-life balance value between men and women's perceptions, between senior and junior academics, and its impacts on their intentions to leave. Through the future work on these demographic differences of work-life balance and intention to leave, it is hoped that better intervention could be implemented by the university to create and maintain an optimum level of work-life balance focusing on a specific group of academic staff members and minimise their intention to leave the organisation. It must be emphasised that the current study's results are based on academics in participating public universities and it is not be possible to generalise to academics in other higher education institutions in Malaysia. Further similar works need to be done in the broader area of Malaysian higher education with segregation and focus among private and public university academics. It is anticipated that through the outcome of the current study, more research focusing on investigating the condition of work-life balance of academics in Malaysia and its association with any other critical attitudes and behaviour could be initiated. This could include occupational stress, organisational citizenship behaviour, perceived organisational support, and absenteeism.

6.0 References

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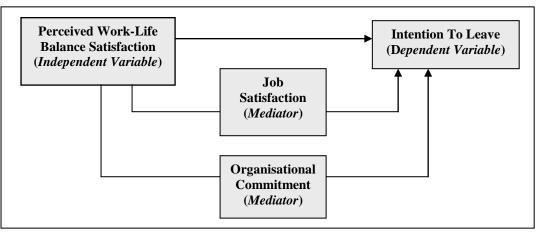


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Variable	No.	%
Age in years (n=910)		
24-32	354	38.9
33-39	282	31.0
40 and above	274	30.1
Gender (n=1043)		
Male	533	51.1
Female	510	48.9
<i>Tenure in years</i> (n=902)		
0-10	723	80.2
11-20	147	16.3
21-30	29	3.2
31 and above	3	0.3

Table 2:	Descriptive Statistics	of Measures

Variable	Description of Measure	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Age	Ordinal measure in years	24	63	36.5	8.37
	1=24-32, 2=33-39, 3=40-63				
Gender	0=Male 1=Female	0	1	-	-
Tenure	Ordinal measure in years	0	33	7.13	5.81
	1 = 0-10, 2 = 11-20, 3 = 21-30,				
	4=31 and above				
Perceived Work-Life	6 item index	6	30	3.18	0.65
Balance Satisfaction					
Job Satisfaction	6 item index	6	30	3.69	0.85
Organisational	18 item index	23	85	3.48	0.52
Commitment					
Intention to Leave	3 item index	3	15	2.48	1.17

Note: Min., Max., SD stands for minimum value, maximum value, standard deviation, respectively. α is the symbol for Cronbach's alpha coefficient value.

Table 3: Bivariate Correlations between all variables of the study
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Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Work-Life Balance						
2. Overall Job Satisfaction	.432**					
3. Overall Org Commitment	.364**	.635**				
4. Intention To Leave	376**	960**	568**			
5. Age	.046	$.102^{**}$.063	088**		
6. Gender	068^{*}	112**	119**	.091**	197**	
7. Tenure	.045	$.079^{*}$.096**	052	.637**	105**

***p*< 0.01 level (2-tailed), **p*< 0.05 level (2-tailed).