

## **Work-Life Balance of Women Academics in Sri Lanka- The moderating effect of Individualism vs. Collectivism**

Welmilla, I.<sup>1</sup>, Semasinghe, D.M.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

<sup>2</sup>Department of Commerce & Financial Management, Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

<sup>1</sup>iwelmilla@kln.ac.lk, <sup>2</sup>semasinghe@kln.ac.lk

### **Abstract**

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between work-family demands with work-life balance (WLB) and the moderating effect of individualism vs. collectivism on the identified relationship of women academics. Nowadays, the education sector in Sri Lanka is required to achieve the global demands and expectations of the new world. Consequently, the Sri Lankan higher education sector is continuously upgrading. Thus, women holding academic positions require attributes of intelligence, knowledge, and skills. Still, women in academics enjoy less freedom in family life relative to their men counterparts. This study is among the first attempts to explore the moderating effect of Individualism vs. Collectivism on the phenomenon of WLB among women academics in Sri Lanka. Focusing on WLB in the academic profession, this study has used the quantitative method to explore the relationship between work-family demand and WLB of culturally diverse women academics. A questionnaire survey was used to collect data from a total of 801 university lecturers in Sri Lankan state universities. The result of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) indicated that work-family demands are negatively associated with WLB, and the cultural value of individualism vs. collectivism (IC) is observed that significantly moderate the relationship between work-family demands with WLB. These typical working and living conditions of women academics make it interesting and informative to understand their WLB and how the IC culture value influences their WLB. Moreover, this study supports understanding the perception-centred approach characterizing WLB research.

**Keywords:** *Collectivism, moderating effect Sri Lanka, work-family demand, work-life balance, university lecturers*

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**Correspondence:** iwelmilla@kln.ac.lk

**ORCID of authors:** Welmilla, I.- <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1705-0779>

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## Introduction

More employees are currently playing a dual role as an employee and parents, and they are responsible for both family and work duties. Thus, it is challenging for them to achieve Work-Life Balance (WLB). Till the 1970s, the arenas of work and family were considered as two different areas. (Clark, 2000). Then, the interdependence of these areas has been given recognition. Thus, it is important to maintain a balance when challenged with demands from each area (Mayberry, 2006). After that, the term '(WLB)' has grown in extensive use among women employees (Houston, 2005). Blyton, Blunsdon, Reed, and Dastmalchian (2006) state that the term WLB does not essentially refer to the same time spent in both fields, as time commitments would depend on each individual's surroundings. The WLB has a large individual component in that this balance is defined based on each individual's needs, experiences, and goals, with there being no one-size-fits-all solution (Adams, King, & King, 1996). The relationship between work-family life is bidirectional: each can interfere with or support the other (Adams et al., 1996). Thus, ignoring properly functioning both at home and in the workplace leads to an imbalance of work-life (Clark, 2001).

Previous studies have revealed that job-related stress influences academics' personal and professional lives (Bruening, 1983). Thompson, Poelmans, Allen, and Andreassi (2007) revealed that the improvement of work-family culture, which aids and values the integration of employees' personal and professional lives, has become essential to decrease work mismatch family.

WLB studies often concern women professionals, especially in the academic field. (Ahemad & Chaudhary, 2013).

Family support is a necessary factor that requires scholarly output in the academic culture (Chrisler, 1998). Though a high percentage of women work as academic professionals, fewer of them enter the top ranks of university positions because they work as dual careers. Recently, women's engagement in the teaching profession has grown comparatively in previous decades in Sri Lanka (Central Bank, 2018). Subsequently, WLB is the most challenging problem for female university academics (Ahemad, Chaudhary, & Karush, 2013). Furthermore, knowledge, intelligence, and skills are the most important traits that require individuals who are holding lecturer positions.

Flores and Day (2006) stated that women in the academic professions enjoy less freedom in their family lives than their counterparts. Thus, women who are employed as academicians are under pressure to achieve a satisfactory level of WLB (Goyal & Arora, 2012; Punia & Kamboj, 2013).

Individuals' behaviors and perceptions are highly affected by the countrywide culture. Humans in western and Asian countries will view work and family differently, mainly due to differences in their individualist and collectivist values (Lu, Gilmour, Kao, Huang, 2006). According to Hofstede's individualism index values, a lower score indicates a collectivist culture, and a higher score indicates an individualist culture (Hofstede 2010). The low degree of this index implies that Sri Lankan culture tends towards a collectivist society. Even though collectivistic culture focuses on the importance of family and work groups, there may be some differences among individuals in a single culture that differently affect personal satisfaction (Love, 2007). Individualism vs. Collectivism (IC) is an important concept in the work and family domains, as



well as it highly influences the WLB of individuals.

Xiao and Cooke (2012) revealed that the social and cultural background determines WLB, and it also reflects the country's economic growth. Individuals describe the WLB concept across cultural values of collectivism and Individualism; thus, it influences the concept of WLB (Poelmans et al., 2003; Roehling, Jarvis, & Swope, 2005). Sanseau and Smith (2012) have shown how the extent of IC affects work and family demand the work and family satisfaction. Therefore, to achieve the WLB through new strategies, the cultural value of IC should be acknowledged. Many researchers have been investigated the influence of the cultural value of IC in the Western context (Goyal & Arora, 2012; Cooke, 2012; Sanseau & Smith, 2012). Sri Lankan women academics have greater challenges for improving the WLB (Bhadra, 2013). Thus, to identify the powerful strategies for achieving WLB, the cultural influence of collectivism vs. individualism should be acknowledged in Sri Lankan settings. However, there is a shortage of study that addresses women employees' WLB experiences with collectivism and individualism cultural values in Sri Lanka.

Furthermore, reviewing the literature, it was identified that no studies were conducted on the moderating effect on work-family demands and WLB experiences of females involved in the academic profession in Sri Lanka. Therefore, to fill the identified gap, the current study is trying to observe the moderating effect of IC.

## Literature review

### Meaning of work

Social researchers have separately identified the terms 'work' and 'family' and their linkages. Although work and family are separate domains, they greatly influence each other. However, literature provides different definitions of work at different times. Initially, the general meaning of work is paid employment. Guest (2002) explains that work includes additional unpaid time that are traveling time for the workplace. Hall (as cited in Lirio et al., 2007, p.27) explained 'work' as 'independently perceived sequences of attitudes and behaviors related to career involvements and happenings throughout an individual's life.'

### Meaning of Life

Life is defined in different ways in different WLB studies. A more inclusive definition that recognizes the enduring familial relationship of various structures must be recognized and validated to explain family. Guest (2002) initially defines life as activities outside work. Life can be defined as the constructive emotions of an individual's preferences to work (Chohen & Kirchmeyer, 2005).

Studies of Burke and Greenglass (1987); Piotrkowski, Rapoport, and Rapoport (1987) express life as individuals related by natural ties, marital, community norms, and adoption. Similar to work, family implies involvement in a society that the person represents. Moreover, these representations are intended to maintain the quality of life and their wellbeing.

### Work-family demands

The role demands in work and family could be the outcome of work duties and family responsibilities. These duties and responsibilities become emotional and physical demands, and they severely affect each other because of inadequate



individual capacities. Overload of work and family demands are possibly harmful to personal emotional strength and attitudes for work engagement. (Lu, Gilmour, Kao, & Huang, 2006). These aspects of role demand require individuals' possessions, such as time, capability, and attention.

Past literature shows that several work-related demands were linked with high work-life conflict and work-life imbalance (Batt & Valcour, 2003; Valcour, 2007; Voydanoff, 2005). Family obligations are necessary for an individual, as it is an essential part of one's identity. Therefore, an individual's perception regarding family is an influence to work, consuming energy and time. The fulfillment of family satisfaction and responsibilities depends on spending time with family members. Thus, high demands and expectations in the family sphere led to work-family conflicts (Beutell, 2010). Hours spent giving care in the family are the most prominent factor which impacts family demand (Spector et al., 2004). Some scholars reveal that the number of children in the family directly affects family demand (Parasuraman, Purohit, Godshalk, & Beutell, 1996) because mothers are responsible for their children and provide their daily necessities. Thus, keeping time and fitness for those requirements is necessary.

### **Work-life balance**

Previous literature has revealed no exact definition of WLB (Chandra, 2012; Felstead, Jenson, Phizacklea, & Walters, 2002). Guest (2002) defines WLB as 'having sufficient time to meet commitments at both homes and work' (p.512). He mentions the subjective and objective perspectives of WLB. According to him, the subjective definition is the supposed balance between work and the rest of life is an individual's personal view,

while the objective perspective is a common idea of a group of individuals about the WLB.

As well, Greenblatt (2002) stated WLB as a lack of conflict among work and family domains because both areas are mutually contradictory; thus, conflicts can arise. Moreover, WLB is an aspect of role conflict because investigators have supposed that the deficiency of conflict or the existence of enrichment among the work-family domains is similar to WLB (Frone, 2003). Subsequently, Frone (2003) indicated that WLB has less conflict and more facilitation of inter-role domains of work and family.

Allen, Johnson, Kiburz, and Shockley (2013) detailed that individuals feel strain and conflict in balancing work and life roles. Furthermore, they explored the conflicts that lead the work to life and life to work interferes. Brid (2006) stated that WLB is not equal because the purpose of balancing life is not about allocating the available daily hours in equal numbers for each activity. However, Greenhaus et al. (2003) expounds dissimilar opinions to Brid (2006) about WLB. They define WLB as the individual's equal engagement to the roles and equal satisfaction from work and family roles. Also, they said that WLB is a process of equally engaging in work and family roles. Hence, balance is reached when engagement (input) and satisfaction (outcome) are equal across functions.

Furthermore, they point out satisfaction balance, time balance, and involvement balance as key indicators of WLB. According to Greenhaus and Allen (2010), WLB depends on satisfaction in work and family roles. They emphasize that WLB is, at a given time, the level to which a person's success and satisfaction in work duties and family responsibilities are compatible with the person's life role



priorities. Focusing Greenhaus and Allen's (2010) definition in this study is used work satisfaction and family satisfaction as dimensions of the WLB.

#### *WLB studies in Sri Lanka*

WLB has been an area of interest for several researchers over the past few decades (Bhadra, 2013; Wicramasingha & Jayabandu, 2007; Akuratiyahamage & Opatha, 2004, Amarakoon & Wicramasingha, 2010; Opatha, 2010; Thavakumara & Victor, 2011; Nishanthi & Thalagapitiya, 2015) in Sri Lanka. Most of these studies focused on the "work-life conflict" of working women who faced the competing demands of home and the workplace. Researchers have identified, for many women, that balancing home and work domains can be physical, psychological, and personally challenging (Amarakoon & Wicramasingha, 2010). However, if individuals cannot meet the respective demands in work and family domains, their career and family lives are dissatisfied (Opatha, 2010).

Research on the work-family balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka, conducted by Perera and Opatha (2014), revealed that work-family balance is positively related to time management, the nature of the spouse, and understanding the strategies available for work-family balance. Akuratiya and Opatha (2004) found that workload is the major cause for the work-life imbalance of the managers in the Sri Lankan banking sector. This factor is identified throughout the Western context. To extend the literature on WLB in the Sri Lankan context to date, it examined the job engagement, job satisfaction, and coping strategies of WLB. However, in the last decade, a level of awareness has been rising on the need for balancing work and family demands for Sri Lankan women to achieve the balance

between work and family life. Increasing women's workforce participation is also experienced in Sri Lanka. However, there have been a growing number of single parents in the past two decades due to civil war in Sri Lanka. Among the few studies that have been done on the WLB experiences in Sri Lankan women, issues around the culture of working women in Sri Lanka are relatively absent. The purpose of the study was to extend the knowledge of WLB experiences of women academics by examining the impact of work-family demands on WLB. Furthermore, this study has identified several gaps in the literature; thus, the study intended to investigate whether the Sri Lankan academic women's collectivist culture will moderate the relationships between work and family demands and WLB.

#### *Border Theory*

Clark (2000) developed the border theory to overcome restrictions in existing approaches to WLB. The initiator of border theory, Clark, attempted to explain a multifaceted interface between border-crossers and their work and family lives, predict when conflict will occur and give a framework to achieve balance (Guest, 2002). Border theory explains how individuals manage work and family domains and their borders to achieve balance. It conceptualizes work and family as two different but interactive settings associated with different rules, emotions, values, thoughts, and patterns of behaviors. Individuals are seen as border-crossers managing and negotiating the work and family domains and their borders to attain WLB. The central focus of the theory is that frames and links between work and family should be managed to establish and maintain a preferred balance. Physical, temporal, and psychological borders may determine where work and family begin or



end. Borders enable an individual to concentrate more on the stronger domain. By means of border theory border – crossers are defined by the degree to which they are central or peripheral participants in either domain. A central participant is defined as having influence and identity. Influence is indicated by competence, responsibilities, connection with other central members, and internalization of the domain's culture (Clark, 2000). Clark (2000) refers to identification as 'whether individuals find meaning in their responsibilities and find their responsibilities mesh with their self-concept' (p.761). Thus, the border theory has been provided a theoretical framework on WLB by identifying the reasons for the imbalance that leads to encouraging a better balance between work and family life.

#### *Social Identity Theory*

Tajfel and Turner developed social identity theory in 1982. The theory explains the relationship between social structures and individual identity through people's meanings to their membership in identity groups. (Tajfel & Turner, 1982, as cited in Lawrence & Fabian, 2014). This explanation describes how individuals cooperate with others who share their identity or those from other groups. The social identity theory has not yet explained the issue of WLB, but some phenomena of individual behavior and WLB can be explained through this theory. Even though it is highlighted more in the psychological field of research, the theory has been cited to a limited extent in WLB research. Deaux (1993) has mentioned that the theory explains the values of important individuals, such as attitudes, beliefs, and behavior, which are based on personal psychological, and social identification. Brown (2000) argues that the social identity theory assumes 'that social identity

is derived primarily from group membership' (p.746). Previous studies (Joshi, Liao, & Jackson, 2006; Slattery & Selvarajan, 2005) have revealed that social identity theory suggests personal behavioural indicators and attitudes at work, such as job satisfaction, linked with an individual's identification groups. Furthermore, Aziz and Chang (2013) argued empirical evidence of this theory towards WLB is limited, but solid cultural values will predict the experiences of WLB. On the other hand, Ashforth and Johnson (2001) reveal that every individual has multiple social identities which take differently related to WLB.

#### **Culture**

Hofstede (2001) defined culture as 'the combined mental programming of the observance differentiating the members of one cluster or group of people from others' (p.29). The mind is the main concept in Hofstede's (2001) culture theory. This viewpoint has been highlighted by Hofstede (2001) in stating that 'the mind stands for the head, heart, and hands that are thinking, feeling, and acting with consequences for beliefs, attitudes, and skills (p.10). This definition reveals that culture includes the norms, traditions, acceptance, values, and belief systems that are different from communities or groups. According to Hofstede (2001), the point of view is that culture as a system of beliefs manifests in signs, heroes, rites, and performances, and those can be detected, matched, and forecasted. Furthermore, he distinguished two ways of culture as visible and invisible. Signs, heroes, rites are terminologies of culture that are observable and highlight invisible beliefs.

However, culture generates multifaceted abstract and significant fundamentals for society. Elements such as cultural values, procedures of social manners, and social



interactions and perceptions vary among people from different cultures and also influence their work, lifestyles, and leisure (Richardson & Crompton, 1988). Cultural differences were identified between Western and Asian countries (Reisinger & Turner, 2003). Matsui (1995) has shown broad cultural differences between Western and Asian countries such that work-family demands create consequent work and family conflict in various forms of strain. According to Hofstede's (1980) first study, common language can't describe culture because it is a very complex term. Therefore, cultural differences can't be fully described at all. In defining cultural value differences, Hofstede, G. Hofstede, G. J. and Minkov (2010) propose six cultural dimensions in terms of uncertainty avoidance, masculinity vs. femininity, pragmatic vs. normative and indulgence vs. restraint, power distance, and individualism vs. collectivism.

### **Cultural Dimensions**

Researchers have identified several cultural dimensions. First, the cultural dimension of power distance denotes the level of acceptability of unequal distribution of authority, wealth, and status across society (Nakata & Sivakumar, 2001). The second cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance means that to the extent that people feel menaced by unknown circumstances, they attempt to avoid these uncertainties. Next, IC explains the integration of people into prime groups. Individualist cultural values are connected to individuals feeling responsibility for their family members, whereas, conversely, more cooperative group consensus is valued in a collectivist society. Hofstede defines the fourth dimension of masculinity vs. femininity as a 'division of emotional roles between men and women (Hofstede, 2001, p.29). In

masculinity, society focuses on tasks, while in femininity, society is concerned about relations. Therefore, masculine culture focuses on economic aspects of life, among which success and competitiveness are central values, but femininity highly values the eminence of life. The next cultural dimension is pragmatic vs. normative. Societies with high pragmatic scores form certain links between their current and past challenges, while normative societies' main characteristic is low pragmatism scores and disbelief in social changes (The Hofstede Center, 2015). The final cultural dimension of indulgent societies is towards the ability to fulfill the instant desires and individual requests of their people. In contrast, people in restrained societies trust that satisfaction wants to be restricted and controlled by community norms. (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Among all cultural dimensions of Hofstede (2001), the IC dimension has been examined in a majority of WLB research. Love (2007) also makes out that IC is an important construct in the work-life domain. Moreover, the WLB research (Westman, 2002) has examined cultural differences by using IC. Therefore, this is the most significant relevant dimension for studying WLB issues across cultures.

#### *Individualism vs. Collectivism (IC.)*

Previous studies have established IC as a means of exploring differences across cultures, and it has become a fundamental construct of cultural variability (Hofstede, 1980; Smith, Dugan, & Trompenaars, 1996). According to Lim et al. (2011), among research on WLB issues, there have been few culturally oriented studies, and they too, have only focused on the IC dimension.

The definition of an individualistic culture as an individual difference indicator is the



same as Hofstede's cultural measure of IC and finds that individuals within a culture reveal variability along this dimension. Individualism deliberates on the way people express their self-reflection as a 'We' or 'I' (The Hofstede Center, 2015). The principal aspect of individualist culture is the hegemony of individual goals (Triandis, 1995). People with greater individualism are expected to protect only themselves and their relations. In contrast, the more collectivist people prioritize the group and care about their cultural group rather than the individual. Ashforth, Kreiner, and Fugate (2000) have found that people engaged in work and life responsibilities in an individualistic society based on the aspiration of rewards, while collectivist societies are keener to value unity through work-life spheres.

Furthermore, Ashforth et al. (2000) point out people in individualistic cultures tend to engage independently in work-life tasks based on anticipated rewards. In contrast, collectivist people are highly interested in value harmony among work-family domains. As such, individualists consider achieving personal goals, while the goals of the group and its wellbeing are valued more in collectivist societies. Thus, IC refers to what extent individuals are joined into crowds.

By focusing on the evidence mentioned above, Hofstede's cultural dimension of IC appears to be most appropriate for reviewing work-life matters across as well as within cultures. The literature review is suggested that culture influences WLB differently. First, it directly influences WLB. Secondly, it moderates the influence of WLB on its antecedents and consequences. There is significant evidence to propose that cultural background acts as a moderator between the role demand of work and family and WLB (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux,

& Brinely 2005; Spector, Allen, Poelmans, Cooper, & Yu, 2005). Furthermore, Lu et al. (2010) report that dimensions of IC impact the relationship between the role demand of work-family and work-life experiences.

### **Culture and WLB.**

In cultural studies of WLB, related concepts are constructed in different ways across cultures. The work-life domains are seemed to be segmented in the United States but integrated in China (Yang, 2005). The author highlights that work-family roles are considered to be incompatible rather than congruent. Several studies find that role incompatibility is direct to involvements of conflict in the United States, while role inter-relation is direct to those of balance in Hong Kong (Yang et al., 2000). Further, they revealed work-family conflict is acknowledged as a danger in the United States, but it is an opportunity for growth in China. (Yang et al., 2000).

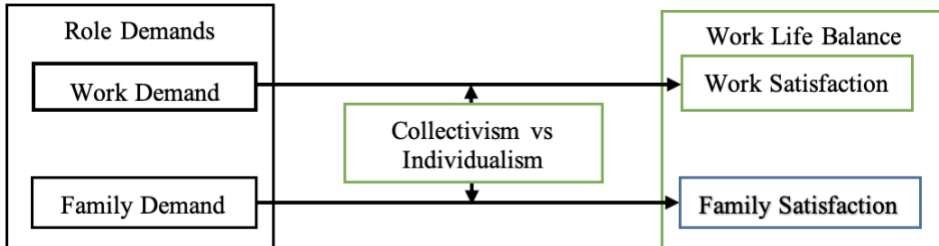
Spector et al. (2004) find one of the family role demands, the number of children, positively correlates to work-family pressure in some countries such as Australia, Romania, Sweden, and United States. However, the same relationship is negative in Hong Kong, Columbia, Spain, and Portugal. It is revealed that the least association between the family interfering in work occurred in Eastern countries, whereas the highest correlation is found in the United States (Hill, Martinson, Ferris, & Baker, 2004). Furthermore, Yang et al. (2005) conclude that spending less time at the workplace has a more significant impact on work-family conflict in the United States than in China. On the other hand, spending less time in the family has a more significant effect on work-family conflict in China than in the United States. Furthermore, they suggest that the





difference particularly causes cultural changes in the time spent on work and personal life. Based on the mentioned

literature, the following conceptual framework (Figure 01) was advanced for the study.



**Figure 01: Conceptual Framework**

Source: Author construct, 2020

## Hypotheses

In previous literature, WLB is often explained by using the conflict concept (Byron, 2005; Ford et al., 2007). Every person has to face multiple role demands, and as a result of engaging the multiple roles, inter-role conflict can arise (Duxbury & Higgins, 2001). Thus, WLB can be defined as the absence of work-life conflict, and work-life conflict indicates work-family imbalance. Based on the past literature, the historical definition of WLB can be identified as the absence of work-life conflict (Carlson et al., 2013). Most of the researchers have highlighted that a high workload leads to work-life imbalance and dissatisfaction with the work-life and family-life (Voydanoff, 2005b; Batt & Valcour, 2003; Valcour, 2007; Major et al., 2002). Therefore, work demand and work satisfaction have a negative relationship.

Even though women are employed, she is the primarily responsible person for the family (Noor, 2004). However, fulfilling these responsibilities for the family facilitates WLB helps reduce work-family conflict (Elisabeth, 2003). Huang et al. (2004) initiate that work-family conflict is positively associated with family demand for childcare; that means the WLB of

individuals is negatively correlated with family demands. Based on these facts, the following hypotheses are advanced for the direct relationship between work-family demand and WLB.

H1a; Work demand is negatively correlated with the work satisfaction of women academicians in Sri Lanka.

H1b; Family demand is negatively correlated with the family satisfaction of women academicians in Sri Lanka.

The majority of cultural studies are examined cultural differences through Hofstede's cultural dimensions. There are limited culturally oriented studies linked to WLB experiences, and a review of this literature suggests that the IC dimension is most relevant in explaining culture (Lim et al., 2011).

People in collectivist societies tend to value the work domain more than those in individualistic societies, which are more involved in the family domain (Hofstede, 1980). In support of this finding, Yang et al.(2000) show that family demands have a more significant impact on WLB in the United States than in China and that, in contrast, work demands had a more significant impact on WLB in China than

in the United States. Thus, this result implies that Chinese people have collectivistic values, whereas American people have individualistic values. However, this difference was particularly due to cultural differences in family and work roles.

Furthermore, Hofstede et al. (2010) mention that if society is collectivist, the family demands expansion to extended family and relations; thus, extended family demands such as childcare, household chores, and perceived family demand can prevent WLB. A recent study with four different nations exhibited that individualism is positively correlated with a work-life imbalance (Billing et al., 2014).

The relationship between work-family demands and conflict was more strongly positive in British society than in Taiwanese society (Lu et al., 2006). This study assumed that British people have individualistic values, and Taiwanese have collectivistic values. This study's findings reveal work and family demands may have a more prejudicial effect on individualists than on collectivist people (Lu et al., 2006).

Furthermore, empirical evidence suggests that cultural background is a moderator between work-family demand and WLB (Eby et al., 2005). Lu et al. (2006) have shown the moderating influence of IC on the WLB. Elsewhere, the literature reveals that cultural values may influence the association between WLB and work-family demands. It shows that culture moderates the strength or direction of the association between WLB and antecedents (Spector et al., 2005).

Furthermore, Spector et al. (2005) find that work-demand roles more strongly affect WLB in Anglo societies than in Chinese and Latin American societies. Thus, CI's cultural value from individuals plays a

significant role in their personal and professional lives. Therefore, the research proposes the following hypotheses:

H2a: The cultural value of collectivism vs. individualism will moderate the relationship between work demand and women academicians' work satisfaction in Sri Lanka.

H2b: The cultural value of collectivism vs. individualism will moderate the relationship between family demand and women academicians' family satisfaction in Sri Lanka.

## Research Methodology

### Sample and procedures

The study focuses on women in the academic profession; thus, the statistics (2020) on the number of lecturers working in state universities in Sri Lanka were found from the directory of university academics available at UGC web page and university web pages in Sri Lanka.

As each population element (member) was known in the study, the researcher used a probabilistic sampling technique called the stratified random sampling method. The main reason for selecting stratified random sampling was that it could provide a more accurate representation of the population by dividing the population into strata based on the identified variables of the research. In the majority of research, cross-cultural differences such as values, assumptions, beliefs, and norms were examined through Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Clows and Ehlers (2007) reveal that individuals of diverse ethnicities differ in perceptions, attitudes, norms, religious, and other cultural values specific to the particular ethnic group towards work. The study considered several ethnicities (Sinhalese, Tamil, and Muslim), and based on this criterion, three strata were identified from the population.



The main reason for selecting a stratified random sampling technique was that the study focused on the WLB of different cultural groups in Sri Lanka. The study considered several ethnicities (Sinhalese, Tamil, and Muslim), and based on this criterion, three strata were identified from the population.

The data used in the current study were gathered from female lecturers based on the Sri Lankan state universities. The total number of female lecturers who communicated and requested to respond to the questionnaires was 1200. Of these, 952 respondents were returned the completed questionnaires, thus making a response rate of 79 percent. However, to achieve a realistic finding regarding the WLB, the researcher omitted unmarried respondents who had no significant family responsibilities. Therefore, the final sample size was 801. Out of the total 55 (07%) participants were in age over 50 years, 106 participants (13) were between 41 and 50 years, 325 participants (41%) were between 31 and 40 years, and 315 (39%) respondents were in the age range of 30 years or below. The majority were Sinhala ethnic (65%) and had two children (61%).

## Measures

All the constructs in the study were measured by using the scales which were adopted from the literature. The scales used in the study include items measured on a five-point Likert scale, and those were originally in English.

### *Work-life balance*

The researcher assessed WLB with two dimensions: work satisfaction and family satisfaction, considered endogenous constructs. There were two latent constructs constructed for role satisfaction: work satisfaction and family satisfaction. Work satisfaction was evaluated using the five items adapted from the effort of Clark

(2000). It measures the individuals' perception of the level of work satisfaction in work life. The example items from the work satisfaction scale are: "I am generally satisfied with the kind of work I do in this job, and I receive a lot of satisfaction from carrying out my responsibilities at work ." Three items from the scale were employed to assess family satisfaction based on the same study. A sample item from the family satisfaction scale is: "I find my activities at home to be personally meaningful." Responses ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with higher values coded to indicate higher demands from family roles.

### *Work and Family demands*

In this study, exogenous constructs were work demand and family demand. The construct of work demands was subjectively evaluated with four items based on the participants' degree of agreement with the items developed by Boyar et al. (2007). An example item is: "I feel like I have a lot of work demands." Perceived family demand was measured with four statements based on the same study. One sample item is: "I have a lot of responsibilities in family life."

### *Collectivism*

The respondents' cultural value of collectivism was assessed with Hofstede's cultural value scale. This scale includes six items. The following are the six statements of Hofstede's cultural value of collectivism: 'Individuals should sacrifice self-interest for the group'; 'Individuals should stick with the group even though difficulties'; 'Group welfare is more important than individual rewards'; 'Group success is more important than individual success'; 'Individuals should only pursue their goals after considering the welfare of the group'; and 'Group loyalty should be



encouraged even when individual goals suffer.'

## Data Analysis

The data were prepared and screened before performing the analysis. Descriptive statistics analysis was performed as a pretest of data cleaning. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to decide whether the data at hand suits the underlying constructs, thereby ascertaining their appropriateness. Violating multivariate assumptions can be problematic because it will affect the accuracy of the statistical test as well as the interpretation and conclusions of the research. Therefore, this study was tested with multivariate assumptions. Once the data screening was completed, the reflective measurement model was assessed. This process began with the test of the item's loading and reliability. Confirmatory Factor analysis (CFA) was used to examine the measurement component of each latent construct. Unidimensionality, validity, and reliability of all latent constructs were assessed using CFA. The internal consistency reliability was employed by testing each construct's composite reliability (CR) coefficient. Next, the average variance extracted (AVE) values were observed to determine the convergent validity of WLB, work demand, family demand, work satisfaction, family satisfaction, and collectivism. The construct validity of the measurement model was ascertained by using numerous goodness-fit indicators. To test the model's discriminant validity, Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion that the square root of average variance extracted (AVE) should be greater than the correlation coefficient of the respective construct was employed.

The internal reliability was tested by observing Cronbach's Alpha value. Composite reliability was measured using the standard formula to confirm the internal

consistency of the constructs. The path coefficient in the structural equation modeling (SEM) was assessed to test the direct relationships between work and family demands and WLB. To determine the moderating effect of collectivism on the relationship between work and family demands and the WLB multi-grouped CFA method was applied through the SEM Statistical Package for Social Science Software-25 (SPSS) and AMOS-25 were used for data analysis.

## Results

Descriptive statistics analysis was performed as a pretest of data cleaning. The main analysis consisted of a three-step process. First, the validity and reliability of the measurement model were assessed by using EFA and CFA. Second, direct hypotheses were tested using SEM. Finally, moderating hypotheses were tested using the Multi-grouped CFA model.

The mean score and standard deviation for the endogenous construct, WLB, are 2.7 and .43, respectively. The exogenous constructs of work-family demand's mean value is 3.2, and the standard deviation is .23. The mean score of moderating variable of collectivism of Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslims are 3.6, 3.1, and 3.0, respectively. As the study used a five-point Likert Scale, the mean values were greater than 2.5; then, the respondents were determined to be in favor of the particular variable.

### Assessment of fit

The mean value of the data set produces a figure that reflects the average value of each factor and construct (Fah & Hoon, 2009). As the study used a five-point Likert Scale, the respondents are determined to favor the particular variable (see Table 01). An EFA was explored to validate that all items shown in Table 01 were correctly grouped. The dimensional



scales for each construct were evaluated. Factor loadings should be 0.50 or higher (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988) for achieving convergent validity. The lowest factor loading in the study model is 0.48. Thus, in addition to factor loadings, the values of (AVE) were assessed to confirm the

convergent validity of each construct. According to the result, the values of AVE for all constructs were above 0.5 (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010) and is supported for the convergent validity of the model (see Table 02).

**Table 01: Mean, standard deviation, and factor loadings for factors.**

Construct	Dimensions/Items	Mean	SD	Factor Loading
WLB	Work Satisfaction			
	WS 1	3.67	0.743	0.932
	WS2	3.61	0.814	0.955
	WS3	3.75	0.908	0.968
	WS4	3.72	0.856	0.970
	WS5	3.53	0.803	0.946
	FS1	2.99	0.789	0.954
	FS2	3.01	0.906	0.989
Work and Family Demand	Work Demand			
	WD1	3.67	0.886	0.909
	WD2	3.77	0.778	0.892
	WD3	3.99	0.802	0.961
	WD4	3.56	0.815	0.958
	Family Demand			
	FD1	4.01	0.669	0.910
	FD2	3.92	0.697	0.934
	FD3	3.47	0.811	0.979
	FD4	3.05	0.834	0.966
Collectivism	COL1	4.21	0.787	0.640
	COL2	4.01	0.777	0.654
	COL3	3.99	0.690	0.745
	COL4	4.22	0.811	0.674
	COL5	3.99	0.655	0.745
	COL6	4.24	0.576	0.483

Source: Adapted from the result of data analysis

The internal consistency reliability of the constructs was then examined. Table 02 reports that both Cronbach's alpha coefficients and composite reliability (CR) exceeded the threshold value of 0.7 (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009), indicating good internal consistency reliability among the items within each

dimension of the constructs. Further, correlation results shown in Table 02 confirm that the square root of the AVE of each dimension was greater than the correlations between each construct and other latent variables. Therefore, the proposed model has achieved discriminant validity.



**Table 02: Properties of constructs and correlation matrix of latent factors**

Construct/ Dimensions	Cronbach 's Alpha	CR	AVE	Discriminant Validity Index Summary				
				WS	FS	WD	FD	COL.
Work satisfaction	0.91	0.9782	0.8998	<u><b>0.8998</b></u>				
Family satisfaction	0.89	0.9781	0.9373	0.255025	<u><b>0.9373</b></u>			
Work demand	0.92	0.9697	0.8472	0.413449	0.0645	<u><b>0.8472</b></u>		
Family demand	0.9	0.9424	0.8872	0.167281	0.3931	0.0795	<u><b>0.8872</b></u>	
Collectivism	0.81	0.8166	0.4327	0.001444	0.1011	0.0075	0.0014	<u><b>0.4327</b></u>

Note: The underlined numbers in the diagonal row are the square root of the AVE

Source: Results of data analysis

Figure 02 depicts the modified full measurement model, which was incorporated all latent constructs indicated by respective items pertaining to each scale.

**Structural model**

The overall validity of the model was examined with respect to fitness indices. The overall fit of the structural model is shown in Figure 03 and Table 03. As expected, the parsimony fit measure of chi-square/df (2.678) was significant. Incremental fit measures of TLI (0.937) and CFI (0.943) were substantially above the preferred 0.90. The absolute fit measure of RASEM was equal to the recommended cut-off of 0.08. Although the GFI index's absolute fit measure did not meet the recommended cut-off, a value close to 0.90 is acceptable because an absolute fit measure of RASEM had already been achieved (Byrne, 2001). Hence, it is concluded that the proposed research model fits the data reasonably. Therefore,

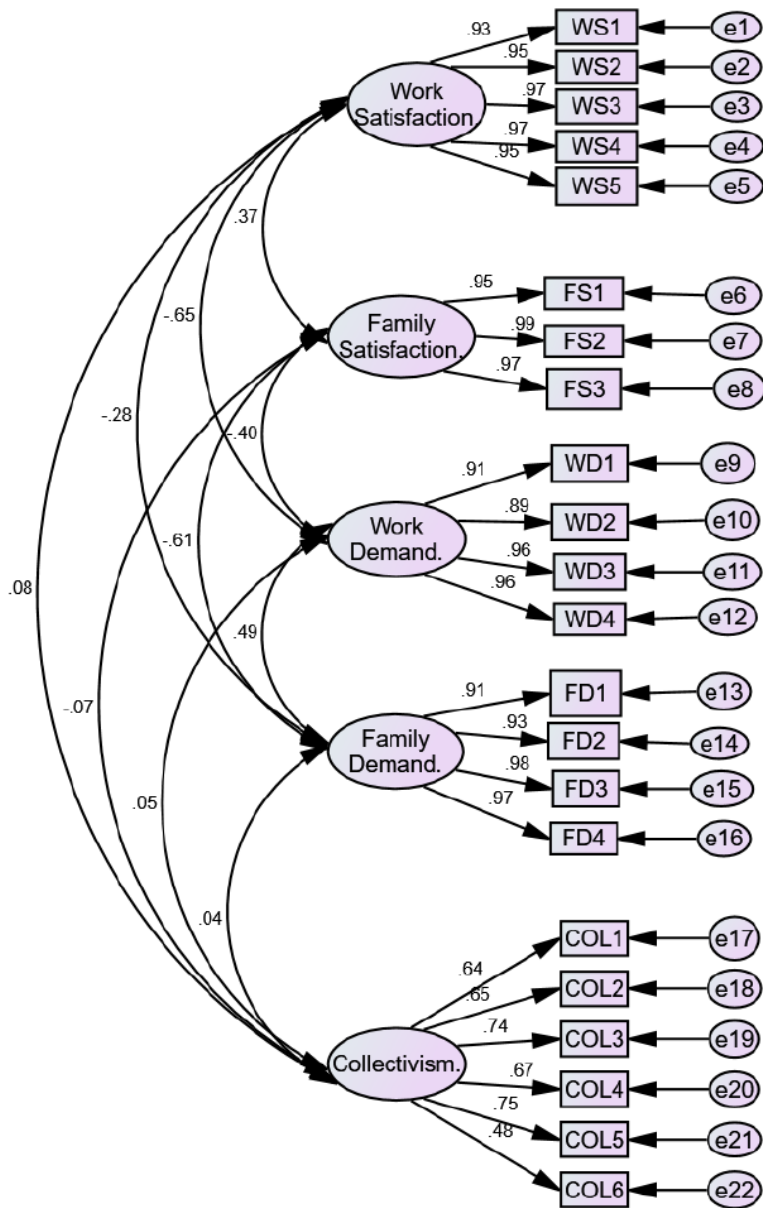
hypotheses were tested by considering the standardized regression weighted estimates of the structural model's various paths.

**Hypotheses testing (direct effects)**

The direct hypotheses were tested through the SEM using AMOS 25. The path that connects work demand to work satisfaction yields a significant coefficient value of -0.64 (SE= 0.57, C.R=-12.368, P= 0.000). Hence, a significant negative path coefficient suggests that, as predicted, work demand is negatively correlated with work satisfaction, thereby confirming H1a

The link between family demand and family satisfaction is generated a coefficient value of -0.61, which is significant at 0.000 (SE= 0.05, CR= 10.345, P=0.000). As a result, H1b, stated that family demand is negatively correlated with family satisfaction. The direct hypotheses testing results of the SEM are presented in Table 03.





**Figure 02: Measurement Model**

Source: Results of AMOS graphics, 2020



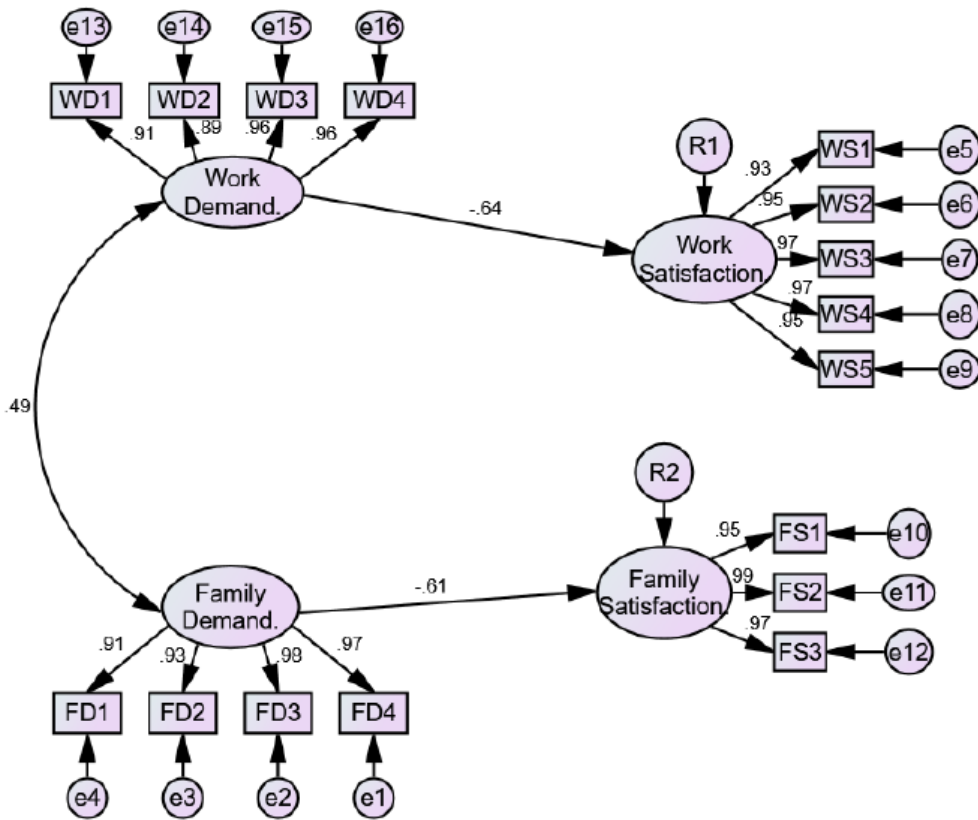


Figure 03: Structural equation model

Source: Results of AMOS graphics, 2020

Table 03: Direct hypotheses testing: AMOS output extract

Fit indications	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	GFI	X <sup>2</sup> /df
Value	0.080	0.943	0.937	0.797	2.678

Source: Adapted from data analysis results

**Hypotheses testing (moderating effects)**

The researcher used multigroup CFA to test the moderating effect of collectivism's cultural value on the relationship between work-family demands and WLB. Multiple group analysis can be used to examine the difference of path coefficients between two groups (Bae, 2011). As mentioned above,

collectivism is measured using Hofstede's cultural value scale. Hence, respondents were divided into two clusters to analyze the data: respondents with high collectivism (sample size = 556) and respondents with a low collectivism value (sample size = 245). The significance of the difference between the two groups was obtained by comparing the chi-square





statistics of the constrained and unconstrained models of cross-groups. Therefore first, the difference of chi-square values of the constrained and unconstrained models was identified. When an adjustment of the degree of critical freedom value is less than the chi-square value variation, it can be confirmed that the result is statistically significant with a relevant significance level (Bae, 2011).

The degree of moderation effect on the relationship between each exogenous and endogenous variable can be different for high and low collectivism groups. In this study, moderating (collectivism) hypotheses also determined the group (low collectivism or high collectivism) in which the effect of the moderating variable is more pronounced. This is confirmed when comparing the standardized parameter estimate for each path for both high and low. The group that has a greater standardized parameter estimate value than the other group can be concluded to

experience a more pronounced effect from exogenous variables on the endogenous variable.

*Moderating effect of collectivism on path work demands and work satisfaction*

According to the result of the multigroup analysis, the unconstrained models' chi-square is 2263.540, and the chi-square of the constrained models is 2934.771, so the difference between the two models is 671.231 (2934.771 - 2263.540). A standard value of chi-square at the 0.05 significance level (df=3) is 7.815, implying that there is a significant difference. Therefore, the variable of collectivism does moderate the relationship between work demands and work satisfaction. The moderating effect of collectivism on the relationship between work demand and work satisfaction for high and low (collectivism) groups is presented in Table 04.

**Table 04: The moderation test results for high and low collectivism groups (path work demands and work satisfaction)**

Group Model	High collectivism		Low collectivism	
	Constrained	Unconstrained	Constrained	Unconstrained
Chi-Square	2934.711	2263.540	2934.711	2263.540
Df	1110	1107	1110	1107
Chisq/df	2.664	2.045	2.664	2.045
GFI	0.805	0.832	0.805	0.832
CFI	0.896	0.934	0.896	0.934
RMSEA	0.063	0.050	0.063	0.050
NFI	0.843	0.879	0.843	0.879
TLI	0.885	0.927	0.885	0.927
Result on Moderation	Significant		Significant	
Result on Hypothesis	Supported		Supported	

Source: Adapted from the result of data analysis



*Moderating effect of collectivism on path family demands and family satisfaction*

The results indicated that the constrained and unconstrained model's chi-square difference is 673.028 (2936.568 - 2263.540) for both groups. A standard chi-square value with three degrees of freedom

at the 0.05 significance level is 7.815, and it is confirmed that there is a moderating effect on the relationship between family demands and family satisfaction. The moderating effect of collectivism on the relationship between family demand and family satisfaction for high and low (collectivism) groups is presented in Table 05.

**Table 05: The moderation test results for high and low collectivism groups ( path family demands and family satisfaction)**

Group	High collectivism		Low collectivism	
	Constrained	Unconstrained	Constrained	Unconstrained
Chi-Square	2936.568	2263.540	2936.568	2263.540
Df	1110	1107	1110	1107
Chisq/df	2.646	2.045	2.646	2.045
GFI	0.703	0.832	0.703	0.832
CFI	0.895	0.934	0.895	0.934
RMSEA	0.063	0.050	0.063	0.050
NFI	0.843	0.879	0.843	0.879
TLI	0.885	0.927	0.885	0.927
Result on Moderation	Significant		Significant	
Result on Hypothesis	Not Supported		Not Supported	

Source: Adapted from the result of data analysis

**Discussion**

The current study identified that work demand had a significant negative association with work satisfaction. Consistent with hypotheses advanced for the study, and in prior literature (e.g., Voydanoff, 2005; Batt & Valcour, 2003; Valcour 2007; Major et al., 2002, Yildirir & Aycan 2008; Scott et al., 2008), the results of the present investigation support the importance of considering the impact of work demand of women employees toward enhancing their work satisfaction. Most previous studies (Frone et al., 1997; Boyar et al., 2007; Guest, 2002) have measured work demand with objective measurements

such as work hours, the number of hours spent on work-related activities per week, and the number of assigned activities, with few studies using subjective measurements of work demand (Boyar et al., 2007). However, the current study chose to assess the subjective perspective of work demands.

On the other hand, some studies have found a positive association between work demand and work satisfaction (Meguellati, 2016; Frone et al., 1997). They argue that employees with more tasks and activities to be completed feel more positively about their workload. In contrast, the present study was able to capture the negative



relationship between work demand and work satisfaction more accurately by utilizing latent constructs, including four measures for work demand and five measures for work satisfaction. However, these findings were similar to Valcour's (2007) findings, in which work demands are negatively related to job satisfaction.

According to the present results, there is a significant negative association between family demand and family satisfaction among women academics of state universities in Sri Lanka. This outcome is consistent with the work of researchers such as Elisabeth (2003) and Huang et al. (2004). They have emphasized that family demand is important to women employees. That perception occupied women hold regarding their family lives have a powerful negative relationship towards family demand and family satisfaction. Some studies (Biggsq & Brough, 2005; Carlson & Kacmar, 2000) observe the relationship between family demand across domains: the relationship between family demand and Work satisfaction and work demand and family satisfaction. However, previous studies reveal that the empirical results of cross-domain relationships have been contradictory. Note that even though the current study examines relationships within domain factors, it is able to confirm that family demand is strongly associated with family satisfaction by utilizing latent constructs, including four measures for family demand and three measures for family satisfaction.

This study found women academics who have more collectivist values have a weak relationship between work demand and work satisfaction. This finding supports Ling and Powell (2001), who found collectivist cultural values to maintain harmony and avoid conflicts in interpersonal relationships at work due to extra workplace demands.

The relationship between family demands and family satisfaction also be reduced by collectivism. This finding is consistent with Spector et al. (2005), who found a significant relationship between work demand (number of hours worked) and work-family conflict among Western employers who are less collectivistic. In a collectivist culture, women receive support, especially from extended families, to meet their family demands. Thus, in collectivistic cultures, help is received from neighbors and friends in the care of children and helping of the household chores, and then the weakness of the relationship between family demand and family satisfaction will reduce. Yang et al. (2000) reported that family demands significantly impacted work-family conflict in a collectivist culture. The result implies that increasing demand within a family domain may contribute to work-family conflict. Thus, the finding that emphasizes the relationship between family demand and family satisfaction, moderated by collectivism, is consistent with Yang et al. (2000).

### **Implication, Recommendation, and Conclusion**

Focusing on increasing understanding of WLB in the academic profession, this study has used the quantitative nature to explore the problem associated with work and family demands and WLB of culturally diverse women academics. The study results have delivered theoretical and practical implications in the field of all constructs under study. The researcher strengthened research on WLB experiences by establishing its relationships with work-family demands. This supports the understanding of the perception-centered approach characterizing WLB research. Moreover, the study findings extend the literature by revealing these relationships for a specific profession: academics in Sri



Lankan universities. These findings fill a gap in the literature by validating associations between work-family demands and WLB dimensions such as work satisfaction and family satisfaction.

Moreover, the researcher contributes to WLB research by exploring individuals' perceptions that cultural differences influence the correlation between work and family demand and WLB. Specifically, this study has revealed empirical evidence to the literature regarding the moderating effect of collectivism on work-family demands and WLB. Although previous studies (Eby et al., 2005, Lu et al., 2006) have examined the moderating effect of cultural values on the WLB, this study makes specific contributions by examining how Sri Lankan women academics' cultural values (collectivism) influence the relationship between WLB and work-family demands.

This study's results have several practical implications that will be constructive to individuals, academic institutes, and administrative officers searching for a deeper understanding of the significance of a balance between work and family demands and their effects on individual satisfaction and university ranks. This study confirms existing literature in terms of the negative association between work-family demands and WLB. Individuals must take responsibility for managing their WLB needs. Academic women, who

proactively manage the boundaries between work and personal lives so that they can better focus at work, are more likely to feel high satisfaction in both domains. Further, this study identifies collectivism as a moderating variable between relationships of work-family demands and WLB. Consequently, individuals and other relevant bodies of university academics may consider the effect of collectivism in increasing individual WLB. Moreover, the research findings also support the view that institutions need to consider individual differences when dealing with work-life imbalance issues and set interventions to facilitate requirements for WLB.

This study has pointed out several directions for further research endeavors. This study examined the moderation effect on work-family demands and WLB using only one cultural dimension. Furthermore, to date, there is no research investigation into the role that other cultural dimensions may play in the relationships between work-family demands and WLB in the Sri Lankan context. Thus, the researcher suggests including in future studies other cultural dimensions to identify their moderation effects on work-family demands and WLB. Recent research argued that men experienced higher work-life imbalance and have a work-life imbalance. Thus, future research is needed that replicates the study for men to generalize the results at hand.



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