

Mediating Role of Job Commitment Between Quality of Work Life and Work-Life Balance in Nepali Public Social Sector

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of quality of work life (QWL) on work-life balance (WLB) and explores the mediating role of job commitment (JC) in this relationship. Adopting a descriptive and causal-comparative research design, the study collected data from 272 employees in Nepal's public social sector using a structured questionnaire with a seven-point Likert scale. A measurement model assessed the goodness of fit, while a structural model analyzed the direct effect of QWL on WLB and the mediating role of JC. The findings revealed that QWL has a significant positive impact on WLB, with job commitment partially mediating this relationship. The study provides practical insights for managers to design effective QWL strategies that enhance employees' work-life balance. Furthermore, it highlights the pivotal role of job commitment in strengthening the link between QWL and WLB, offering valuable implications for organizational policy and employee well-being in the public sector.

Keywords: Employee Well-being, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Performance, Psychological Engagement, Public Sector Management

1. Introduction

Quality of Work Life (QWL) refers to the overall relationship between employees and their work environment, encompassing factors such as empowerment, career development, job security, incentives, and workplace conditions (Alfain et al., 2024; Arasma et al., 2024; Ghimire et al., 2024). It also includes aspects like supervisory support, social relevance, and physical work settings, all of which contribute to employee well-being (Kalleberg, 1977; Walton, 1973). A positive QWL fosters a supportive atmosphere that enhances Work-Life Balance (WLB)—defined as the adjustments in work structures that help employees balance their professional and personal responsibilities (Parakandi & Behery, 2016). Research suggests that QWL directly improves WLB by creating a conducive workplace (Aruldoss et al., 2021; Khadka et al., 2024; Mochtar & Susanti, 2022), although the underlying mechanisms, such as job commitment (JC), remain underexplored.

Job commitment, defined as an employee's psychological attachment, dedication, and loyalty to their job and organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991), plays a crucial mediating role between Quality of Work Life (QWL) and Work-Life Balance (WLB). Employees with high levels of job commitment are more likely to exert sustained effort, align with organizational goals, and maintain long-term engagement (Arasma et al., 2024; Aruldoss et al., 2021; Karki et al., 2023). In the Nepali context, QWL is often assessed through factors such as workplace conditions, rewards, and organizational culture, all of which significantly influence job satisfaction (Paudel, 2024; Shrestha et al., 2023). However, previous research in Nepal has not explored the direct impact of QWL on WLB or the indirect effect mediated by job commitment, highlighting a critical gap in studies of the public sector workforce.

This study addresses this gap by examining how Quality of Work Life (QWL) influences Work-Life Balance (WLB) and whether job commitment mediates this relationship within Nepal's public social sector. While existing literature underscores QWL's impact on employee satisfaction, its broader effect on

WLB—particularly through the lens of job commitment—remains underexplored in developing economies like Nepal. By analyzing these dynamics, the study offers empirical insights that can guide policymakers and organizational leaders in crafting effective QWL strategies aimed at enhancing both job commitment and work-life balance.

The Nepali public social sector faces unique challenges, including bureaucratic inefficiencies, limited resources, and high employee turnover, all of which can negatively affect Quality of Work Life (QWL) and Work-Life Balance (WLB). Despite increasing awareness of these issues, empirical research on how job commitment (JC) mediates the QWL-WLB relationship remains limited, particularly in developing countries like Nepal. Most existing studies focus on Western contexts or private-sector organizations, creating a critical gap in understanding public-sector dynamics in South Asia. Given Nepal's socio-economic constraints and the essential role of the public sector in service delivery, this study offers timely insights into how improving QWL can enhance employee commitment and, in turn, improve WLB. By addressing this gap, the research not only contributes to academic discourse but also provides actionable strategies for policymakers to boost workforce productivity and well-being in Nepal's often-overlooked public social sector.

2. Literature Review

The relationship between Quality of Work Life (QWL), Work-Life Balance (WLB), and Job Commitment (JC) has been extensively explored through both theoretical and empirical lenses. Spillover Theory suggests that experiences in one domain (e.g., work) can affect another (e.g., personal life), creating either positive or negative crossover effects (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Judge & Watanabe, 1994). When employees experience high QWL—marked by supportive policies, career development opportunities, and a positive work environment—it promotes alignment between work and personal life, thereby enhancing WLB. In parallel, Social Exchange Theory (SET) posits that employees reciprocate favorable treatment from their organization, such as strong QWL initiatives, with increased commitment and engagement (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Together, these theories offer a framework for understanding how QWL not only directly improves WLB but also strengthens job commitment as a mediating factor.

Quality of Work Life and Work-Life Balance

Quality of Work Life (QWL) represents a comprehensive approach to employee well-being, encompassing both tangible and intangible elements of the work environment. As Aruldoss et al. (2021) conceptualized, QWL fosters a positive organizational climate through fair rewards, job security, and opportunities for career advancement, all of which significantly contribute to employee satisfaction and performance. This construct is typically operationalized through key dimensions, such as grievance redress mechanisms, reward systems, workplace autonomy, and recognition programs (Bhende et al., 2020; Dahal et al., 2020). Importantly, these elements do not exist in isolation; they interact to form an ecosystem that either facilitates or impedes employees' ability to achieve Work-Life Balance (WLB)—defined by Hill et al. (2001) as a sustainable equilibrium between professional demands and personal/family commitments across emotional, behavioral, and temporal domains.

Empirical evidence strongly supports the relationship between Quality of Work Life (QWL) and Work-Life Balance (WLB), though with some nuanced findings. Bhende et al. (2020) and Ghimire et al. (2023) found that while rewards, autonomy, and recognition significantly enhanced productivity and skill deployment, their impact on overall efficiency was less pronounced. Similarly, grievance redress systems showed varying effects across different WLB indicators. These findings align with Spillover Theory, which suggests that positive work experiences naturally transfer to personal life domains (Judge & Watanabe, 1994). The consistently positive relationship between QWL and WLB has been further

validated in multiple cultural contexts (Aruldoss et al., 2021; Mochtar & Susanti, 2022; Shahi et al., 2022; Syahbana et al., 2024), providing robust support for the study's first hypothesis. This body of research collectively suggests that organizations investing in comprehensive QWL initiatives are likely to see measurable improvements in employees' ability to balance work and personal life demands.

H1: QWL positively impacts WLB.

Job Commitment Mediated Between QWL and WLB

The intervening role of job commitment (JC) in the relationship between Quality of Work Life (QWL) and Work-Life Balance (WLB) represents a critical intersection in organizational behavior research. QWL, fundamentally defined as the overall quality of employee-workplace interactions (Feldman, 1993), includes not only physical working conditions but also psychological factors, such as job satisfaction, professional fulfillment, and the integration of personal and work identities (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). This multidimensional construct becomes particularly important when examining WLB—the sustainable balance between professional responsibilities and individual/family commitments across emotional, behavioral, and temporal dimensions (Aruldoss et al., 2021; Bhattarai et al., 2020). At the core of this relationship lies job commitment, conceptualized by Mowday et al. (1982) as an employee's psychological attachment to their work, demonstrated through goal alignment, sustained effort, and organizational loyalty. These interconnections form a theoretical triad that is best understood through the lens of Social Exchange Theory (SET).

Empirical evidence reveals key nuances in how job commitment (JC) mediates the relationship between Quality of Work Life (QWL) and Work-Life Balance (WLB). While some studies have found job satisfaction to be an insignificant mediator (Syahbana et al., 2024), research by Amalia et al. (2022) demonstrated that work commitment serves as a robust intervening variable. This distinction is crucial, as it suggests that emotional attachment to one's job (commitment) may have a greater impact than transient job satisfaction in facilitating WLB. Supporting this perspective, several studies have confirmed the significant mediating role of JC (Aruldoss et al., 2021; Arasma et al., 2024), in line with Social Exchange Theory (SET), which posits that employees reciprocate positive work experiences (QWL) with increased commitment, ultimately enhancing their ability to manage work-life integration. This theoretical and empirical foundation strongly supports the study's second hypothesis, emphasizing the importance of examining these dynamics within the unique context of Nepal's public sector.

H2: JC positively mediates the relationship between QWL and WLB.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study (Figure 1) presents an integrated model that examines how Quality of Work Life (QWL) influences Work-Life Balance (WLB) through the mediating role of Job Commitment (JC). Grounded in Spillover Theory (Judge & Watanabe, 1994) and Social Exchange Theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), the framework positions QWL as an antecedent that includes workplace conditions, career development, and organizational support (Walton, 1973). These elements directly enhance WLB while simultaneously fostering JC as a psychological mediator. The mediating pathway aligns with the principle of reciprocity in SET, where employees reciprocate favorable QWL conditions with increased commitment, thereby enhancing their ability to balance professional and personal domains. This tripartite structure offers a systematic approach to test the hypothesized relationships within the context of Nepal's public social sector.

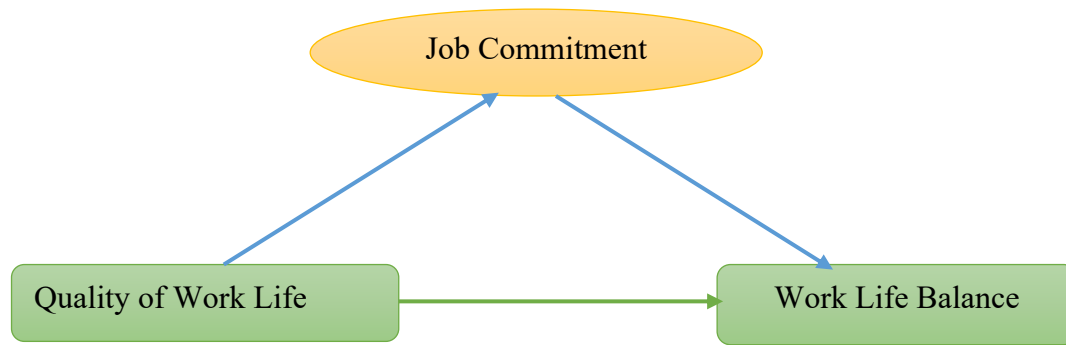


Figure 1: The Study Conceptual Framework

Source: Aruldoss et al. (2021)

3. Research Methodology

This study employed a descriptive research design to characterize the variables and a causal-comparative design to examine the relationships between them. Data were collected through primary surveys administered to permanent employees in Nepal’s public social sector, with a defined population of 849 (Ministry of Finance, 2081). Using the Slovin formula (Sevilla et al., 2007), a representative sample of 272 respondents was determined and selected via purposive sampling to ensure alignment with the study’s objectives. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha, while confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to establish validity. Frequency distributions were used to summarize respondent profiles, and measurement models evaluated goodness-of-fit indices. To test the hypotheses, a structural equation model (SEM) was employed to analyze the direct effect of QWL on WLB and the mediating role of JC in this relationship.

In this study, Quality of Work Life (QWL) was conceptualized as a multidimensional construct comprising: (1) working conditions (4 items adapted from Walton, 1973), (2) career growth and development (4 items synthesized from Herzberg, 1968, and Kalleberg, 1977), and (3) organizational support and relationships (4 items drawn from Eisenberger et al., 1986, and Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Job commitment (JC) was measured using 4 items from Meyer and Allen’s (1991) seminal scale, while Work-Life Balance (WLB) was assessed with 4 items integrating Clark’s (2000) and Greenhaus & Beutell’s (1985) dimensions. All constructs were evaluated using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree) to capture nuanced employee perceptions.

Reliability and Validity Assessment

All constructs, as presented in Table 1, demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach’s alpha coefficients exceeding the .70 threshold recommended by Hu and Bentler (1999): Quality of Work Life ($\alpha = .756$), Working Conditions ($\alpha = .907$), Career Growth and Development ($\alpha = .905$), Organizational Support and Relationships ($\alpha = .901$), Job Commitment ($\alpha = .911$), and Work-Life Balance ($\alpha = .886$). These results confirm the reliability of the measured constructs.

Table 1: Variables’ Reliability

Variable	Cronbach Alpha	N of Items
Quality of Work Life (QWL)	.756	12
Working Conditions (WC)	.907	4

Career Growth and Development (CGD)	.905	4
Organizational Support and Relationships (OSR)	.901	4
Job Commitment (JC)	.911	4
Work Life Balance (WLB)	.886	4

The scales' validity was further established through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), with all factor loadings exceeding 0.50 and significant t-values ($p < 0.001$), indicating strong convergent validity. Table 2 presents the convergent and discriminant validity results.

Table 2: Validity of WC, CGD, OSR, JC, and WLB

	CR	AVE	MSV	WC	CGD	OSR	JC	WLB
WC	0.908	0.712	0.002	0.844				
CGD	0.907	0.710	0.061	0.007	0.843			
OSR	0.904	0.706	0.011	0.005	0.105	0.840		
JC	0.912	0.722	0.068	0.038	0.216	0.043	0.850	
WLB	0.887	0.663	0.068	0.049	0.246	0.023	0.261	0.814

The measurement model confirmed strong validity across all constructs. Composite reliability (CR) scores significantly exceeded the .70 threshold (Collier, 2020): Working Conditions (WC = 0.908), Career Growth and Development (CGD = 0.907), Organizational Support and Relationships (OSR = 0.904), Job Commitment (JC = 0.912), and Work-Life Balance (WLB = 0.887). Convergent validity was established through two key criteria: (1) all CR values exceeded their respective average variance extracted (AVE) values, and (2) all AVE scores surpassed the recommended 0.50 benchmark (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988)—WC (0.712), CGD (0.710), OSR (0.706), JC (0.722), and WLB (0.663). These results collectively confirm that the measurement instruments were both reliable and valid for assessing the theoretical constructs.

The measurement model demonstrated strong discriminant validity through three established criteria: First, all average variance extracted (AVE) values significantly exceeded their corresponding maximum shared variance (MSV) values: WC (AVE = 0.712 > MSV = 0.002), CGD (0.710 > 0.061), OSR (0.706 > 0.011), JC (0.722 > 0.068), and WLB (0.663 > 0.068). Second, the square roots of AVE for each construct (WC = 0.844; CGD = 0.843; OSR = 0.840; JC = 0.850; WLB = 0.814) exceeded all inter-construct correlation values in the corresponding rows and columns of the correlation matrix (Chin, 1998). Third, all heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratios were below the conservative threshold of 0.85. These results collectively confirm that each construct in the measurement model is empirically distinct and captures phenomena not represented by the other constructs.

4. Results of the Study

Respondent Profile Characteristics

Table 3 presents the demographic composition of the 272 permanent employees who participated in this study. The profile analysis examines four key characteristics: (1) gender distribution, (2) marital status, (3) age categories, and (4) organizational tenure. These demographic variables were included to characterize the sample and assess potential variation in responses across different employee subgroups. The balanced representation across these categories enhances the generalizability of the findings within the context of Nepal's public social sector.

Table 3: Profiles of Gender, Marital Status, Age, and Tenures

	Gender		Marital Status		
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
Male	164	60.3	Single	41	15.1
Female	108	39.7	Married	231	84.9
	Age		Tenures		
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
Less than 24	5	1.8	Less than 6 years	41	15.1
24-35	122	44.9	6-11 Years	144	52.9
35-44	123	45.2	More than 11 Years	87	32.0
More than 44	22	8.1			

N = 272

The study sample ($N = 272$) consisted primarily of male employees (164, 60.3%), reflecting the gender distribution in Nepal's public social sector. Most respondents were married (231, 84.9%), with the largest age group being 35-44 years (123, 45.2%). In terms of organizational tenure, the majority reported 6-11 years of service (144, 52.9%), indicating substantial workplace experience among participants. These demographic characteristics suggest that the sample represents experienced, mid-career professionals in the sector.

Mediation Analysis of Job Commitment

Figure 2 presents the structural equation model examining the mediating role of job commitment (JC) in the relationship between quality of work life (QWL) and work-life balance (WLB). The model specification includes:

1. Direct paths from QWL constructs (working conditions, career growth, organizational support) to WLB
2. Mediated pathways through JC
3. All theoretically specified covariances among predictor variables

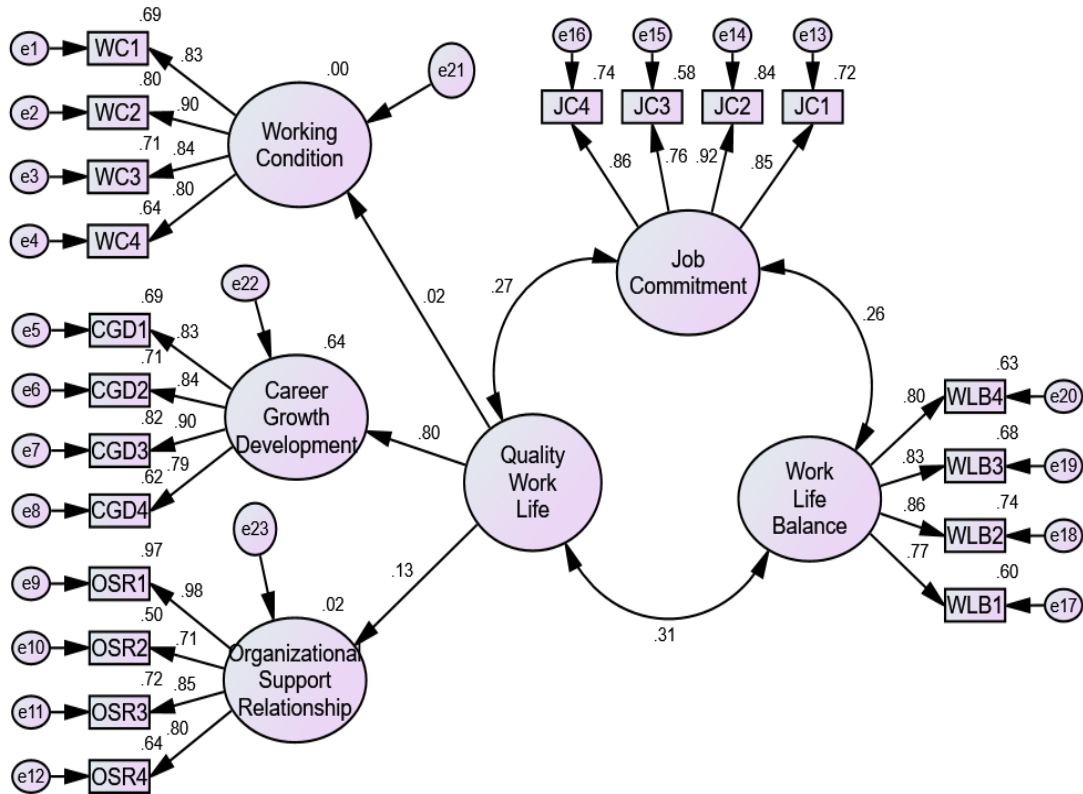


Figure 2: Affiliation Among QWL, JC, and WLB

The measurement model demonstrated excellent fit across multiple indices:

- 1) The χ^2/df ratio of 1.489 ($\chi^2 = 244.133$, $df = 164$) indicates good fit, being well below the conservative threshold of 3.0 (Byrne, 2010).
- 2) Absolute fit measures exceeded benchmarks:
 - GFI = 0.920 (> 0.90 recommended by Hair et al., 2010).
 - AGFI = 0.898 (within 0.85-0.90 acceptable range per Dogan & Ozdamar, 2017)
- 3) Incremental fit was strong:
 - CFI = 0.978 (> 0.95 threshold per Bentler, 1990)
- 4) The RMSEA of 0.042 (< 0.05 excellent fit cutoff; Byrne, 2010) confirmed close population approximation

This comprehensive evidence from diverse fit indices (absolute, incremental, and parsimony-adjusted) collectively validates the model's excellent goodness-of-fit with the empirical data.

Figure 3 presents the standardized path coefficients for the mediation model, examining job commitment (JC) as a mediating mechanism between quality of work life (QWL) and work-life balance (WLB). The structural model reveals:

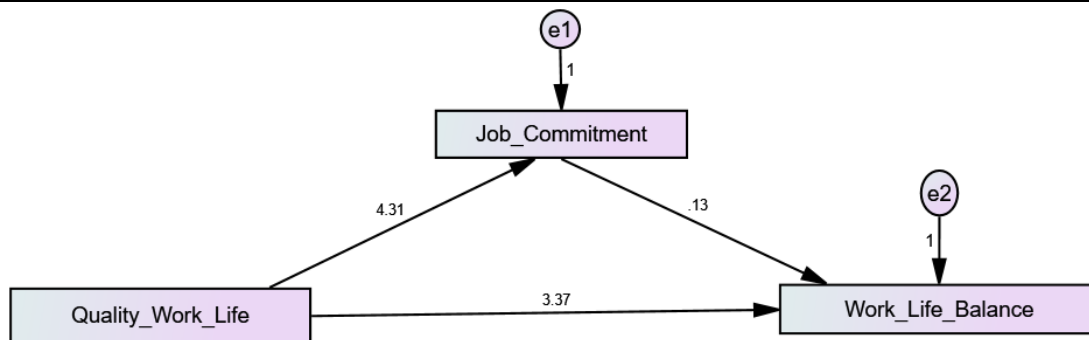


Figure 3: Path Diagram test from QWL Through JC to WLB

Structural Path Analysis Results

The structural equation modeling analysis revealed three key significant relationships:

1) QWL → Job Commitment Pathway:

Quality of work life showed a strong positive effect on job commitment ($\beta = 4.313$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that a one-standard-deviation increase in QWL corresponds to a 4.313 standard deviation increase in job commitment levels.

2) QWL → WLB Direct Path:

The direct effect of quality of work life on work-life balance was both significant and positive ($\beta = 3.370$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that improvements in QWL directly enhance work-life balance, irrespective of any mediation effects.

3) Job Commitment → WLB Path:

Job commitment had a significant positive influence on work-life balance ($\beta = 0.134$, $p = 0.005$). Although smaller in magnitude than the direct effect, this confirms the role of JC as a partial mediator.

Mediation Analysis Using Bootstrapping

The mediation effect was rigorously tested using a bias-corrected bootstrapping approach with 5,000 resamples (Collier, 2020), which is recommended for small-to-medium sample sizes. This non-parametric method generates robust confidence intervals by:

- 1) Calculating unstandardized path coefficients across random subsamples (Taylor et al., 2008).
- 2) Establishing 95% confidence intervals (CI) for indirect effects.
- 3) Confirming significance when CI excludes zero (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

As detailed in Table 4, the bootstrap analysis (N=5,000 samples) confirms the significant mediating role of job commitment in the QWL-WLB relationship.

Table 4: Mediating Exam of JC Utilizing 95% CI with a Bootstrap Analysis

Relationships	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	CI		P-value
			LB	UB	
QWL --> WLB	3.370				0.000
QWL --> JC --> WLB		0.577	0.234	1.049	0.001

Note: Unstandardized coefficients reported

Hypothesis Testing Results for H1

The analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between quality of work life (QWL) and work-life balance (WLB), with a significant standardized path coefficient ($\beta = 3.370$, $p < 0.001$). This finding supports our first hypothesis (H1), confirming that QWL is a significant predictor of WLB.

Mediation Analysis Results for H2

The bootstrap analysis ($N = 5,000$) confirmed the significant mediating role of job commitment in the QWL-WLB relationship. The 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect ($\beta = 0.577$, $CI[1.049 - 0.234] = 0.815$, $p = 0.001$) did not cross zero, thereby supporting H2 (Collier, 2020). These results indicate that improved QWL conditions—such as safe work environments, skill development programs, and fair promotion systems—not only directly enhance employees' work-life balance but also strengthen their organizational commitment, which further improves their ability to manage work-life integration effectively.

The results reveal a dual-pathway relationship between quality of work life (QWL) and work-life balance (WLB) within Nepal's public social sector. QWL has both a significant direct effect ($\beta = 3.370$, $p < 0.001$) and an indirect effect through job commitment ($\beta = 0.557$, $p = 0.001$) on WLB, confirming partial mediation (Collier, 2020). In the Nepali context, these findings highlight the importance of job commitment as a key psychological mechanism that amplifies the positive effects of QWL. This suggests that public sector organizations should focus on enhancing both structural factors (QWL) and attitudinal factors (job commitment) to optimize employees' work-life balance.

5. Discussions

The study confirms that quality of work life (QWL) significantly and positively impacts work-life balance (WLB) in Nepal's public social sector ($\beta = 3.370$, $p < 0.001$). This direct relationship aligns with prior research (Aruldoss et al., 2021; Dahal, 2022; Mochtar & Susanti, 2022), which demonstrates that factors such as working conditions, career development opportunities, and organizational support collectively enhance employees' ability to balance work and personal life. In the Nepali context, these findings are particularly relevant, given the sector's bureaucratic challenges and resource limitations. The standardized coefficients indicate that improving QWL by one standard deviation could lead to a 3.370 unit improvement in WLB, providing quantifiable evidence for the benefits of organizational investments in enhancing workplace quality.

Job commitment emerges as a crucial psychological bridge, reflecting the total effect of quality of work life (QWL) on work-life balance (WLB) ($\beta = 0.577$, $CI[1.049, 0.0234]$). This mediation effect aligns with Social Exchange Theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), wherein employees reciprocate improved QWL with increased commitment ($\beta = 0.130$), which in turn facilitates better work-life management ($\beta = 3.370$). Notably, the partial mediation observed in Nepal's public sector (Collier, 2020) contrasts with Western private-sector studies that typically report full mediation, suggesting that cultural and sectoral factors may

moderate these relationships. This indicates that while structural QWL improvements are essential, their impact is significantly enhanced when paired with initiatives that foster commitment, such as participatory decision-making and recognition systems.

This study confirms that job commitment (JC) significantly mediates the relationship between quality of work life (QWL) and work-life balance (WLB), consistent with the findings of Aruldoss et al. (2021) and Arasma et al. (2024). The results strongly support Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), showing that employees who benefit from improved QWL conditions—including fair compensation, career growth opportunities, and supportive work environments—are more likely to develop stronger organizational commitment. This increased commitment, in turn, enhances their ability to achieve sustainable work-life integration. These findings are particularly relevant for Nepal's public social sector, where improving both structural (QWL) and attitudinal (JC) factors could significantly enhance employees' work-life outcomes.

6. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that quality of work life (QWL) is a key driver of work-life balance (WLB) in Nepal's public social sector, influencing WLB through two complementary pathways: directly by improving working conditions, career development opportunities, and organizational support systems, and indirectly by fostering stronger job commitment. These findings provide public sector managers with empirical evidence to design dual-focused interventions that enhance both structural QWL factors (such as fair grievance systems and skill development programs) and organizational commitment through participatory management and recognition initiatives. The study emphasizes how Nepal's unique public sector context—characterized by bureaucratic structures and resource constraints—can benefit from this integrated approach to workforce management, where commitment-building plays a crucial role in amplifying the effectiveness of QWL initiatives in achieving sustainable work-life integration.

The findings emphasize the importance for Nepali public sector organizations to adopt a dual-strategy approach to enhance employee well-being. First, structural improvements in QWL—such as safe working conditions, transparent promotion systems, and skill development programs—should be prioritized, as these directly enhance WLB. Second, commitment-building initiatives, such as recognition programs, participatory decision-making, and mentorship opportunities, should be implemented to strengthen employees' psychological attachment to their work, thereby amplifying the benefits of WLB. Policymakers and HR managers can leverage these insights to design evidence-based interventions that promote both job satisfaction and organizational loyalty.

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