

The Relationship of Work-Life Balance and Quality of Life among Women Employees in Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Malaysia

Tengku Fatimah Muliana Tengku Muda*,
Syh Noorul Madiah Syed Husin, Siti Khatijah Ismail,
Zurita Mohd Yusoff, Siti Fatimah Salleh,
Wan Mohd Yusof Wan Chik and Nadiyah Binti Zakaria

Abstract--- *Life and work overlap and interact regardless of education level, gender, occupation or age. A shifting trend in the labour market witnessed a rapid increase of women in the work force, heightening the awareness of work-life issues. In contrast, conflicts between work and personal life priorities can be catalyst for a low quality of life. Thus this study aimed to investigate the relationship between work-life balance and the quality of life among women employees in UniSZA, Malaysia. Quantitative method was employed, whereby data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with IBM-SPSS-AMOS program version 21.0. Three dimensions of work-life balance were assessed, Work Interference with Personal Life, Personal Life Interference with Work and Personal Life, and Work/Personal Life Enhancement. The findings revealed that there is high correlation of work-life balance and the quality of life among women employees in UniSZA, Malaysia.*

Keywords--- *Work-life Balance, Quality of Life, Structural Equation Mode (SEM).*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the last few decades the international labour markets witnessed a dramatic shifting trend whereby the percentage of women in the work population has increased rapidly in many regions around the world. As a consequence, the proliferation of dual-income families where role expectations toward men and women, both in their work activities and their domestic responsibilities, have radically changed (Bond, Galinsky, & Swangberg, 1998). Integration of women in the workforce is seen capable to facilitate the nations' productivity, increase the wealth of families and promote financial independence of women. Where Malaysia is concerned, it has generally witnessed an increasing rate in the female labour force participation, from 49.5% in 2012 to 54.3% in 2016. However, with the men and women juggling the competing demands of work and family, there is a possibility of an overspill of stress due to work-life imbalance into both work and non-work life, more often, the family. The various roles individuals play implicitly suggesting that attention to one area of a person's life necessarily detracts from the others, and that juggling and managing multiple roles causes stress and emotional strain (Lockwood, 2003). The

Tengku Fatimah Muliana Tengku Muda*, Faculty of Islamic Contemporary Studies, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Malaysia.
E-mail: tg_fatimah@unisza.edu.my
Syh Noorul Madiah Syed Husin, Faculty of Islamic Contemporary Studies, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Malaysia.
Siti Khatijah Ismail, Faculty of Islamic Contemporary Studies, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Malaysia.
Zurita Mohd Yusoff, Faculty of Islamic Contemporary Studies, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Malaysia.
Siti Fatimah Salleh, Faculty of Islamic Contemporary Studies, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Malaysia.
Wan Mohd Yusof Wan Chik, Faculty of Islamic Contemporary Studies, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Malaysia.
Nadiyah Binti Zakaria, Faculty of Islamic Contemporary Studies, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Malaysia.

discussions on the pressure of work have also been intensifying in recent decades. Factors such as the advances in information technology, the need for speed response and constant availability of an employee, an increase in the intensity of work; are all examples of demands that can be source of pressure (David 2002). The high demands of work are reflected in longer working hours, more exhaustion and growth of weekend work, leaving less quality time for family and rest of life needs. As a result, these will lead to poor health and loss of productivity among employees across occupations. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between work-life balance and quality of life among women employees in Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, one of the public higher education institutions in Malaysia. It will first seek to analyse the correlation between the construct of work-life balance, and will then analyse the correlation between work-life balance and the quality of life among women employees in the aforementioned university.

II. THE SIGNIFICANCE WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The notion 'work-life balance' has been promoted since the beginning of the nineties, when human resource managers became aware of an increase in the rate of burn-out syndrome in their personnel and the need and desires of female employees to reconcile family and work (Nina, Tatjana & Janez, 2014). Researchers have different approaches to operationally define work-life balance, and whether it simply means to devote an equal amounts of time to paid work and non-paid roles. The word 'balance' as according to Oxford English Dictionary is "an equal distribution of weight or amount", however work-life balance sought by many may not imply equal weight on both sides. Clark (2000) defines work-life balance as 'satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum role conflict'. Greenhaus et al. (2003) meanwhile defined balance in work-family context as the extent to which an individual is equally engaged in and equally satisfied with his or her work role and family role. Thus, employees who experience high work-life balance are those who exhibit similar investment of time and commitment, to work and non-work domains. Hartog and Frame (2003) viewed that work-life balance means that employees can freely use flexible working hours to balance their work or with other commitments such as family, hobbies, arts, studies, and not only focus on their work. According to Singh and Khanna (2011), work-life balance is a broad concept that involves determining the right priority between work (career and ambition) on one side and life (happiness, leisure, family and spiritual development) on the other. Others view living a balanced life as 'a satisfying and productive life that includes work, play and love and achieving satisfying experiences in all life domains (Kirchmeyer, 2000). Indicators of balance have been associated with greater employee commitment, job satisfaction (Kossek, E. E. & Ozeki, C.,1999) and organizational citizenship behavior (Grzywacz, J.G. & Carlson, D.S., 2007). According to Nina et al. (2014), among the consequences of a balanced life are; decreased stress and burnout caused by reducing conflicts between work and family responsibilities, increased passion for work, increased empowerment, less ill health, and therefore resulted in a higher quality of life.

Quality of life, on the other hand, broadly encompasses how an individual measures the wellbeing of multiple aspects of their life. These evaluations include one's emotional reactions to life occurrences, disposition, sense of life fulfillment, satisfaction with work or satisfaction in personal relationships (Paraskevi, 2013; Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). Thus it is a complex, multifaceted concept which varies from individual's feelings of wellbeing to

physical, social, occupational, spiritual, marital and sexual functioning (Santosh & Krishna, 2016). The World Health Organization (WHO) defines quality of life as an individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It is a broad ranging concept affected in a complex way by the person's physical health, psychological state, personal beliefs, social relationships and their relationship to salient features of their environment. Measures of satisfaction and happiness are often used to operationalize perceived quality of life, as well evaluated according to how well one is doing financially, physically, emotionally and socially (Lauer & Lauer, 2012).

In a study by Roohollah Askari et al (2019), a cross-sectional survey of 210 hospital employees was conducted in a period of 3 months (April to June 2016) in three training hospitals in Yazd, Iran to analyze the relationship between work life balance and the quality of life. Two standard questionnaires including work-life balance and WHO Quality of Life were used to gather data. The differences in the work-life balance by demographic variables were examined using Independent t-test and one-way ANOVA statistics. Pearson correlation coefficient was also used to examine the association between work-life balance and quality of life among hospital employees. It was found that most of the study participants devoted more time on work other than personal life. Employees' perception toward work-life balance was proved to be associated with quality of life in all of the domains. Another study by Jyoti and Sarang (2016) evaluated the role of quality of work life in maintaining work-life balance and impact of quality of work life on quality of life of women working in service industry. The study found that, a high degree of quality of work life in organization was positively associated with work-life balance of women working in service industry which led to better quality of life, and vice-versa.

The present study will then analyze the relationship of work-life balance with quality of life, a prominent indicator of well being, among women employees in UniSZA, Malaysia.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, three dimensions of work-life balance were assessed; Work Interference with Personal Life, Personal Life Interference with Work and Work/Personal Life Enhancement. The study analyzes the strength of the correlation between Work Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE) and Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL), between Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW) and Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL), and between Work Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE) and Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW). It then analyzes the strength of the correlation between Work Life Balance (WLB) with Quality of Life (QoL).

The method used is quantitative and data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with IBM-SPSS-AMOS program version 21.0. SEM is formed with two main models namely measurement model and Structural model. Before the SEM test is tested, prior adjustment tests should be made to ensure that the tested indicator actually represents the measured construct (Chik, 2018). There are two analyzes as prerequisites that must be met before the SEM analysis is performed:

- 1) Exploration Analysis Factor (EFA).
- 2) Confirmation Factor Analysis (CFA).

Validation factor analysis (CFA) is a test of measurement model to ensure that each construct meets procedures such as validity and reliability for each experiment being built. Comparison of model measurement is essential to ensure that any latent construct in this study is compatible with the data studied before SEM can be continued (Kline, 2016; Awang, 2015; Schumucker & Lomax, 2004). The compatibility of the hypothetical models tested is verified using the Fitness Indexes to see the values of Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA<0.08), Comparative Fit Index (CFI>0.90) and Chi Square/Degree of Freedom (chisq/df<5.0). According to Hair et al. (2006) if the value of χ^2 is less than 2.00 but significant, it should be noted whether the sample is large or vice versa. Sample size above 200 can cause χ^2 to be significant. Therefore, Hair and his colleagues propose two other indices namely CFI and RMSEA to ensure CFA analysis establishes a dimensionless research model. If the CFI value exceeds 0.90 and the RMSEA is less than 0.08 it is said that the existence of unidimensionality exists for the formation of each construct.

Using a convenience sampling, the study was administered to a group of 119 married women employees in University Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA), one of the government higher education institutions in Malaysia. The level of work life balance was measured with the version of Work-Life Balance Scale adapted from Jeremy Hayman (2005).

The scale is designed to assess three dimensions of work-life balance: work interference with personal life (for example, “My personal life suffers because of work”), personal life interference with work (for example, “My personal life drains me of energy for work”), and work/personal life enhancement (for example, “My job gives me energy to pursue personal activities”). Work personal life enhancement refers to “the extent to which experiences in one role improve the quality of life in the other role” (Greenhaus& Powell, 2006). The responses were given using seven point time related scale (for example, 1=Not at all, 4=Sometimes, 7=All the time).

Quality of life, the dependent variable, was assessed using a bipolar items that describes ‘how you feel about your present life’ adapted from Quinn and Sheppard (1974) namely; boring – interesting; miserable – worthwhile ; discouraging – hopeful ; disappointing – rewarding; hard – easy; tied down – free. Each bipolar item has a seven-point scale where 1 represents the negative phrase and 7 represents the positive phrase.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

I. Analysis of the Correlation Work Life Balance between Constructs Work Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE), Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW) and Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL).

The findings indicate that there is a significant relationship between Work Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE) and Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL), between Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW) and Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL) and between Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW) and Work Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE). Figure 1 below shows the results of the covariance between constructs.

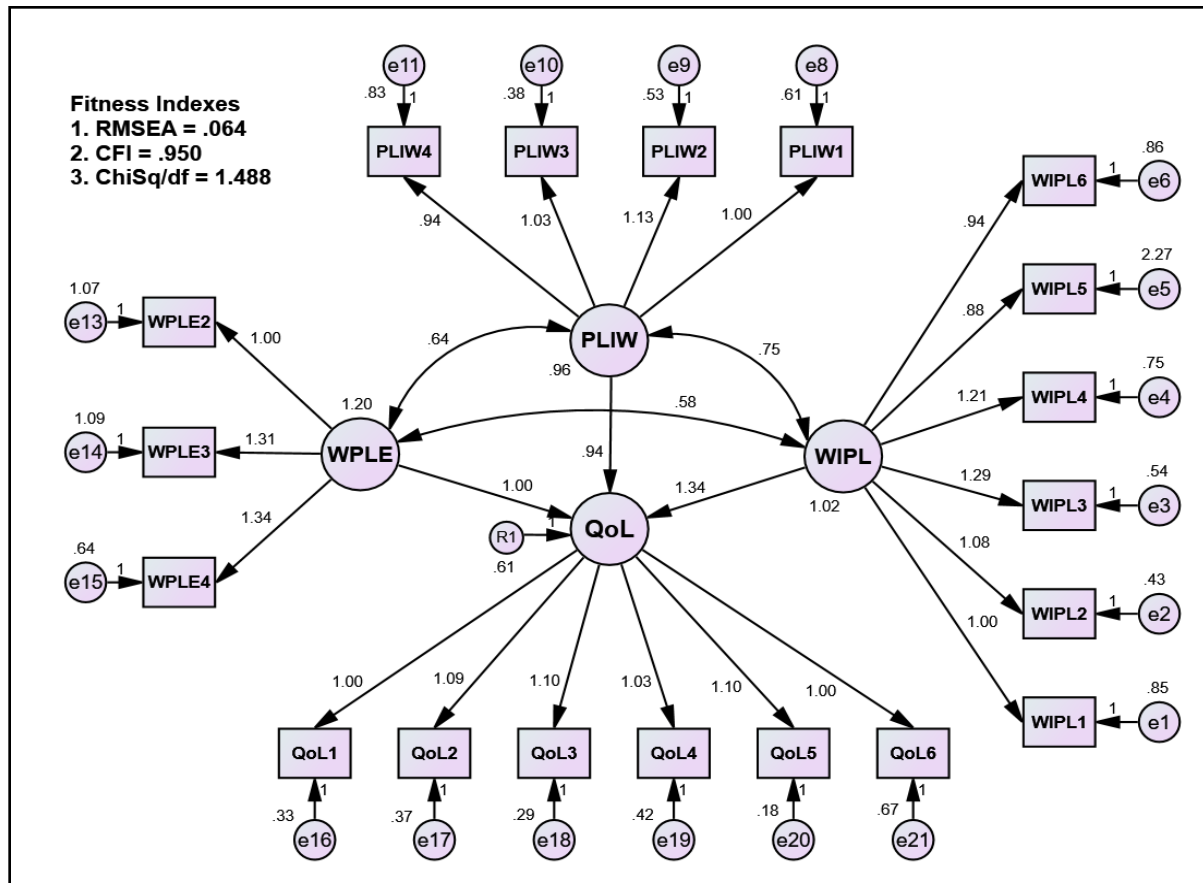


Figure 1: Analysis of Covariance between Constructs (Unstandardized Estimates)

Table 1 shows the results of hypothesis testing of the covariance between constructs. Hypothesis testing in Table 2 is based on the SEM findings from Figure 1 above.

Table 1: Covariance Values between Constructs

Constructs	Constructs	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
WIPL	<--> WPLE	0.583	0.164	3.555	***	Significant
WIPL	<--> PLIW	0.752	0.110	6.836	***	Significant
PLIW	<--> WPLE	0.641	0.119	5.386	***	Significant

*** Significant value at the level of understanding, $p < 0.001$

Table 2: Hypothesis Test between Constructs

Hypothesis Test	P	Decision
H ₁ : Work Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE) has a significant correlation with Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL) among women employees in Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin in Malaysia.	0.001	Supported
H ₂ : Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW) has a significant correlation with Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL) among women employees in Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin in Malaysia.	0.001	Supported
H ₃ : Work Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE) has a significant correlation with Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW) among women employees in Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin in Malaysia.	0.001	Supported

Figure 2 and Table 3 below shows the results of the value of correlation between constructs:

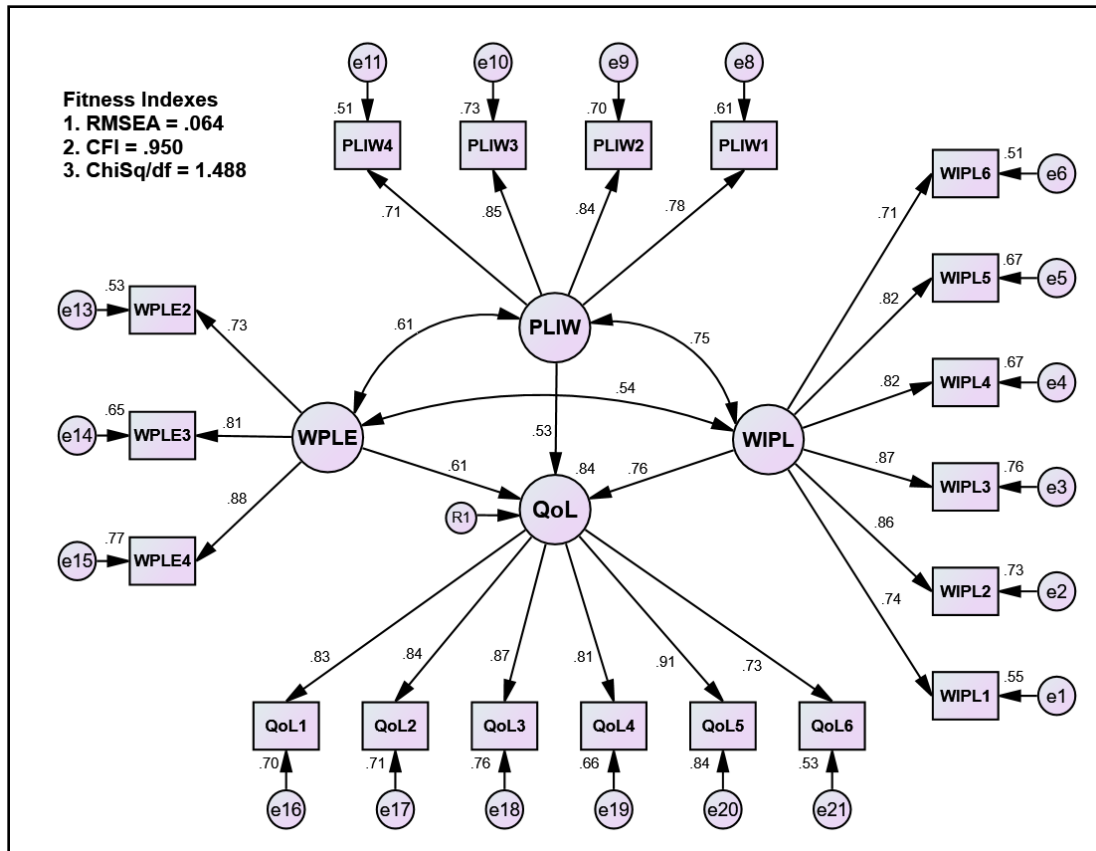


Figure 2: Analysis of Correlation between Constructs (Standardized Estimates)

Table 3: Correlation Values between Constructs

Constructs	Constructs	Estimate
WIPL	<--> WPLE	0.541
WIPL	<--> PLIW	0.752
PLIW	<--> WPLE	0.612

The strength between these correlations is based on the obtained value of the correlation coefficient (estimate).

Table 4 below shows the correlation value based on the value of the correlation coefficient (estimate) obtained.

Table 4: Strength of Correlation Coefficient (Estimate)

No	Correlation Coefficient	Interpretation
1	Less 0.10	Very small correlation, almost none
2	0.10 to 0.29	The correlation is low, but the correlation persists
3	0.30 to 0.49	Simple to strong correlation
4	0.50 to 0.69	High correlation
5	0.70 to 0.89	Very high correlation
6	Greater than 0.90	Perfect correlation

(Source: John Arul Philips, 2010)

II. Analysis Correlation between Work Life Balance (WLB) with Quality of Life (QoL) Constructs

The findings indicate that there is a significant relationship between Work Life Balance (WLB) with Quality of Life (QoL) constructs. Figure 3 below shows the results of the covariance between constructs.

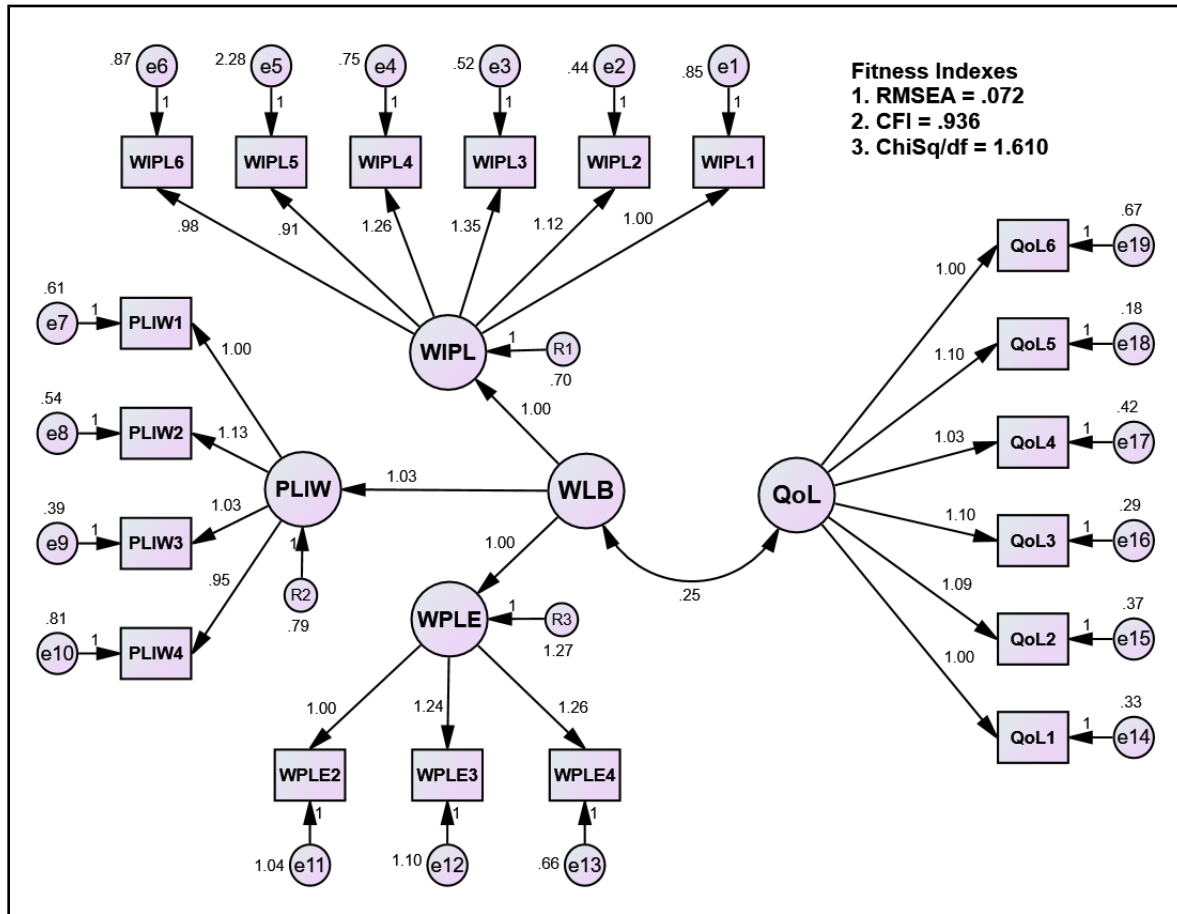


Figure 3: Analysis of Covariance between Constructs (Unstandardized Estimates)

Table 5 shows the results of hypothesis testing of the covariance between constructs. Hypothesis testing in Table 6 is based on the SEM findings from Figure 1 above.

Table 5: Covariance Values between Constructs

Constructs	Constructs	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
QoL	<--> WLB	0.248	0.075	3.325	***	Significant

*** Significant value at the level of understanding, $p < 0.001$

Table 6: Hypothesis Test between Constructs

Hypothesis Test	P	Decision
H ₄ : Work Life Balance (WLB) has a significant correlation with Quality of Life (QoL) among women employees in Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin in Malaysia.	0.001	Supported

Figure 4 below shows the results of the value of correlation between constructs:

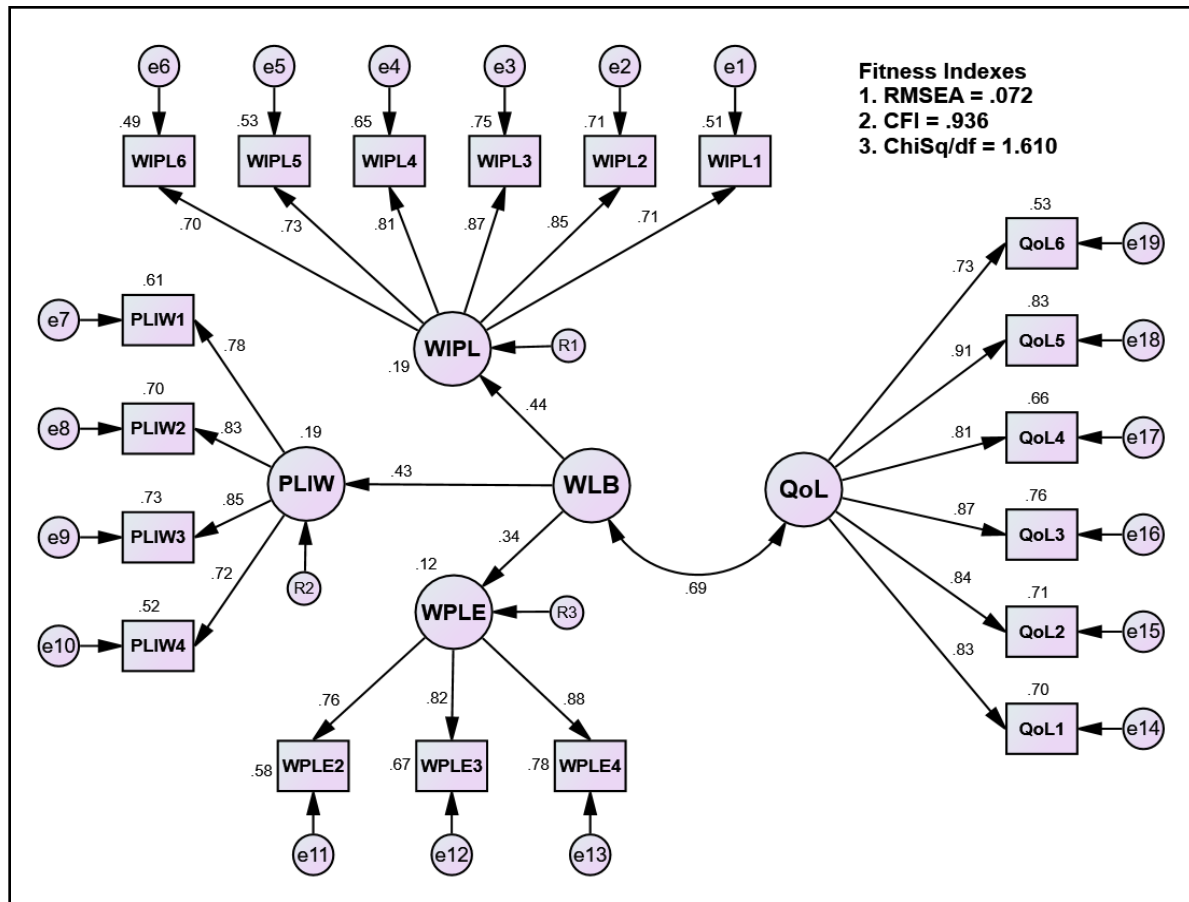


Figure 4: Analysis of Correlation between Constructs (Standardized Estimates)

The result shows that Work Life Balance (WLB) constructs have a significant correlation with Quality of Life (QoL). The budget for correlation Coefficient (Estimate) is 0.691, the level is significant 0.001 (Estimate = 0.691, $p < 0.001$).

The results of this study show that Work Life Balance (WLB) constructs have a significant correlation with Quality of Life (QoL). Therefore, the correlation between Work Life Balance (WLB) with Quality of Life (QoL) constructs occurs under **high correlation**. Therefore, the hypothesis testing of H_1 in this study was supported based on the absorbed data.

Based on the above discussion, the study found that the constructs of work-life balance; work interference with personal life, personal life interference with work, and work/personal life enhancement are highly correlated. There is also a high correlation between work-life balance and the quality of life among women employees in UniSZA. Thus a balanced work and life will optimize one's quality of life. Meanwhile, overcompensating in either direction of work or life will impede quality of life. Where the results yield that work-life balance has a high correlation with the quality of life of the employees, organizations can implement various work-life balance initiatives that may assist employees to better balance their work and family responsibilities, gain improvements in well-being and provide organizational benefits such as through the implementation of flexi working hours, telecommuting or job-

sharing. The notion of flexibility as seen from the employees' view means availability for leisure, family, working closer to home or at home, and the possibility to interrupt or reduce work to attend family needs and emergencies (Paula, 2008). As discussed by previous studies, the effects of introducing work-life balance practices on employee attitudes and perceptions include job satisfaction, commitment, job stress and and better physical and mental health (Lazar et al., 2002) which are among the contributing factors to increased quality of life. Due to the limitation of the present study, considerable future research on the impact of work-life balance on individual wellbeing and perceived quality of life may benefit both, the employees and the organizations.

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