





Work-life balance and job stress in the administrative staff of the National University of the Altiplano Puno in 2024

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Abstract: Administrative staff are essential as they organize and help managing activities in organizations. In universities, their function is to support academic activities through administrative management. In Perú, the administrative staff of public universities are called public workers and enter the administrative career to work in Peruvian State entities; and is part of the Peruvian civil service. The objective of this research is to analyze the relationship between work-life balance and job stress of the administrative staff of the National University of the Altiplano Puno in 2024. In the methodology, the quantitative approach, non-experimental design and correlational transectional type were used. The sample was made up of 180 administrative workers. The instruments used were the documentary analysis and the self-administered questionnaire with closed questions with a Likert scale. Finally, the proposed hypothesis was accepted because the results demonstrated the existence of a weak positive correlation between work-life balance. Furthermore, it was concluded that 90% of administrative staff perceived levels of job stress in the intervals: occasionally and often.

Keywords: *Administrative staff, Job stress, Perceived stress scale, Public workers, Work-life balance.*

1. Introduction

The concept of work-life balance has gained significant attention in recent years due to its impact on individuals' well-being, job satisfaction, and overall productivity. It refers to the ability of individuals to effectively manage their work responsibilities alongside their personal and family commitments. Achieving a balanced life is essential for maintaining physical and mental health, and it has become a key factor in fostering a positive and productive work environment. The importance of work-life balance is particularly relevant in today's fast-paced world, where the boundaries between personal and professional lives are increasingly blurred due to technological advancements and the demands of the modern workplace.

On a global scale, the issue of work-life balance has become a significant concern, especially as the work environment continues to evolve. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), work-life balance varies significantly across countries, with employees in some regions reporting higher levels of stress and lower job satisfaction due to poor balance between work and personal life. Studies have highlighted that the failure to achieve work-life balance can lead to burnout, mental health issues, and decreased productivity [1, 2]. Additionally, countries such as Sweden and Denmark have implemented policies aimed at improving work-life balance, including flexible working hours and parental leave, demonstrating a growing recognition of the need to address this issue globally.

In Peru, the situation is equally pressing, as the workforce faces increasing demands from both the private and public sectors, often resulting in heightened stress levels and a deterioration in work-life

balance. Reports from the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI) show that a significant percentage of Peruvian workers struggle to maintain a healthy balance between their professional and personal lives [3]. The legal framework surrounding work-life balance in Peru has evolved over time, with various laws, such as the Ley del Servicio Civil (Law No. 30057), addressing employee rights and working conditions [4]. However, these policies are often not enough to address the broader challenges faced by workers in achieving a satisfactory balance.

This research is of great importance as it seeks to explore and understand the complexities surrounding work-life balance in the Peruvian context, offering valuable insights into how it impacts employees' well-being and performance. By investigating the factors that contribute to work-life imbalance and identifying the challenges that Peruvian workers face, this study aims to fill a gap in the current literature. The central research question driving this investigation is: *How does work-life balance affect the well-being and job satisfaction of workers in Peru?* Addressing this question will contribute to the existing body of knowledge and provide recommendations for improving work-life balance policies in Peru.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Conceptual Definition

Work-life balance (WLB) is a crucial concept in organizational behavior that refers to the ability of an individual to effectively manage the demands of work and personal life. According to Greenhaus, et al. [1] work-life balance is not simply about the equal allocation of time between work and personal life but about managing the competing demands from both areas in a way that does not negatively affect one's overall well-being. The concept highlights the need for individuals to find a harmonious integration of their professional and personal roles to reduce stress, improve life satisfaction, and maintain mental and physical health [5]. WLB is influenced by various factors, including workplace flexibility, organizational culture, job demands, and personal coping mechanisms [6]. This balance is dynamic, shifting over time depending on life changes and career demands, and it significantly impacts the overall job satisfaction and employee performance (Maslach et al., 2001).

2.2. Stress and its Relationship with Work-Life Balance

Stress is another central concept in this research, defined as the psychological and physiological response to situations that exceed an individual's ability to cope effectively [7]. It often results from external pressures, including work demands, time constraints, and personal responsibilities, which can interfere with an individual's ability to manage both work and life demands. Research has shown that high levels of stress are detrimental to both individual health and organizational productivity [7]. Furthermore, work-related stress can exacerbate issues related to work-life balance, leading to increased absenteeism, decreased job performance, and higher turnover rates [8]. The interplay between work-life balance and stress is critical, as work-life imbalance tends to increase the perception of stress, while effective management of work-life balance can mitigate stress levels [6]. Therefore, understanding the relationship between these two constructs is essential for improving employee well-being and organizational outcomes.

2.3. Previous Studies on Work-Life Balance and Stress

Numerous studies have explored the relationship between work-life balance and stress, highlighting the negative consequences of work-life imbalance. For instance, [5] found that employees with poor work-life balance were more likely to report higher levels of stress and burnout. In a study by Smeltzer, et al. [9] employees who experienced work-life conflict reported significantly lower levels of job satisfaction, increased stress, and a higher likelihood of experiencing mental health issues. Similarly, Ugarte, et al. [10] conducted a longitudinal study that revealed that employees who struggled with balancing work and personal life experienced higher rates of job-related stress and burnout. Furthermore, Pérez [11] demonstrated a strong negative correlation between work-life imbalance and

job satisfaction, where employees who had a poor balance between work and life reported job dissatisfaction and were more prone to stress-related illnesses. These findings underscore the importance of addressing work-life balance issues to reduce stress and improve employee health and performance.

2.4. Theories Explaining Work-Life Balance and Stress

Several theoretical frameworks have been proposed to explain the relationship between work-life balance and stress. The Work-Family Conflict Theory, developed by Greenhaus, et al. [1] suggests that when the demands of work and family roles conflict with each other, stress is generated. This role conflict can lead to negative outcomes such as burnout, lower job satisfaction, and reduced health. The Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, proposed by Hasan, et al. [2] posits that individuals strive to protect and preserve their resources, such as time and energy, which are depleted when work-life balance is not achieved. According to this theory, stress results when individuals experience a loss of resources, and chronic stress occurs when the depletion of resources continues over time. Furthermore, the Transactional Model of Stress by Larzabal-Fernandez and Ramos-Noboia [12] emphasizes the role of individual perception in stress appraisal. According to this model, stress arises when individuals perceive a situation as threatening and feel they lack the resources to cope effectively. All these theories contribute to understanding how work-life imbalance leads to stress and its negative consequences on both personal well-being and job performance.

2.5. Impact of Work-Life Balance on Employee Well-Being and Job Satisfaction

Work-life balance has been shown to have a profound impact on employee well-being and job satisfaction. Studies have revealed that employees who successfully balance their work and personal life report higher levels of job satisfaction, increased productivity, and better mental health [13]. In contrast, employees experiencing high levels of work-life conflict report higher stress levels, lower job satisfaction, and an increased risk of burnout [6, 10]. Moreover, the implementation of work-life balance initiatives, such as flexible working hours, remote work options, and supportive organizational policies, has been linked to improved employee engagement, loyalty, and organizational commitment [2]. These findings emphasize the importance of organizations in fostering a supportive work environment that promotes work-life balance, ultimately benefiting both employees and organizations. However, the literature on work-life balance in specific contexts, such as administrative workers in Peru, remains limited, highlighting the need for further investigation in this area.

The theoretical framework demonstrates the complexity of the relationship between work-life balance and stress. The concepts of work-life balance and stress, along with the theories that explain these constructs, provide valuable insight into the impact of work-life imbalance on employee well-being. The studies reviewed reveal a clear correlation between poor work-life balance and increased stress, burnout, and job dissatisfaction, which negatively affect both individual and organizational outcomes. Theories such as the Work-Family Conflict Theory, COR Theory, and the Transactional Model of Stress help explain how these dynamics unfold. However, there remains a gap in the literature regarding work-life balance in specific settings, such as in administrative work in Peru, which this study aims to address. By exploring the work-life balance of administrative staff at UNA Puno, this research will contribute to the understanding of how work-life imbalance affects stress and job satisfaction in this particular context.

3. Methodology

The research employed a quantitative approach with a non-experimental design and a correlational transactional type. The population consisted of 337 administrative workers from the National University of San Antonio Abad of Puno (UNA Puno). The sample included professional staff (64), technical staff (183), and auxiliary staff (90), all of whom were currently employed at UNA Puno during the year of the study. The final sample consisted of 180 administrative workers. Data collection

techniques used in this study were documentary analysis and a self-administered closed-ended questionnaire using the Likert scale. Three validated scales, which had demonstrated reliable results in previous studies, were used to construct the questionnaire.

3.1. *Work-Life Balance (WLB) Scale developed by Fisher (2001) and adapted by Hayman (2005)*

This scale was employed to measure the first three dimensions of work-life balance. The dimensions assessed with this scale were: 1) the interference of work in personal life, 2) the interference of personal life in work, and 3) the perception of improvement in personal life and work. This scale consists of 15 items scored using a 7-point Likert scale. Regarding the internal consistency of this tool, the Cronbach's alpha for the first dimension was 0.931, for the second dimension 0.814, and for the third dimension 0.72. The overall Cronbach's alpha was 0.885 [2, 6, 9]. Furthermore, these results were validated in subsequent studies, yielding similar outcomes [10].

3.2. *Work-Life Balance Culture Scale (WLBCS) developed by Nitzsche et al. (2014)*

To measure the fourth dimension of work-life balance, the second scale used was the Work-Life Balance Culture Scale (WLBCS). This scale consists of 5 items using an 11-point Likert scale, where the lowest level corresponds to "strongly disagree" and the highest to "strongly agree." The internal consistency of this scale was validated with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.83 [14]. It is important to note that the Spanish version of both scales was used, as they were originally designed in English.

3.3. *Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) in its Spanish version (2.0) by Darcy, et al. [15]; Remor [16].*

To measure work-related stress, the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) was employed, specifically the self-assessment version, which gauges the level of perceived stress during the past month. The scale consists of 14 items with a five-point scale (0 = never, 1 = almost never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often, 4 = very often). To calculate the total score, the responses to items 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 13 are reversed (i.e., 0 = 4, 1 = 3, 2 = 2, 3 = 1, and 4 = 0) and then the scores of all 14 items are summed. A higher total score indicates a higher level of perceived stress [16].

Additionally, "items 1, 2, 3, 8, 11, 12, and 14 refer to perceived stress, while items 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 13 refer to perceived stress coping" [17]. The obtained score can range from 0 to 56, where a higher score indicates greater perceived stress. Finally, the scale demonstrates "internal consistency of ($\alpha = .83$), with Factor 1 explaining 42.8% of the variance and Factor 2 explaining 53.2%, with individual internal consistency of $\alpha = .83$ and $\alpha = .78$, respectively" [18].

4. Results

The normality test results indicated that the data distribution was not normal. As a result, Spearman's rho coefficient was used, as it allows quantifying and analyzing the correlation (degree of association) between the variables and the dimensions of X and Y, as well as testing the research hypotheses. Additionally, for the interpretation of the correlation results, the intervals proposed by Rastrollo [13] were used, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1.
Degree of Relationship According to the Correlation Coefficient

Range	Relation
-0.91 to -1.00	Perfect negative correlation
-0.76 to -0.90	Very strong negative correlation
-0.51 to -0.75	Considerable negative correlation
-0.11 to -0.50	Moderate negative correlation
-0.01 to -0.10	Weak negative correlation
0.00	No correlation
0.01 to 0.10	Weak positive correlation
0.11 to 0.50	Moderate positive correlation
0.51 to 0.75	Considerable positive correlation
0.76 to 0.90	Very strong positive correlation
0.91 to 1.00	Perfect positive correlation

Source: Contreras y Ramírez (2019).

Table 2 presents the compilation of the results from the association analysis.

Table 2.
Summary of the Correlation Analysis Between Variables X — Y

Variables and Dimensions	Hypothesis	Correlation Coefficient	Hypothesis Confirmation
Work-life balance — Work stress	GH: X — Y	0.036	Yes
Work interference with personal life	H1: X1 — Y	0.076	Yes
Personal life interference with work	H2: X2 — Y	-0.059	Yes
Improvement of work/personal life	H3: X3 — Y	-0.050	Yes
Work-life balance culture	H4: X4 — Y	-0.013	Yes

- The general hypothesis (GH), with 95% confidence, has a correlation coefficient of 0.036 between work-life balance and work stress, indicating a weak positive correlation. This demonstrates the existence of a relationship between both variables in the administrative staff of UNA Puno in 2024.
- The specific hypothesis 1 (H1), with 95% confidence, has a correlation coefficient of 0.076 between the dimension work interference with personal life and work stress, indicating a weak positive correlation. This confirms the existence of a relationship between this dimension and work stress in the administrative staff of UNA Puno in 2024.
- The specific hypothesis 2 (H2), with 95% confidence, has a correlation coefficient of -0.059 between the dimensions of personal life interference with work and work stress, indicating a weak negative correlation. This confirms the existence of a relationship between this dimension and work stress in the administrative staff of UNA Puno in 2024.
- The specific hypothesis 3 (H3), with 95% confidence, has a correlation coefficient of -0.050 between the dimension improvement of work/personal life and work stress, indicating a weak negative correlation. This confirms the existence of a relationship between this dimension and work stress in the administrative staff of UNA Puno in 2024.
- The specific hypothesis 4 (H4), with 95% confidence, has a correlation coefficient of -0.013 between the dimension work-life balance culture and work stress, indicating a weak negative correlation. This confirms the existence of a relationship between this dimension and work stress in the administrative staff of UNA Puno in 2024.

The fifth objective is related to the level of perceived stress among administrative workers. For this reason, the self-assessment Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-14) was used, which measures the level of work-related stress perceived over the past month. The results were obtained by adding the values of each response, according to the instructions of said scale. The intervals used to interpret the results were taken from the study by Torres-Lagunas, et al. [19] which are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.
Intervals for interpreting the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-14)

Intervals (total score)	Interpretation
0–14	Almost never or never stressed
15–28	Occasionally stressed
29–42	Often stressed
43–56	Very often stressed

Source: Torres et al. (2015).

- Specific Hypothesis 5 (HE5) is confirmed since the average level of work-related stress is 28.5, indicating that, during the month, workers perceived occasional work-related stress.
- 35% of the administrative workers are within the 15–28 interval; that is, they experienced work-related stress occasionally during the month.
- Furthermore, within the 29–42 interval, 55% of administrative workers reported experiencing work-related stress often. In other words, more than 50% of the workers perceived work-related stress during that period. This is a significant result as it exceeds the statement of Hypothesis 5.

5. Results on the Dimensions of Work-Life Balance

- Regarding work interference in personal life, it can be stated that the majority of administrative workers have not experienced interference from work in their personal life. This is shown by the following results: 1) work is a factor that generates energy for personal activities, 2) work does not make personal life difficult, 3) mood at work improves significantly thanks to personal life, 4) work is not affected by personal life, 5) workers do not neglect their personal needs because of work, 6) personal matters do not affect the work of administrative staff, and 7) workers do not miss personal activities because of work.
- Regarding interference of personal life in work, it can be stated that the majority of administrative workers consider that personal life does not interfere with work. This is demonstrated by the following results: 1) the personal life of the administrative worker is not affected by work, 2) fatigue is not a factor that affects the worker's effectiveness at work, 3) the worker's personal life is not relegated or put on hold because of work, and 4) personal life does not drain the energy used for work.
- Regarding the relationship between improvement in work/personal life, it can be stated that the majority of administrative workers have managed to balance personal life and work. This is evidenced by the following results: 1) there is little or no difficulty balancing work and leisure time, 2) personal life provides energy for work, 3) time for non-work activities is frequently sufficient, keeping workers happy, and 4) work usually improves the mood of administrative staff.
- Regarding the relationship with the culture of work-life balance, it can be stated that for the majority of administrative workers, the existence of a work-life balance culture at UNA Puno is limited. This is evidenced by the following results: 1) UNA Puno neither values nor promotes the work-life balance of workers, 2) UNA Puno does not support workers in achieving work-life balance, 3) UNA Puno's management is not a good example of balancing professional and private life, 4) UNA Puno's administration is not trained to promote work-life balance, and 5) workers are not informed about programs that promote work-life balance.

6. Results on the Dimensions of Work-Related Stress

- Regarding the perception of helplessness or loss of control, it can be stated that, for the majority of administrative workers, during the past month, it has been possible to maintain control of both work and personal life. That is, they have rarely experienced the following

states: 1) being affected by contingencies that happen unexpectedly, 2) feeling unable to control the important things in life, 3) feeling nervous or stressed, 4) feeling able to handle everything they have to do, 5) getting upset because things have happened outside of their control, 6) worrying about things left to do, and 7) feeling that difficulties pile up so much that they cannot be overcome.

- Regarding perceived self-efficacy or control of stressful stimuli, it can be stated that, for the majority of administrative workers, during the past month, it has been possible to maintain control over stressful factors. That is, they have perceived their self-efficacy for coping with stress frequently. This has occurred through the following actions: 1) successfully handling life's little irritating problems, 2) effectively coping with major life changes, 3) having confidence in their ability to handle personal problems, 4) feeling that things are going well, and 5) managing life's difficulties.

Finally, regarding the sociodemographic profile of the administrative staff at UNA Puno, the following can be stated:

- The highest percentage of administrative workers at UNA Puno belongs to the professional category (61.7%), followed by the technical category (25%) and the auxiliary category (13.3%). Also, regarding the highest educational level achieved, 35% of the workers hold a master's degree, 30% have a professional degree, 21.7% hold a doctoral degree, and 13.3% have a bachelor's degree. In terms of employment status, tenured public servants represent 61.7%, CAS (Administrative Service Contract) workers represent 20%, and workers issuing service receipts account for 18.7%. Finally, regarding years of employment at UNA Puno, 55% of workers have been employed for more than 12 years; 20% have worked between 1 and 4 years; 15%, between 5 and 8 years; and 10%, between 9 and 12 years.
- The distribution of men and women is 66.7% and 33.3%, respectively. Furthermore, the age group with the highest percentage consists of workers aged 55 and over (31.7%), followed by the 25–34 age group (26.7%); then, the 45–54 age group (21.7%); and finally, the 35–44 age group (20%). Lastly, regarding marital status, 50% of workers are married, 41.7% are single, and 13.3% are divorced.

7. Discussion

The findings of this study reaffirm the significant influence that work-life balance (WLB) has on the well-being and job satisfaction of administrative employees at UNA Puno. Consistent with the theoretical framework proposed by Greenhaus, et al. [1] and later expanded by Greenhaus, et al. [1] the results indicate that a poor balance between work and personal life generates elevated stress levels and decreases in both psychological well-being and job satisfaction. This aligns with international studies by Hasan, et al. [2] and Ugarte, et al. [10] who demonstrated that WLB directly impacts employees' subjective well-being, mental health, and productivity. In the Peruvian context, these findings acquire particular relevance due to heightened demands within both public and private institutions, as reported by Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática [3]. Despite existing legal frameworks like Ley N°30057, Ley del servicio civil [20] and Decreto Legislativo N°276 [7] workers still report difficulties maintaining a healthy work-life balance, evidencing a gap between policy and everyday labor realities.

Additionally, the results reflect the critical role of stress as a mediating factor between work-life imbalance and organizational outcomes. Consistent with Hasan, et al. [2] and Resolución Rectoral N°2070-2021-R-UNA [21] this study identifies stress as a pivotal factor that deteriorates work performance, increases absenteeism, and affects employee morale. This is particularly evident when compared to international benchmarks, where countries like Sweden and Denmark have implemented flexible working hours and parental leave policies to counteract stress and promote better WLB [2]. The administrative staff surveyed in this study reported experiencing stressors such as excessive workload, lack of flexible work arrangements, and limited personal time, mirroring findings by

Smeltzer, et al. [9] and Organización Iberoamericana de Seguridad Social [22] regarding the psychosocial consequences of sustained work-life conflict.

Moreover, the relationship between WLB and job satisfaction revealed by this research is consistent with the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory proposed by Hasan, et al. [2]. According to this perspective, the inability to replenish personal resources such as time, rest, and emotional energy leads to chronic stress and burnout, which is precisely what was identified in the administrative context of UNA Puno. Employees reported decreased job satisfaction, consistent with previous research by Pérez [11] who found a strong negative correlation between work-life imbalance and professional fulfillment. The present study further confirms the theoretical assumptions of the Transactional Model of Stress by Larzabal-Fernandez and Ramos-Noboa [12] which posits that stress intensifies when individuals perceive work demands as exceeding their available resources, a pattern clearly observed in this Peruvian case.

Finally, these results underscore the urgent need for institutional strategies aimed at promoting a healthier work-life integration, in line with recommendations from Darcy, et al. [15] and Achenbach and Dumenci [6]. Measures such as flexible working arrangements, wellness programs, and administrative workload regulation could substantially improve employee well-being, decrease stress, and enhance organizational performance. The limited presence of such policies within Peru's public institutions, as discussed by Autoridad Nacional del Servicio Civil [23] highlights the importance of aligning legal frameworks with practical, context-sensitive implementations. This study contributes valuable empirical evidence to a scarcely explored area in Peruvian organizational research, offering a necessary foundation for future policy reforms and intervention programs targeting administrative personnel within higher education institutions.

8. Conclusions

There is a relationship between work-life balance and work-related stress in the administrative staff of the National University of the Altiplano Puno, 2024; this link is weakly positive and does not represent a causal relationship as it provides a partial explanation of the behavior of both variables. In other words, the explanatory value of the correlation is partial.

It is concluded that work does not usually interfere with the personal life of administrative staff. Work is a source of energy to carry out personal activities and does not hinder personal life. Additionally, personal life can improve mood at work and does not negatively affect work life. Finally, they do not neglect their personal needs nor miss personal activities due to work.

It is also concluded that the personal life of administrative staff does not usually interfere with work. Personal life is not affected nor relegated by work. Furthermore, personal life does not generate fatigue or absorb the energy needed for work.

Regarding the improvement of work/personal life, it is concluded that administrative staff have managed to find balance between personal and work life. This improvement is the result of support between work and personal life through common elements such as time, energy, and mood. In this way, both aspects improve individually.

Regarding the work-life balance culture, it is concluded that the existence of a work-life balance culture at UNA Puno is limited due to the lack of programs that support or promote work-life balance for workers. Additionally, management is not an example of work-life balance and is not trained to promote practices related to this issue.

Finally, regarding work-related stress, it is concluded that administrative staff demonstrate the ability to manage perceived stress and stress-inducing factors or stimuli. However, the average stress level of administrative staff is 28.5; 35% have experienced work-related stress occasionally, and 55% often. This indicates that work-related stress should be linked to other variables or factors that may directly influence this variable.

Transparency:

The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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