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Drivers of Employee Engagement and Job Performance in Nepal's Pharmaceutical Industry: The Mediating Role of Work-Life Balance

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Abstract. This study investigates the relationship between employee engagement drivers (cognitive, emotional, and behavioral), work-life balance, and job performance among pharmaceutical representatives in Nepal. Using a cross-sectional survey design, data were collected from 384 pharmaceutical representatives and analyzed using PLS-SEM. Results indicate that emotional and behavioral engagement significantly predict job performance, while cognitive engagement does not. Work-life balance partially mediates the relationship between emotional and behavioral engagement and job performance, and fully mediates the relationship between cognitive engagement and job performance. These findings contribute to employee engagement theory by highlighting the differential impacts of engagement drivers and the crucial mediating role of work-life balance in the Nepalese pharmaceutical industry context. Practical implications for enhancing employee performance in this sector are discussed.

Keywords: Employee engagement, Work life balance, Job performance, Pharmaceutical representatives, Nepal

1. Introduction

The issue of employee engagement, work-life balance, and job performance has become increasingly prominent in academic research due to their profound impact on organizational effectiveness and individual well-being. Employee engagement is a key driver of productivity, while work-life balance plays a crucial role in shaping job satisfaction and mental health. The interaction between these factors is instrumental in determining overall job performance, rendering them essential for achieving sustainable organizational success. Contemporary research underscores the importance of promoting employee engagement and supporting work-life balance to enhance performance and mitigate burnout, ultimately benefiting both employees and organizations (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Kalliath & Brough, 2008). In such context, this study aims to address the research gap by examining how different drivers of employee engagement (cognitive, emotional, and behavioral) impact job performance among Nepalese pharmaceutical representatives, with work-life balance as a mediating factor. We hypothesize that all three drivers will positively impact job performance, with work-life balance mediating these relationships.

The degree to which an employee's personal objectives coincide with the company's vision and objectives is known as employee engagement (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015). Kahn (1990) described employee engagement as the process by which individuals in an organization adapt their physical, cognitive, and emotional expressions to their job duties. Employee engagement may be an effective tool for organizational transformation and financial improvement when approached with the appropriate knowledge, resources, and mindset (Albrecht et al., 2015). Providing correct information to the appropriate individuals at the appropriate moment and consciously implementing employee engagement allows the exchange and application of information to improve organizational performance (Sypniewska et al., 2023). Alagaraja and Shuck (2015) discussed that when combined with the appropriate skills, resources, and attitude, employee engagement can be a powerful force for organizational change and financial improvement. Gallup (2013) demonstrated that employee engagement initiatives have a favorable financial impact, as engaged employees are regarded as the important human capital for businesses.

High employee engagement is essential to the organization's success in overall, while highly engaged employees feel more satisfied, and having lower employee turnover that ultimately leading to increased job performance (Sewagegn, 2020; Osborne and Hammoud, 2017; Bakar, 2013). Examining these subtleties of employee engagement is especially important in the context of various sectors in Nepal, where the market dynamics are distinctive and difficult (Basnet, 2023). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004); Bakker (2005); Mullen (2010) and De Braune and Roodt (2011) have investigated employee engagement from a psychological perspective, particularly based on the Job Demand-Resources model and found positive relationship with job performance. Further, Bell (2019) explained that the Job Demand Resource Model posits that excessive job demands combined with low job positives (resources) can result in stress and burnout. Conversely, positive job resources can counteract strong job demands and promote motivation and engagement. Additionally, the idea of work-life balance has drawn a lot of attention recently. Finding a balance between the demands of work and personal obligations is getting more and more difficult as the lines between work and personal life become more and more hazy (Lewis et al., 2023). In addition to being crucial for workers' general wellbeing, work life balance may also have an impact on how well they perform at work (Litchfield et al., 2016). As human capital and employees' psychological involvement in a company become more and more important, this relatively new concept in HR literature is brought to light (Devi, 2017). Pharmaceutical representatives play a critical role in the dynamic and intensely competitive pharmaceutical sector. Market penetration, sales, and the general success of pharmaceutical companies are significantly influenced by the effectiveness of pharmaceutical representatives. Understanding the elements that enhance their effectiveness at work therefore becomes quite important (Khazzaka, 2019). While studies such as Maisyuri et al. (2021) and Sewagegn (2020) found positive relationships between cognitive engagement and job performance,

others like Eke et al. (2023) and Riaz et al. (2021) found no significant relationship. This contradiction highlights the need for further investigation, particularly in the unique context of Nepal's pharmaceutical industry.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Employee Engagement and Job Performance

Various studies (Akyurt, 2021; Memon et al., 2018; Motyka, 2018; Poon, 2013; Shuck et al., 2011) demonstrated a modest but favourable and significant correlation between employee work engagement and job performance. Leiter and Bakker (2010) found that offering suitable job resources like autonomy, performance feedback, supervisor support, and learning opportunities increases employee engagement, which in turn boosts job performance. Another study by Bakker et al., (2012) mentioned that job resources are thought to initiate a motivating strategy, allowing employees to accomplish work-related objectives, and promoting their learning, development, and progress. Bakker and Bal (2010) examined on Dutch teachers and discovered a favourable significant relationship between in-role and extra-role output and weekly work engagement. Teachers who had the freedom to make their own decisions and had opportunities for professional development were likely to be more engaged at work, which in turn led to better job performance (Bakker & Bal, 2010; Poon, 2013; Shuck et al., 2011). Employee engagement was found to operate as a mediator between work resources and extra-role and in-role performance and when given job-related resources like autonomy, motivated employees not only do well in their allocated tasks (Bakker & Bal, 2010). Buckingham and Coffman (2014) and Akyurt (2021), elevated levels of employee engagement propel employees' efficacy and facilitate enhanced task performance. A parallel study by Supriyanto et al. (2021) offered additional insights, demonstrating a direct and tangible influence of employee engagement on individual performance. Moreover, Satata (2021) found the impact of employee engagement on individual work performance, asserting that it serves as a major factor for achieving the overarching objectives of the organization signifying positive relationship between employee engagement and job performance.

Shrestha (2019) conducted a study on the employees of Tribhuvan university revealed that employee engagement was correlated with university performance , while Singh et al., (2017) conducted study in Nepalese hotel industry found a positive correlation between employee engagement and job performance. Specifically, it highlighted that engaged employees have a higher capacity to interpret social cues, hence facilitating the development of social skills that are essential for accomplishing organizational objectives and the study recognizes that workplace and workforce factors influence the relationship that exists between employee engagement and performance. Lakshmi and Ragavan (2020 and Loan (2020) found that enhanced employee engagement significantly impacts job satisfaction that ultimately led to increased job performance. In a broader context, Sun and Bunchapattanasakda (2019) reaffirmed the positive relationship between employee engagement and both individual and organizational performance, consolidating the idea that engaged employees are more likely to contribute positively to the organization. Engagement extends beyond the organization's boundaries, as demonstrated by Schneider et al., (2018). Their study established that employee engagement possesses predictive power concerning organizational financial and customer metrics, and highlighted that engagement leads to increased job performance significantly. The significance of engagement was also emphasized in Tanwar's (2017) study which underscored that employee engagement fosters a sense of belonging and integration within the organization, ultimately contributing to improved performance. However, Abdullah (2014) could not find the positive relation between employee engagement and job performance while conducting study in Malaysian part time working students. While studies such as Maisyuri et al. (2021) and Sewagegn (2020) found positive relationships between cognitive engagement and job performance, others like Eke et al. (2023) and Riaz et al. (2021)

found no significant relationship. This contradiction highlights the need for further investigation, particularly in the unique context of Nepal's pharmaceutical industry.

2.2. Behavioral Engagement and Job Performance

Eke et al. (2023) conducted a study on South African municipalities, while Maisyuri et al. (2021) examined Utama Finance in Indonesia; both studies revealed a significant relationship between the behavioral dimension of employee engagement and job performance. Similarly, Jaya et al. (2021) identified a positive and significant impact of employees' behavioral engagement on job performance. In addition, Sewagegn (2020) also reported a positive and significant relationship between behavioral engagement and employee job performance. Similarly, Bergeron et al., (2013) described that employees that are eager to work hard are more likely to display behavioral engagement, which significantly impacts job performance. Additionally, Al-Dalahmeh et al. (2018) undertaken study on IT employees found a positive significant relationship between employees' behavioral engagement and job performance. Also, Chhajer et al. (2018), found that elevated levels of Behavioral engagement generally correlated with enhanced job performance (Muldoon et al., 2017, Lauring and Selmer, 2015, Shuck and Reio, 2014). In contrast, Riaz et al. (2021) found that behavioral engagement does not have a significant relationship with job performance when they conducted a study on employees of private sector companies in Pakistan. The findings concluded that employees' job performance is not directly related to the behavioral engagement drivers of employee engagement but may be influenced by interventions of other variables (Riaz et al., 2021). In a similar way, Schwartz (2012) provided evidence that engagement of employees in multiple tasks causes a reduction in an employee's performance. Most of the studies (Jaya et al., 2021; Sewagegn, 2020) found positive relationship between behavoural engagement and job performance. However, others such as; (Riaz et al., 2021; Schwartz, 2012) found no significant relationship or minimum relationship. This contradiction may be because different landscape of pharmaceutical market of Nepal. Thus, further study in this relationship is required.

2.3. Cognitive Engagement and Job Performance

Maisyuri et al. (2021) conducted a study on employees of Utama Finance in Indonesia, and Sewagegn (2020) examined Ethio Telecom, both revealing a significant but weaker positive relationship between cognitive engagement and job performance. Al-Dalahmeh et al. (2018), in their study of IT employees, also found a significant positive relationship between cognitive engagement and job performance. Cognitively engaged employees typically maintain favorable attitudes and positive perceptions about their jobs, which enhances their job performance (Kuok & Taormina, 2017; Zehir et al., 2017; Muldoon et al., 2017; Knoll & Redman, 2016). Conversely, Eke et al. (2023) found no significant relationship between cognitive engagement and job performance among employees in South African municipalities. Similarly, Riaz et al. (2021) and Jaya et al. (2021) reported that cognitive engagement did not significantly relate to job performance. These contradictory findings may be attributed to different cultural dimensions and the nature of the businesses studied, indicating a need for further research. Additionally, as the Nepalese pharmaceutical market differs from the industrial areas covered in these studies, further research in this context is warranted.

2.4. Emotional Engagement and Job Performance

Eke et al. (2023) conducted a study on employees of South African municipalities and found that the emotional dimension of employee engagement had a significant positive relationship with job performance. Similarly, Jaya et al. (2021), in their study of 193 employees, revealed a significant influence of emotional engagement on job performance. Muldoon et al. (2017) also reported a

significant positive impact of emotional engagement on job performance (Riaz et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2021). Sewagegn (2020) observed a similar positive relationship among employees of Ethio Telecom. Al-Dalahmeh et al. (2018) also found a significant positive relationship between emotional engagement and job performance in their study. Imandin et al. (2015) highlighted that emotional engagement with the organization positively influences job performance (Singh & Karki, 2015). Rich et al. (2010) noted that emotional engagement directly impacts employees' connection to their work and interactions with coworkers, ultimately enhancing job performance. Therefore, when employees feel emotionally engaged, they are more likely to be committed to their work, leading to improved performance. However, Maisyuri et al. (2021) identified a significant positive but minimal impact of emotional engagement on job performance in their study of Utama Finance in Indonesia. This variation may be due to population differences or the possibility that emotional engagement is less crucial for employees in the financial sector. Given that the pharmaceutical industry has different characteristics, further research is necessary to confirm this relationship.

2.5. Work Life Balance and Job Performance

A study undertaken by Madogwhe and Omogero (2023), in Warri Delta State University, revealed that work-life balance practices and benefits enhanced employee performance. Similarly, Yasmeen (2023), in her study found that work-life balance increases employees' job satisfaction and it allows them to perform well in the workplace. Other studies suggested that Work-life balance has been shown to enhance psychological health and job satisfaction, which may have a moderating and mediating effect on job performance (Faisal et al., 2022, Wang et al., 2022, Abdirahman et al., 2020, Preena, 2021). Susanto, et al. (2022) found that job satisfaction and performance are positively impacted by work-life balance. Sthapit and Paudel (2021) undertaken study in Nepalese commercial banks and they suggested that organizations should effectively handle the work-family balance of their human resources to enhance performance, ultimately contributing to the achievement of organizational goals. Norzita et al. (2020) found that employees responded positively in job performance to the company's sincere concern and broad involvement in promoting work-life balance. As a result, workers who have a good work-life balance are probably very productive and perform very well for the company (Norzita et al., 2020; French et al., 2020, Wong et al., 2020). Ardiansyah and Surjanti (2020) concluded that an employees' commitment is positively impacted by work-life balance ultimately leading to improved performance. Employee performance is strongly impacted by a favorable work-life balance, and there is a correlation between greater work-life balance and improved employee performance in overall (Ajayaghosh and Thampi, 2020, Ajayaghosh and Thampi, 2020, Mutunga, 2018). Acharya and Padmavathy (2018) found that job satisfaction and performance among employees of private banks in Nepal is increased when organizations support work-life balance. To improve employee job performance, organizations are putting more and more focus on the adoption of different HR practices and initiatives, like work-life balance (Acharya and Padmavathy, 2018). One of the most important factors impacting job performance is said to be work-life balance (Thevanes and Mangaleswaran, 2018, Naithani, 2017). The study areas of previous studies and this study is different. Similarly, population characteristics are completely different. Pharmaceutical industry for the study on work life balance and performance is virgin area for further study in Nepal.

2.6. Employee Engagement and Work Life Balance

Siregar et al. (2022) indicated that employee engagement has a significant and positive effect with work-life balance. It showed that greater levels of engagement are directly proportional to proper work-life balance (Siregar et al., 2022). Mariyanti et al., (2022) underscored the importance of employee engagement and work-life balance, particularly for employees who are balancing multiple

responsibilities. In the same way, Hasan et al. (2021) found that employee engagement was low with the absence of work-life balance. The empirical results highlighted how negatively work-life balance affects employees' levels of engagement. Lestari and Margaretha (2021) noted that Y generation workers needed more work-life balance and how crucial it is to address concerns about work-life balance to increase job engagement and lower the likelihood of turnover among this group. Engaged employees, from the findings of study by Shirina and Sharma (2021), Ferreira et al. (2020) and Sumathi (2017) found that encouraging employee engagement improved work-life balance positively. Wardani and Firmansyah (2020) conducted a study on blue-collar workers' perceptions of work-life balance and found that work life balance is highly influenced by employee engagement and suggested employers to take engagement into account when resolving work-life balance issues.

2.7. Mediating Role of Work-Life Balance

Research on the mediating role of work-life balance in the relationship between employee engagement and job performance is limited, with only a few studies addressing this topic. Riaz et al. (2021) conducted a study involving 334 employees from private sector organizations in Pakistan, exploring this relationship. Their findings revealed that work-life balance acts as a partial mediator between employee engagement—specifically cognitive, behavioral, and emotional engagement and job performance. In contrast, Abdullah (2014) found that work-life balance did not mediate the relationship between employee engagement and job performance in a study of part-time university students in Malaysia. This discrepancy may be due to the fact that university students often have more flexibility to manage their family responsibilities, whereas professionals, such as pharmaceutical representatives, may not have such flexibility. As no research has yet been conducted in this area in Nepal, further studies are needed to explore these dynamics in different contexts.

2.8. Job Demand Resource Theory

Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory proposed by Bakker and DeMerouti (2007), implies that all job characteristics can be categorized as either resources or demands. Job demands encompass aspects of the job that necessitate ongoing physical and/or mental exertion, incurring certain biological and/or psychological costs (Bakker & DeMerouti, 2007). On the other hand, job resources are components that contribute to achieving work goals, reducing working pressures, and inspiring self-improvement, learning, and development (Bakker & DeMerouti, 2007). The theory suggests that when employees expend high levels of sustained effort to meet job expectations, it results in job strain, and workplace resources provide both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The impact of job demands and resources on employee outcomes, such as job performance, is moderated by job strain and motivation. While the theory posits that job demands are primarily related to exhaustion (job strain) and job resources to work involvement (motivation), meta-analytic evidence indicated that job demands not only exacerbate burnout but also negatively correlate with work engagement (Crawford et al., 2010; Bakker et al., 2014). Work engagement and work life balance are positively correlated because highly engaged workers invest more physical, mental, and emotional effort in executing their jobs and achieving work goals leading to good balance between work and personal life (Rich et al., 2010; Espert et al., 2020). Robust work activity, characterized by persistent high levels of physical effort and fortitude, aids in achieving long-term goals through sustained effort (Schaufeli et al., 2006; Kahn, 1990; Rich et al., 2010).

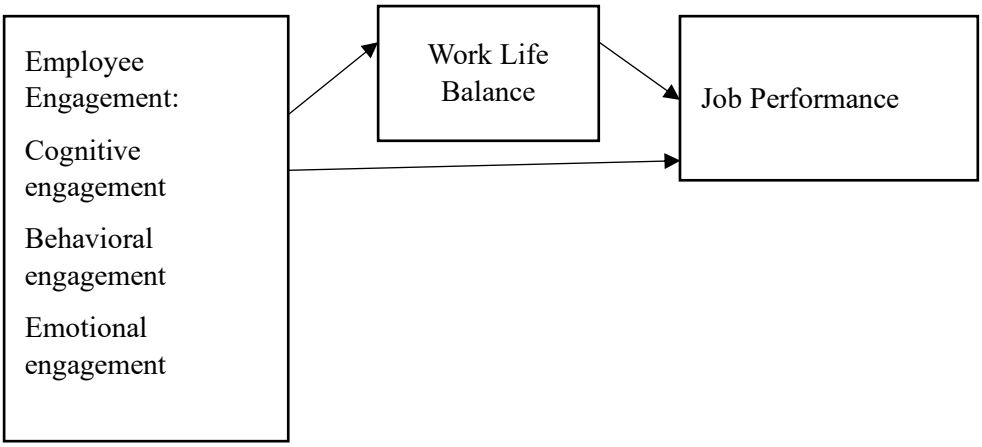
Dedication, another element of job engagement, involves emotional investment, enthusiasm, and pride in one's work (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Individuals emotionally committed to their work responsibilities tend to achieve work goals, maintain authenticity, and exhibit emotional resilience (Kahn, 1990; Rich et al., 2010; Giménez-Espert et al., 2020). The third element, absorption, signifies cognitive effort, and those who employ cognitive effort are better at attaining their work goals by being

vigilant, alert, and concentrated (Schaufeli et al., 2006; Rich et al., 2010). Job-Demand Resource Theory further elaborates that both job and personal resources, whether combined or independent, play a crucial role in shaping work engagement (Rich et al., 2010). This is particularly significant when job demands are high, as both types of resources have a substantial and positive impact on engagement. The relationship between work engagement and performance is supported by the job demands-resource theory model, which acknowledges how particular job characteristics affect variability in both in-role and extra-role performance (Chughtai and Buckley, 2011; Bakker et al., 2012; Ćulibrk et al., 2018; Akyurt,2021). In alignment with the Job-Demand Resource Theory, the fulfillment of psychological contracts is considered a job resource that contributes to enhancing employee engagement (Bakker et al., 2023).

2.9. Kahn's Theory and Model of Engagement

Kahn (1990) mentioned that when performing tasks for jobs, people could use varying degrees of their physical, cognitive, and emotional capabilities. This tendency has implications for both their professional and social interactions (Kahn, 1990). Further Kahn (1990) proposed that Personal involvement occurs when people choose to include or remove their personal selves while carrying out their job-related duties. The degree to which people use their physical, cognitive, and emotional components while performing their job-related duties defines these behaviors (Kahn, 1990). Kahn's model (1990) is considered the earliest conceptualization of employee engagement, focusing on the psychological aspects of personal engagement and disengagement at work. Through qualitative studies, Kahn (1990) identified three key psychological conditions associated with individual engagement and disengagement such as meaningfulness, availability, and safety.

Overall, most studies (Kurniawati & Raharja, 2022; Satata, 2021; Akyurt, 2021; Shrestha, 2019; Memon et al., 2018; Motyka, 2018; Singh et al., 2017; Singh & Karki, 2015; Poon, 2013; Shuck et al., 2011; Bakker & Bal, 2010) have focused on the influence of employee engagement on job performance, while the role of work-life balance has received limited attention. The relationship between employee engagement and job performance is marked by conflicting findings, as observed in studies by Lakshmi and Ragavan (2020), Munish and Agarwal (2017), Reijseger et al. (2017), and Walden et al. (2017). A few studies (Eke et al., 2023; Maisyuri et al., 2021; Riaz et al., 2021; Chhajer et al., 2018) have investigated the drivers of employee engagement (cognitive, behavioral, and emotional) in relation to job performance, but they often overlook the role of work-life balance. Other studies (Madogwhe & Omogero, 2023; Yasmeen, 2023; Faisal et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022; Preena, 2021; Paudel & Sthapit, 2021; Abdirahman et al., 2020) have explored the influence of work-life balance on job performance without considering the role of employee engagement in this relationship. Additionally, some studies (Siregar et al., 2022; Mariyanti et al., 2022; Hasan et al., 2021; Lestari & Margaretha, 2021; Shirina & Sharma, 2021; Ferreira et al., 2020; Sumathi, 2017) have examined the relationship between employee engagement and work-life balance but have not explored the drivers of employee engagement in connection with work-life balance. There is a noticeable gap in research that explores both the drivers of employee engagement and their relationship with work-life balance. Only a few studies (Abdullah, 2014; Riaz et al., 2021) have used work-life balance as a mediating variable between employee engagement and job performance. Among these, only one study (Riaz et al., 2021) has investigated the drivers of employee engagement, job performance, and the mediating role of work-life balance within the context of Pakistan. This area remains largely unexplored in Nepal as well, indicating the need for further research. Based on existing reviewed theory and empirical evidences, the theoretical framework has been developed as shown in Figure 1.



Source: Abdullah (2014); Riaz et al., (2021)

Fig.1: Theoretical Framework

3. Research Methodology

A causal comparative research design was used to examine the relationship among the variables. The data has been gathered using a cross-sectional survey approach. Those employees employed in the Nepalese Pharmaceutical Industry as pharmaceutical representatives were the main target population for this study. A non-probability sampling procedure was used to select the respondents. The sample size was determined using the formula of Godden (2004).

$$\textit{Sample Size for infinite population } (n) = Z \text{ ^ } 2 * p * (1-p) / M \text{ ^ } 2$$

Where, *Z = Z value (95% Confidence interval, 1.96 standard value); p = Population proportion expressed as decimal, (0.50); M = Error margin (.05); Sample Size for infinite population (n) = 1.96 ^ 2 ∗ 0.50 ∗ (1-0.50)/0.05^2= 384*

The sample size for this study is 384. Each respondent's input is crucial for the research, so participants were selected based on convenience. A total of 450 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, and 400 responses were received. Out of these, only 384 were deemed suitable for analysis. A standardized structured questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale was administered to pharmaceutical representatives through the Facebook group "Medical Representatives of Nepal" and by personally visiting several hospitals, including Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital, Bir Hospital, Annapurna Neuro Hospital, Bansbari Neuro Hospital, Om Hospital, Alka Hospital, Kathmandu Medical College, Sumeru City Hospital, Bhaktapur Cancer Hospital, BnB Hospital, Green City Hospital, Medicity Hospital, and Kirtipur Hospital. The Employee Engagement Scale (Shuck et al., 2017) was used to measure the three drivers of engagement. Sample items include 'I am really focused when I am working' (cognitive), 'I feel energized when I work' (emotional), and 'I really push myself to work beyond what is expected of me' (behavioral). Cronbach's alpha for these subscales ranged from 0.82 to 0.88." To assess the items' internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha was calculated. Cronbach's alpha calculation has become a typical procedure in research requiring multiple-item measures of a construct (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha of Constructs

Constructs and Items	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	After Removing Items: Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Number of Items
Behavioural Engagement	7	0.715	0.822	5
Cognitive Engagement	7	0.602	0.854	4

Emotional Engagement	7	0.702	0.876	5
Job Performance	7	0.674	0.849	4
Work-Life Balance	9	0.780	0.887	5

As per Tavakol and Dennick, (2011), typically, data with Cronbach's alpha values falling within the range of 0.70 to 0.95 are deemed reliable. The outcomes of the reliability test revealed that all the constructs possess Cronbach's alpha values (.822, .854, .876, .849 and .887) exceeding 0.70 which satisfy the criteria of consistency. For the analysis, two software; IBM SPSS and Smart PLS 4 were employed. The assessment includes evaluating both direct and indirect effects to measure the significance of the work-life balance mediation on the relationship between employee engagement and job performance. The computation of composite reliability, Cronbach's alpha, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were used to assess the data's internal consistency. Furthermore, measurements are made to demonstrate discriminant validity using the Fornell Larcker Criterion, Cross Loading, and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio. Multicollinearity was tested using VIF. Hypotheses were tested using structural equation modeling. In the similar issues academia used SEM in the recent literatures such as; Maisyuri et al., 2021; Sewagegn, 2020; Eke et al., 2023; Lauring & Selmer, 2015. Thus, the study used SEM for direct and indirect impact of employee engagement on job performance.

Hypotheses
H1: Behavioural engagement is positively related to job performance.
H2: Work-life balance mediates the relationship between behavioural engagement and job performance.
H3: Cognitive engagement is positively related to job performance.
H4: Work-life balance mediates the relationship between cognitive engagement and job performance.
H5: Emotional engagement is positively related to job performance.
H6: Work-life balance mediates the relationship between emotional engagement and job performance.
H7: Work-life balance is positively related to job performance.

3.1. Measurement of Constructs

The questionnaire has been taken from different tested sources for different variables. For the independent variable employee engagement which consisted of 3 drivers i.e., cognitive engagement, emotional engagement and behavioral engagement, the questionnaire has been taken from two different sources. For each driver of employee engagement i.e. cognitive engagement, emotional engagement and behavioral engagement items were taken from Shuck et al., (2017) and May et al., (2004). Similarly, for work life balance the questionnaires were taken from Smeltzer et al., (2016) and questionnaire for job performance were taken from the work of Ramos et al., (2019). The Employee Engagement Scale (Shuck et al., 2017) was used to measure the three drivers of engagement. Sample items include 'I am really focused when I am working' (cognitive), 'I feel energized when I work' (emotional), and 'I really push myself to work beyond what is expected of me' (behavioral). Cronbach's alpha for these subscales ranged from 0.82 to 0.88. The work-life balance scale (Smeltzer et al., 2016) was used. Sample item includes ' My personal life suffers because of work'. Cronbach's alpha for these subscales was 0.887. Similarly, The job performance (contextual) scale (Ramos et al., 2019) was used. Sample item includes ' On my own initiative, I start new task when my old tasks were completed'. Cronbach's alpha for these subscales was 0.849.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1. Position of Variables

Table 2: Position of Variables

Variables	Mean	S.D.
Cognitive Engagement	3.75	0.866
Behavioural Engagement	3.96	0.778
Emotional Engagement	3.87	0.822
Work-life Balance	3.82	0.888
Job Performance	3.83	0.842

The data were collected using five point Likert scale questionnaire. So, the mean value more than 3.5 is considered satisfactory. All the mean values remained more than 0.5. Therefore, all these things are considered by the managers while formulating policies for medical representatives in Nepal. The data collected through five-point Likert scale questionnaire, produced the mean value greater than 3.5 which is considered satisfactory. All mean values exceeded 3.5, indicating that the responses were generally positive. Therefore, these findings should be taken into account by managers when formulating policies for medical representatives in Nepal.

4.2. Normality Test

Table 3: Normality Test

Variables	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Cognitive Engagement	.138	384	.000	.941	384	.000
Behavioral Engagement	.114	384	.000	.939	384	.000
Emotional Engagement	.135	384	.000	.920	384	.000
Work Life Balance	.138	384	.000	.936	384	.000
Job Performance	.182	384	.000	.925	384	.000

The findings of the normality tests for Cognitive Engagement, Behavioral Engagement, Emotional Engagement, Work Life Balance, and Job Performance are shown in Table 3. All the variables' p-values, as determined by the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests, are less than 0.05. This demonstrates that data is not normally distributed.

4.3. Structural Equation Model Analysis

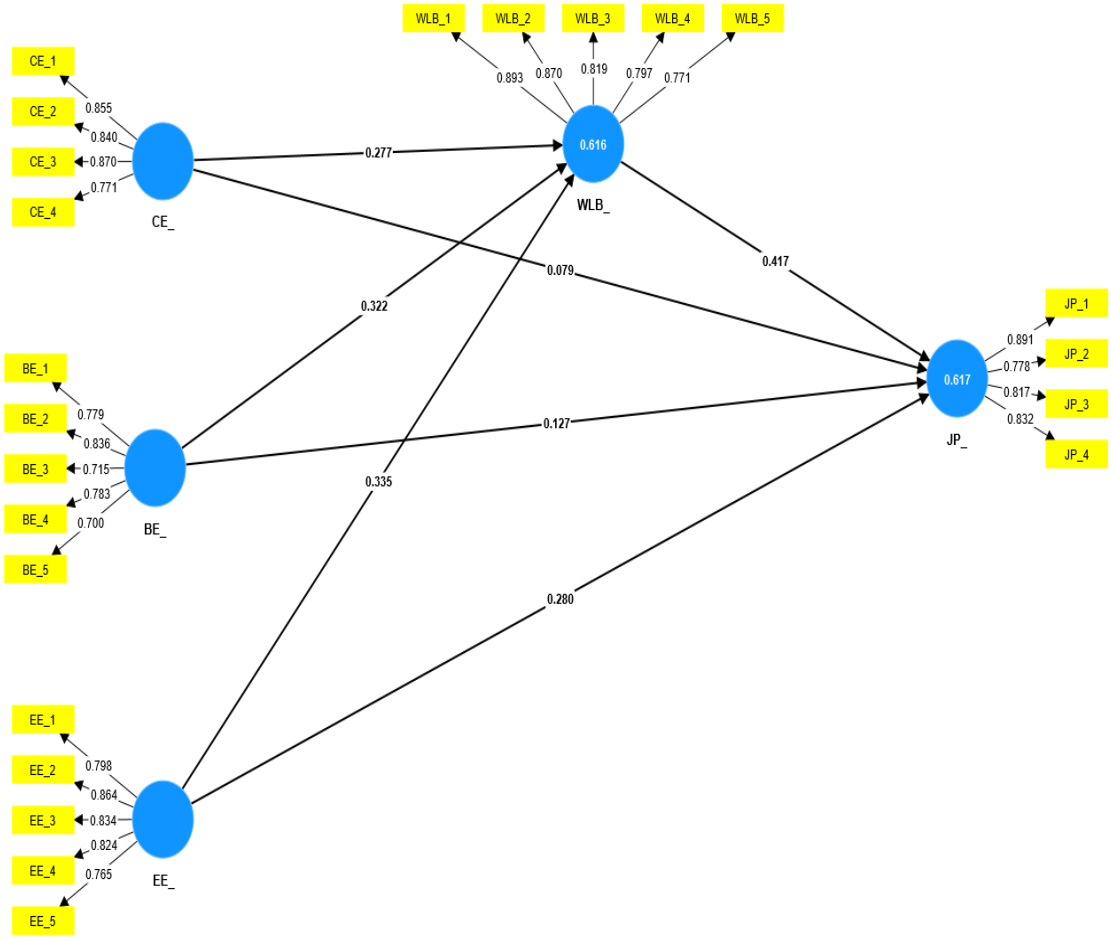


Fig. 2: Structural Model of Variables

Figure 2 illustrates the path coefficient and R^2 value of the developed structural model. The R^2 value serves as an indicator of the model's predictive power, representing the amount of explained variance of the endogenous construct in the model (Hair et al., 2017). In figure 2, the R^2 value for Work-life balance is observed to be 0.616, indicating a moderate predictive power. This value suggests that 61.60 percentages of the variation in work-life balance is explained by the independent variables. Additionally, the path analysis reveals a moderate predictive power for Job performance, as reflected in R^2 value of 0.617. This signifies that approximately 61.70 percentages of the variance in job performance are explained by the dependent variables.

4.4. Path Coefficient Analysis

Table 4: Path Coefficient

Path	Beta Coefficient (β)	Standard Deviation (SD)	T-value	P-value	LLCI (2.5%)	ULCI (97.5%)
BE -> JP	0.127	0.052	2.461	0.014	0.027	0.228
BE -> WLB	0.322	0.059	5.472	0.000	0.204	0.436
CE -> JP	0.079	0.048	1.658	0.097	-0.013	0.176
CE -> WLB	0.277	0.051	5.428	0.000	0.178	0.377
EE -> JP	0.280	0.063	4.454	0.000	0.159	0.398
EE -> WLB	0.335	0.067	4.987	0.000	0.209	0.469
WLB -> JP	0.417	0.064	6.510	0.000	0.293	0.545

Table 4 shows the relationship between behavour engagement, cognitive engagement and emotional engagement. Similarly, the relationship of behavour engagement, cognitive engagement and emotional

engagement with work-life balance and relations of work-life balance with job performance. As shown in the table, behavioural engagement (β= .127, P-value < 0.05) and emotional engagement (β= .335, P≤ 0.05) were significantly affect to job performance, while cognitive engagement (β=0.079, P > 0.05) were not. Similarly, Behavioural engagement (β= 0.322, p≤ 0.01), Cognitive engagement (β= 0.277, p≤ 0.01) and Emotional engagement (β= 0.067, p≤ 0.01) impact on work-life balance significantly and work-life balance (β= 0.417, p≤ 0.01) affects job performance significantly.

4.5. Mediation Effect

4.5.1. Relation between Behavioral Engagement and Job Performance and Mediation Effect of Work- Life Balance

Table 5: Direct Effect, Indirect Effect and Total Effect of BE on JP

Effect	Path	Beta Coefficient (β)	Standard Deviation (SD)	T-value	P-value	LLCI (2.5%)	ULCI (97.5%)
Direct Effect	BE -> JP	0.127	0.052	2.461	0.014	0.027	0.228
Indirect Effect	BE -> WLB -> JP	0.134	0.03	4.479	0.000	0.08	0.197
Total Effect	BE -> JP	0.261	0.055	4.74	0.000	0.153	0.369

Table 5 presents the total effect, direct effect, and indirect effect of behavioral engagement on job performance. The results indicated that the total and direct effect of behavioral engagement on job performance is statistically significant (β=0.261, 74, P≤ 0.01) and β=-0.127, P≤ 0.05). Similarly, the indirect effect of behavioral engagement on job performance through work life balance is found to be significant (β=0.134, P≤ 0.01). This suggests that the relationship between behavioural engagement and job performance is partially mediated by work life balance.

4.5.2. Relation between Emotional Engagement and Job Performance and Mediation Effect of Work-Life Balance

Table 6: Direct Effect, Indirect Effect and Total Effect of EE on JP

Effect	Path	Beta Coefficient (β)	Standard Deviation (SD)	T-value	P-value	LLCI (2.5%)	ULCI (97.5%)
Direct Effect	EE -> JP	0.28	0.063	4.454	0.000	0.159	0.398
Indirect Effect	EE -> WLB -> JP	0.14	0.039	3.546	0.000	0.073	0.226
Total Effect	EE -> JP	0.42	0.052	8.069	0.000	0.314	0.518

Table 6 presents the total effect, direct effect, and indirect effect of emotional engagement on job performance. The results indicated that the total effect and direct effect of emotional engagement on job performance is statistically significant (β=0.42, P≤ 0.01 and β=-0.28, P≤ 0.01 respectively). Similarly, the indirect effect of emotional engagement on job performance through work life balance is found to be significant (β=0.14, P≤ 0.01). This suggests that the relationship between emotional engagement and job performance is partially mediated by work life balance.

4.5.3. Relation between Cognitive Engagement and Job Performance and Mediation Effect of Work-Life Balance

Table 7: Direct Effect, Indirect Effect and Total Effect of CE on JP

Effect	Path	Beta Coefficient (β)	Standard Deviation (SD)	T-value	P-value	LLCI (2.5%)	ULCI (97.5%)
Direct Effect	CE -> JP	0.079	0.048	1.658	0.097	-0.013	0.176
Indirect Effect	CE -> WLB -> JP	0.116	0.026	4.403	0.000	0.069	0.171
Total Effect	CE -> JP	0.195	0.05	3.899	0.000	0.098	0.294

Table 7 shows the total effect, direct effect, and indirect effect of cognitive engagement on job performance. As shown, total effect of cognitive engagement on job performance is statistically significant (β=0.195, P≤0.01). However, the direct effect of cognitive engagement on job performance is insignificant (β=-0.079, 0.081, P>0.05). But the indirect effect of cognitive engagement (β= 0.195, P≤ 0.05) on job performance through work life balance is found to be significant. This suggests that the relationship is fully mediated by Work life balance.

4.5.4. Test of Hypothesis

Table 8: Hypothesis Testing Summary

Hypothesis and Structural Path	Beta Coefficient (β)	P-value	LLCI (2.5%)	ULCI (97.5%)	Results
H1: BE -> JP	0.127	0.014	0.027	0.228	Accepted
H2: BE -> WLB-> JP	0.134	0.03	0.08	0.197	Accepted
H3: CE -> JP	0.079	0.097	-0.013	0.176	Rejected
H4: CE -> WLB-> JP	0.116	0.026	0.069	0.171	Accepted
H5: EE -> JP	0.28	0.000	0.159	0.398	Accepted
H6: EE -> WLB -> JP	0.14	0.039	0.073	0.226	Accepted
H7: WLB -> JP	0.417	0.000	0.293	0.545	Accepted
Effect Size					0.617
Employee Engagement -> JP WLB-> JP					0.616

The relationship between behavioral engagement and job performance is statistically significant (β = 0.127, p ≤ 0.05). Thus, Hypothesis 1 (H1), which posits a positive and significant relationship between behavioral engagement and job performance, is supported. Likewise, the relationship among behavioral engagement, work-life balance, and job performance is also statistically significant (β = 0.134, p ≤ 0.05). This supports Hypothesis 2 (H2), which suggests that the sequential relationship of behavioral engagement through work-life balance to job performance is positively significant. Cognitive engagement is not significantly related to job performance (β = 0.079, p ≤ 0.05), leading to the rejection of Hypothesis 3 (H3). However, the relationship between cognitive engagement and job performance through work-life balance is significant (β = 0.116, p ≤ 0.05), supporting Hypothesis 4 (H4). Both the direct relationship between emotional engagement and job performance (β = 0.28, p ≤ 0.01) and the relationship through work-life balance (β = 0.14, p ≤ 0.05) are statistically significant. Therefore, Hypotheses 5 (H5) and 6 (H6) are accepted. Also, the direct relationship between work-life balance and job performance is statistically significant (β = 0.417, p ≤ 0.01), supporting Hypothesis 7 (H7).

4.6. Discussions

The specific focus of the study is to investigate the relationship of drivers of employee engagement (cognitive, emotional, and behavioural) with job performance along with the mediating effect of work life balance among pharmaceutical representatives of Nepal. The findings confirmed that, emotional engagement and behavioural engagement have a positive significant relationship with job performance.

This finding is consistent with the findings of Maisyuri et al. (2021), Riaz.et al. (2021), Sewagegn (2020), Eke at.al (2023), Muldoon et al. (2017), Singh and Karki (2015) and Rich et al. (2010). One plausible reason for the consistency in findings with studies might be the shared theoretical framework and use of same base theory i.e. Kahn's (1990) theory of engagement that underlies the concept of emotional engagement and behavioural engagement. This theory posits that employees who are emotionally and behaviourally engaged are likely to invest more in their work, could be a unifying factor across these studies. Thus, the study confirms the theory of Kahn in Nepalese settings. In contrast, the study found a non-significant relationship between cognitive engagement and job performance. This finding is consistent with the study done by Eke et al. (2023), Riaz et al. (2021) and Jaya et al. (2021). These findings are contrast with the findings of Maisyuri et al. (2021), Sewagegn (2020) and Zehir et al. (2017) who found a positive significant relationship between cognitive engagement and job performance. This may suggest that for pharmaceutical representatives in Nepal, being cognitively focused on their work is less important for performance than emotional investment and behavioral effort. This could be due to the relationship-oriented nature of pharmaceutical sales in Nepal's cultural context.

The direct impact of work life balance on job performance is found significantly positive relationship. The study finding is consistent with the study findings of Madogwhe and Omogero (2023), Yasmeen (2023), Susanto.et al. (2022), Wang et al. (2022), Preena (2021), Norzita et al. (2020), Banu (2019), Acharya and Padmavathy (2018), and Mutunga (2018). The similarity in finding may be because of use of Job Demands-Resources (J D-R) model as base model that posits a positive relationship between work-life balance and job performance. Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model suggests that balancing work and personal life contributes to employee well-being, which, in turn, positively influences job performance. However, the findings of the mediating role of work life balance are contradictory. The finding is consistent with the findings of Riaz et al. (2021) who have tested the similar relationship. Riaz et al. (2021) found the mediating role of work life balance between all three drivers (cognitive, emotional, and behavioural) of employee engagement and job performance. It is consistent because the concept of all variable might be universal but the findings of Abdullah's (2014) is inconsistent. It may be so because he has tested using emotional engagement in a whole not separating the drivers of engagement.

5. Conclusions and Implications

This study provides novel insights into the dynamics of employee engagement, work-life balance, and job performance among pharmaceutical representatives in Nepal. Our findings highlight the critical roles of emotional and behavioral engagement in driving job performance, while unexpectedly revealing no direct effect of cognitive engagement. The mediating role of work-life balance underscores its importance in translating engagement into performance outcomes. These results extend employee engagement theory by demonstrating the differential effects of engagement drivers and the pivotal role of work-life balance in a unique cultural and industrial context. For pharmaceutical companies operating in Nepal, our findings suggest the value of fostering emotional connection to work, encouraging extra-role behaviors, and supporting work-life balance to enhance sales force performance. Future research should explore these relationships longitudinally and in other cultural contexts to further refine our understanding of these crucial organizational behavior concepts.

This study provides insights to the pharmaceutical industries and the investors who are interested to invest in pharmaceutical industry especially to manage medical representatives who are key persons for medical industry. The managers of pharmaceutical industries can focus on fostering emotional connection to work and encourage and encourage extra-role behaviour and intervene in the work-life balance of employees that may help foster performance of employees. Future research can explore this relationship longitudinally and in other contexts such as; manufacturing, bank and financial institutions, hotel and hospitality industry to refine our understanding of these organizational behaviour and job performance concepts. Non- probability sampling was used in the study, Future researcher can use probability sampling so as to draw the non-biased results. Job Demand-Resource theory's (JD-R) notion

is supported by the study finding. As JD-R theory suggests that balancing personal and work-life contributes to employee wellbeing, which, in turn, positively influences job performance. Similarly, Kahn's theory of engagement is partially accepted by the study findings. As the findings show that behavioural and emotional engagement are influencer to job performance but by cognitive engagement.

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