

# Mapping the Impact of Employee Engagement on Job Performance with Mediating Role of Work-Life Balance: An Investigation of Private Sector Organizations in Pakistan

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## Abstract

Employee engagement is rapidly emerging as an antidote for overall organizational success. In the contemporary business environment, engaged employees are essential for the achievement of overall organizational goals. However, there are countless advantages of retaining and attracting an engaged workforce. This paper explores the impact of employee engagement drivers on job performance and the mediating role of work-life balance. Using convenient and snowball sampling, we collected data from 334 employees working in different private sector organizations in Pakistan. Subsequently, we used SPSS and AMOS (Structural Equation Modelling) to ascertain the structural relationship between the study variables. The study found that cognitive and behavioral engagement does not affect job performance, but emotional engagement positively affects job performance. The study also found that work-life balance mediates employee engagement drivers and job performance.

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Thus, we have inferred that passionate and engaged employees do their job more efficiently, report higher performance, and provide potential growth opportunities for the organization. The study also suggests strategies crucial for employee engagement.

**Keywords:** *Employee engagement, cognitive engagement, behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, job performance, work-life balance.*

## **Introduction**

Emerging global trends are affecting the business environment. Firms that can adopt the changes would have sustainable growth and a competitive edge (Uddin, Mahmood & Fan, 2019). Human resources are an inevitable asset for the growth of any organization. Effective human resource plays an instrumental role to meet organizational objectives and keeps employees engaged. Lack of employee engagement and commitment adversely affects organizational performance. Organizations need to recruit highly committed employees willing to offer their best at work (Al-dalahmeh, Khalaf & Obeidat, 2018). Cooke et al. (2019) and Kompaso and Sridevi (2010) assert that firms should focus on nurturing and retaining committed employees, making firms more attractive to potential employees. Similarly, Gupta and Kumar (2012) have documented that committed employees align with employers' values. Such employees contribute more than their formal obligations.

Employees with high-performance levels are more engaged, productive and create more business potential (Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019). Sometimes employees show irresponsible attitudes towards work (Cahill et al., 2015). Organizations can enhance their productivity and performance by recognizing disengaged employees. Turner (2020) stresses that it is difficult for organizations to measure engagement since most lowly engaged employees do not display unpleasant and antagonistic behavior. Besides other factors, poor work-life balance adversely affects employees' wellbeing and performance globally. Work-life balance is the balance of resources (time and energy) between work and family (Wieneke et al., 2019). Psychologists believe that the job load of employees should make it difficult for them to spend quality time with family members and friends. Inadequate work-life balance results in low job performance, lack of commitment, and satisfaction. Thus, organizations should ensure that their employees have optimum work-life balance since it promotes a sense of ownership (De Beer, Tims, & Bakker, 2016). Employees with adequate work-life balance contribute to organizational productivity and sustainability (Leary et al., 2013).

## **Problem Statement and Objectives**

Researchers for decades have been examining the effect of employee engagement

on job performance and organizational success (Breevaart, Bakker, Derks, & Vuuren, 2019; Alessandri, Consiglio, Luthans, & Borgogni, 2018). In this era of globalization, organizations are looking for talented employees and want to fully engage them in all spheres of their relationship with the organization. According to the Alexa (2019) report, robots will replace around 8.5% of the world job market by 2030. Artificial intelligence may reduce the demand for human workers, but it would not reduce the importance of human resource management (Ngwenya & Pelsner, 2020). Highly engaged employees give optimum performance and play important roles in enhancing the satisfaction level of customers and other stakeholders. Similarly, work-life balance also stimulates employee engagement and job performance (Kooij, Tims, & Akkermans, 2017).

Given the importance of the above-discussed issues, the study would aim to:

1. Investigate the effect of cognitive, behavioral, and emotional engagement on job performance in private sector organizations of Pakistan.
2. Investigate the mediating role of work-life balance between employee engagement drivers (i.e., cognitive, behavioral, and emotional) and job performance.

## **Literature Review & Hypothesis Development**

### ***Employee Engagement***

The concept of employee engagement is not new in the contemporary world. Due to its broad nature and changing business trends, many authors have defined employee engagement in different contexts in the last two decades (Robertson, 2019; Ruck, Welch, & Menara, 2017). Gupta, Ganguli, & Ponnamm (2015) assert that human resource managers have examined how employee engagement affects the business environment for decades. In a multi-theoretical study, Uddin, Mahmood, and Fan (2019) concluded that highly engaged employees also encourage and help their teams perform tasks efficiently. Karatepe, Yavas, Babakus, and Deitz (2018) suggest that organizational resources, including a flexible working environment, improve employee engagement and work-life balance. Highly engaged employees tend to have a strong association with the organization and believe they can significantly contribute to its growth and performance. Self-engaged employees also have high self-actualization that motivates them towards higher job performance (Al-dalahmeh, Khalaf, & Obeidat, 2018). Thus, employees become more committed and enthusiastic in their daily jobs (Anitha, 2014). Extant literature also asserts that firms must ensure that their employees are highly engaged, committed, and strive for the best possible performance (Weideman & Hofmeyr, 2020).

To involve non-engaged or moderately engaged employees, managers and entrepreneurs should properly convey their business vision, goals, and values. Employees' high perception of organizational justice and flexible working environment stimulates employees' engagement. Employee engagement strongly correlates with human capital and employees' ownership of an organization (Ruck, Welch, & Menara, 2017). Globalization and a competitive environment have increased the importance of productivity, which is only possible with highly engaged employees (Weideman & Hofmeyr, 2020). Saks (2006), based on empirical evidence, has documented that an organization's sustainability depends on retaining and attracting talented employees, which is only possible by having a highly structured and capable human resource management team.

### ***Drivers of Employee Engagement***

The current study has used three drivers of employee engagement which are discussed in the following sections:

#### ***Emotional Engagement***

Emotional engagement is all about employees' emotional association with the job, company, and organizational structure. Employees with emotional engagement are happy with their jobs and feel responsible for organizational goals (Ramani, 2019).

#### ***Cognitive Engagement***

Cognitive engagement includes employees' perception of the organization, their managers and colleagues, and overall culture. Cognitively engaged employees actively participate in organizational activities and positively affect the organization (Joo, Zigarmi, Nimon, & Shuck, 2017).

#### ***Behavioral Engagement***

Employees with behavioral engagement put extra effort into achieving organizational goals and finding ways to perform their jobs more efficiently. Behavioral engagement is the value-added component in employees reflecting their efforts into their work (Leek, Houghton & Canning, 2019).

#### ***Work-life Balance***

Researchers have examined the effect of work-life balance on job performance and other organizational-related outcomes (Chummar, Singh, & Ezzedeen, 2019; Johari, Tan, & Zulkarnain, 2018). Employees' work-life balance gives adequate time and resources to work and personal life without undue stress either from family or work (Kaya & Karatepe, 2020). It is an important driver of organizational performance and citizenship behavior

and is negatively associated with turnover intentions (Obuobisa-Dark & Tsedzah, 2019). Work-life balance is essential for improving organizational productivity and employees' psychological wellbeing (Haider, Jabeen, & Ahmad, 2018). It also promotes employee satisfaction and affective commitment.

While allocating job-related duties, organizations should ensure that they do not delegate excessive duties. The excessive workload adversely affects employees' personal and social lives. An adequate work-life balance adds value to organizational and financial results, reduces turnover intentions develops psychological ownership in the employees. Anitha (2014) found that a variation in the work-life balance increased employee productivity by 37%. The study also concluded that it is one of the most important factors for improving employee engagement with job satisfaction (Anitha, 2014). Similarly, Bakker and Bal (2010) found that work-life balance affects job-related consequences, including "employee turnover, job satisfaction, employee performance, absenteeism" and non-job-related aspects, including "family relationship and job stress." Researchers also suggest that work-life balance motivates employees in achieving organizational goals and promotes organizational commitment and engagement (Beauregard & Henry, 2009).

### ***Job Performance***

Job performance refers to the employees' total tangible or intangible contribution to attaining organizational goals and objectives (Bakker, Tims, & Derks, 2012). Highly engaged employees' performance and productivity are higher than disengaged employees. Also, job engagement motivates employees to go beyond their formal job responsibilities. Employees with high engagement are top performers and highly motivated to achieve the organization's vision (Kooij, Tims, & Akkermans, 2017). Effective leadership is one of the key drivers that positively affect job performance, employee attitude, and behavior. It motivates them to sacrifice their personal goals over organizational goals (Buil, Martínez, & Matute, 2019). Extant literature suggests a positive relationship between employee commitment and indicators of job performance such as absenteeism, employee turnover, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Choi et al., 2019; McDaniel, Schmidt, & Hunter, 1988). Baral and Bhargava (2010) assert that engaged employees are more committed and involved in their jobs. They found that employees with as little as 15% to 30% level of engagement can exponentially increase corporate sales. Employees with poor job engagement do not perform their duties efficiently. They also discourage other employees from performing efficiently.

### ***Employee Engagement and Job Performance***

Uddin, Mahmood, and Fan (2019) emphasized that employees with a symbiotic

relationship would be more efficient than other employees. Highly engaged employees are more task-driven; therefore, they can prioritize jobs (Ramani, 2019; Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011). Harter et al. (2009) carried out an extensive survey on job performance. The study collected data from fifty-two organizations in forty-four industries located in twenty-six countries across the world. The sample size for the study was quite large (i.e., 955,905 observations). The study segmented employees into categories, such as highly engaged and lowly engaged. The study found that highly engaged employees' performance was 18% higher than the lowly engaged employees. The study also found that the quality of inputs of lowly engaged employees was 60% lower than highly engaged employees.

On the contrary, many researchers argue that an insignificant association exists between employee engagement and organizational performance (Gruman & Saks, 2011). They also believe that an inverse relationship exists between employee commitment and corporate productivity. At the same time, studies have also documented a modest association between employee engagement and performance indicators such as "sales turnover, customer base, employee turnover and attainment of organizational growth" (Harter et al., 2002). The literature suggests that employee engagement positively affects job performance (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). Therefore, we argue its drivers would also affect job performance.

*H1: Cognitive engagement is positively associated with employees' job performance.*

*H2: Behavioral engagement positively affects employees' job performance.*

*H3: Emotional engagement positively affects employees' job performance.*

### **Work-Life Balance and Job Performance**

Work-life balance promotes employees' job performance and organizational success (Kaya & Karatepe, 2020). Work-life balance improves employees' performance and generates favorable outcomes, including "low turnover, absenteeism, and organizational citizenship behavior." Ang, Hwa, and Teh (2018) assert that stability and affinity between personal and professional activities encourage employees to perform their job efficiently, translating into better job-related results. In addition, poor work-life balance presumably negatively affects job performance and employees' organizational commitment. Employees are more committed to their jobs when they fulfill their job expectations and household needs. Baral and Bhargava (2010) found that work-life balance fulfills an employee's psychological and emotional needs. It also increases employee loyalty towards the organization.

*H4: Work-life balance mediates the relationship between cognitive engagement and job performance.*

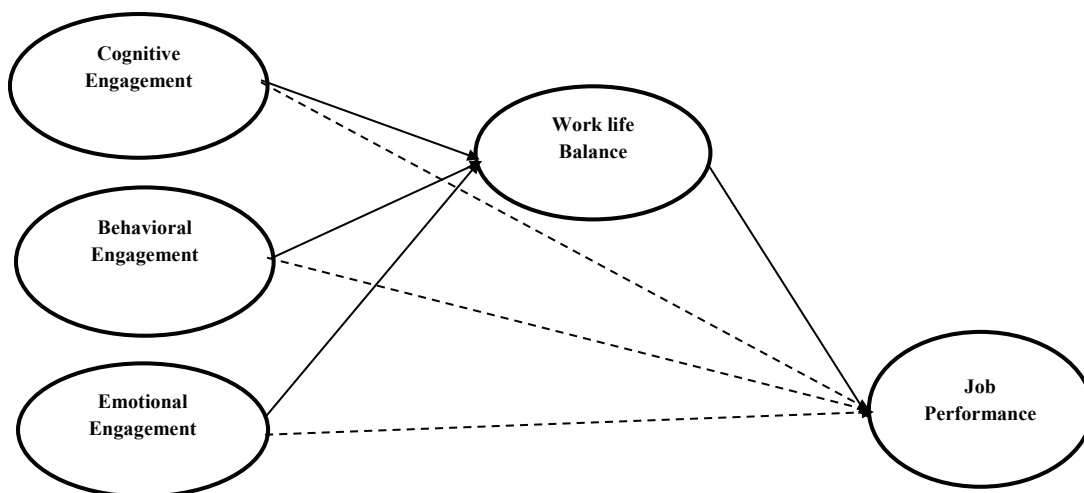
*H5: Work-life balance mediates the relationship between behavioral engagement and job performance.*

*H6: Work-life balance mediates the association between emotional engagement and job performance.*

*H7: Work-Life balance mediates the association between employee engagement and job performance*

## Conceptual Framework

Based on theoretical discussions, we have proposed a conceptual framework. The conceptual framework has five latent variables and seven hypotheses, of which three are mediating, and four are direct. The conceptual framework is presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study entails quantitative analysis, which measures the empirical relationship between employee engagement and job performance with mediating effect of employee



work-life balance. The research is exploratory. The study has used a structured Likert scale-based questionnaire to collect data from targeted private sector organizations.

### ***Data and Sampling Technique***

We have targeted various private organizations from banking, textiles, FMCG, telecommunication, pharmaceuticals, education, and insurance. We distributed 450 questionnaires and received 334 useable questionnaires. The study has used a valid sample of 334 respondents, including managers and non-managerial employees, to test the research hypotheses. We collected the data using convenient and snowball sampling via social media sharing, email, and offline resources.

### ***Scales and Measures***

To measure the “impact of employee engagement on employee performance with the mediating role of employee work-life balance,” the research instrument had twenty-four items apart from demographic measures. However, the study dropped six items due to low factor loading. We have adapted the questionnaire from different studies discussed in the following sections. The items were endorsed and validated by experts and scholarly practitioners.

### ***Employee Engagement Measure***

Employee engagement was measured using 13 items adopted from Ramani (2019) and Karatepe, Yavas, Babakus, and Deitz (2018). The study classified these items into three sub-dimensions: cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and behavioral engagement. Out of these 13 items, we omitted four items because of low factor loading.

### ***Work-Life Balance Measure***

The study employed six items from Suifan, Abdallah, and Diab (2016) to determine the role of the mediating variable. The study dropped three items because of low factor loading.

### ***Job Performance Measure***

We have measured employee job performance based on six items from Buil, Martínez, and Matute (2019). There was no sub-dimension for this measure.

### ***Demographic Measure***

The first part of the questionnaire measured the demographics from the respondents' profiles. It has five items based on a nominal scale.



### **Statistical Analysis**

We have used SPSS version 26 and AMOS for statistical analysis. The study used SPSS for normality, validity, reliability, and AMOS to assess composite reliability based on standardized factor loadings and variances. This research used confirmatory factor analysis for standardized factor loadings and variances. The study used the double phase structural equation modeling (SEM) technique for testing the developed model. Initially, we used CFA to assess the reliability and validity of the proposed model. Subsequently, we used path analysis to test the direct and indirect effects between the variables and the structural relationship between the “measured variables” and latent constructs.

## **Results & Discussion**

### **Respondents Profile**

We distributed 450 survey questionnaires and received 334 complete responses with no missing values. Table 1 depicts the summary of respondents’ profiles.

**Table 1: Respondents’ Profile (N-334)**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	150	45%
	Female	184	55%
<b>Age</b>	20-25	97	29%
	26-35	160	48%
	36-45	56	17%
	46-55	21	6. %
<b>Educational Qualification</b>	Matric or O-level	8	2%
	Under Graduate	76	23%
	Graduate	128	38%
	Masters or above	122	37. %
<b>Job Experience</b>	Less than a Year	53	16%
	1-3 Years	94	28%
	4-6 Years	116	35%
	7-9 Years	61	18.%
	More than 10 Years	10	3%
<b>Managerial Levels</b>	Non-Mgr. Employees	26	8%
	Junior Level Managers	128	38%
	Middle-Level Managers	140	42%
	Senior Level Managers	40	12%

The demographics statistics suggest that 55% of the respondents were male, and 45% were female. The age profiles show a bulk of respondents (48%) were in the 26-35 years age category, and the rest are in other age groups. About 67% of the respondents are at least graduate, and 33% have lower educational qualifications. Similarly, about 34.7% of the respondents have job experience of about 4-6 years, and the remaining respondents' job experience falls in other experience categories. The profile also suggests that 92% of the respondents fall in different management categories and 8% in the non-management category.

### ***Descriptive Statistics***

Table 2 shows the summary of descriptive statistics, which is inclusive of "Mean, SD and Cronbach's s alpha values".

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics**

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>α</b>	<b>EP</b>	<b>CE</b>	<b>BE</b>	<b>EE</b>	<b>WLB</b>
Job Performance	3.61	0.84	1.000				
Cognitive Engagement	3.33	0.73	.471	1.000			
Behavioral Engagement	3.12	0.73	.486	.553	1.000		
Emotional Engagement	3.01	0.79	.436	.510	.590	1.000	
Work-Life Balance	3.21	0.77	.171	.043	.009	.105	1.000

The results show that all the Cronbach's alpha values are over 0.70 suggesting acceptable internal consistency of the constructs used in the study (Mohajan, 2017). The study also used Pearson correlation to evaluate the relationship between the research variables. The results show a significant positive relationship among cognitive, behavioral, emotional engagement, work-life balance, and job performance.

### ***Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)***

The study has used Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and path analysis of the relationship between research variables and respective indicators. Table 3 shows the summary of the results.

**Table 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)**

Latent variable	Item Label	Standardized factor Loadings
Cognitive Engagement	CE1	.60
	CE2	.60
	CE4	.64
Behavioral Engagement	BE1	.60
	BE2	.70
	BE4	.60
Emotional Engagement	EE1	.60
	EE2	.65
	EE5	.60
Work Life Balance	WLB2	.55
	WLB4	.55
	WLB6	.51
Job Performance	EP1	.64
	EP2	.70
	EP3	.70
	EP4	.73
	EP5	.70

The results show that the factor loadings of the indicator variables are at least 0.50, suggesting a theoretical association between latent variables and their indicators (Marsh, Guo, Dicke, Parker, & Craven, 2020).

### ***Evaluating Measurement Model Fitness***

Researchers have suggested many fit indices for assessing the model fitness. Given this inconsistency, we used seven commonly used fit indices. Table 4 shows fit indices, their values, and fitness criteria.

**Table 4: Model Fitness Values**

Model fit Indices	Measurement	Fit index criteria
Comparative fit index	0.90	Closer to 1 ; good
CMIN/DF	2.30	< 3 good; < 5 acceptable
Good of fit Index	0.91	>0.90
Adjusted Goodness of fit index	0.92	>0.80
Tucker Lewis coefficient	0.9	>0.90
Root means square error of approximation	0.062	< 0.08
PCLOSE	0.01	> 0.05

The results show that all the model fitness indices are within the acceptable range, suggesting that the model fits adequately (García-Santillán, 2017).

### **SEM Results**

The study has empirically tested seven hypotheses, of which our results support all the hypotheses except two. Table 5 illustrates the summary of the results.

**Table 5: SEM Results**

	<b>B</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>T-value</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Result</b>
Cognitive Engagement → Job Performance	.008	.089	.089	.929	Rejected
Behavioral Engagement → Job Performance	-.130	.092	-1.409	.159	Rejected
Emotional Engagement → Job Performance	.200	.079	2.516	.012	Accepted
Cognitive Engagement → WLB → Job Performance	.334	.080	4.203	.000	Accepted
Behavioral engagement → WLB→ Job Performance	.434	.088	4.947	.000	Accepted
Emotional Engagement → WLB→ Job Performance	.210	.063	3.359	.000	Accepted
Employee engagement → WLB → Job Performance	.240	.088	2.742	.006	Accepted

The results support all the mediating relationships and one direct relationship. The results did not support the (1) association between cognitive engagement and job performance and (2) behavioral engagement and job performance.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

### **Discussion**

Employee engagement is one of the main predictors of employees' job performance, and our research findings and past studies support these relationships (Ramani, 2019; Uddin, Mahmood, & Fan, 2019; Weideman & Hofmeyr, 2020). The study also found the positive contribution of employee engagement towards effective job performance with a strong mediating role of work-life balance. The results suggest that employees' job performance increases with their cognitive, behavioral, and emotional engagement. Engaged employees feel a strong association with the organization and believe that their endeavors will make a difference in company performance (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

The results also suggest that the association between "cognitive engagement and job performance" and the relationship between "behavioral engagement and job performance" were insignificant. We have concluded that work-life balance is a strong partial mediator between employee engagement and job performance by looking at the mediation effects. There are very few studies that have explored the mediating

effect of work-life balance, particularly in the Pakistani context. Therefore, this study will positively contribute to the relevant field and provide insight for future researchers.

## **Conclusion**

Engaged employees have always been the priority for human resource managers in the business environment. This positive attitude towards the job and its responsibilities benefit the organization in numerous ways. This research determines the influence of employee engagement on employees' job performance in the private sector organizations in Pakistan. The study's conceptual framework comprises multiple emotional, behavioral, cognitive engagement, work-life balance, and employees' job performance. The study results suggest that employee engagement drivers (i.e., emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement) are significant predictors of employee job performance. Also, work-life balance improves employee job performance and generates favorable outcomes, including low turnover intentions, absenteeism, organizational citizenship behavior, and performance. We also found that work-life balance enhances employees' engagement level and stimulates job performance. Work-life balance helps employees in achieving organizational goals and increases employee commitment and engagement. We also found the partial mediating effect of work-life balance on employee engagement and job performance. Enhancing employee engagement is an effective strategy for increasing organizational performance and retaining talented employees.

## ***Implications for Managers***

The vital role of human resource management and its impact on organizational growth has always been an interesting topic for researchers. Organizations must use different motivation practices to augment employee commitment and organizational performance. The private sector in Pakistan needs to focus on employee engagement. The current study would help human resource managers in improving employee engagement and job performance. The study also suggests that organizations should identify engaged and non-engaged employees. And then select different strategies for them.

## ***Limitations and Future Research***

The study has examined the impact of employee engagement drivers (cognitive, behavioral, and emotional engagement) on job performance and the mediating role of work-life balance in private organizations of Karachi. Future studies may examine the impact of employee engagement on different sectors separately. Other studies can also examine the impact of employee engagement drivers on organizational and work-related factors such as motivation and job satisfaction. Employee performance

affects organizational citizenship behavior directly and indirectly. Future studies can examine whether organizational citizenship behavior has a moderating effect on job performance. Cultural values also affect organizational outcomes. Thus, future studies can explore the moderating effect of Hofstede's cultural dimensions on job performance.

## Annexure

### Constructs and Items Used in the Questionnaire

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#### **Employee Engagement**

##### ***Cognitive Engagement***

CE1. At work, my mind is focused on my job.

CE2. At work, I devote a lot of attention to my job.

CE3. At work, I focus a great deal of attention on my job.

CE4. At work, I concentrate on my job.

##### ***Behavioral Engagement***

BE1. I often go above what is expected of me to help my team be successful.

BE2. I work harder than expected to help my company be successful.

BE3. I am willing to put in extra effort without being asked.

BE4. I push myself to work beyond what is expected of me.

##### ***Emotional Engagement***

EE1. I believe in the mission and purpose of my company.

EE2. I am proud to tell others that I work for my current organization.

EE3. Working at my current organization has a great deal of personal meaning to me.

EE4. I feel a strong sense of belonging to my job.

EE5. I care about the future of my company.

#### **Work-Life Balance**

WLB1. There is a good fit between my personal life and work-life.

WLB2. There is a good fit between my family life and work-life.

WLB3. I receive support and recognition from family members.

WLB4. There is a good fit between my job and my personal health.

WLB5. I have sufficient emotional energy for the job.

WLB6. I have sufficient emotional energy for the job.

#### **Employee Performance**

EP1. I consistently complete the duties.

EP2. I consistently meet the performance requirements of the job.

EP3. I fulfill all responsibilities required by my job.

EP4. I consistently fulfill my obligations to perform for my job.

EP5. I often fail to perform essential duties.

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