

EFFECT OF WORK–LIFE BALANCE ON SUSTAINABLE AND MINIMALIST CONSUMPTION TRENDS**Dr. Dennis Edward Fernando**

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Abstract

This study investigates the effect of Work–Life Balance on Sustainable Consumption Behaviour and Adoption of Minimalist Lifestyle among gig employees, a rapidly expanding segment of the modern workforce. Using primary data collected from 239 respondents, the research examines how the ability to balance professional and personal responsibilities influences environmentally conscious consumption patterns and the tendency to adopt simpler, clutter-free lifestyles. Correlation analysis reveals strong positive relationships among Work–Life Balance, Sustainable Consumption Behaviour, and Minimalist Lifestyle Adoption, indicating that individuals with better balance are more likely to engage in sustainable and minimalist practices. Regression results show that Work–Life Balance explains a significant proportion of variance in these lifestyle outcomes, highlighting its critical role in shaping consumer behaviour. Furthermore, Structural Equation Modeling confirms that both sustainable consumption and minimalist living significantly and directly contribute to improving work–life balance, demonstrating a reciprocal and reinforcing relationship. The findings suggest that lifestyle choices rooted in sustainability and minimalism are not only environmentally beneficial but also support personal well-being by reducing stress and enhancing balance in daily life.

Keywords: Gig employees, Minimalist lifestyle, Sustainable consumption, Work–life balance.

Introduction

In the modern economy, consumers are increasingly prioritizing a balanced lifestyle that harmonizes personal well-being, professional fulfillment, and responsible consumption. The rise of work–life balance (WLB) awareness has shifted consumer priorities from material accumulation to meaningful living. This transition aligns with global movements toward sustainable and minimalist consumption, where individuals prefer fewer, high-quality, and eco-conscious products over excess and waste. Balanced individuals often value time, health, and environmental responsibility, translating into conscious purchasing decisions. Conversely, those facing work stress or imbalance may exhibit compensatory or impulsive buying behaviors. Understanding how work–life balance influences this emerging consumption trends can help marketers, policymakers, and sustainability advocates promote responsible consumerism.

The growing prominence of gig employment has transformed work patterns, lifestyle choices, and consumption behaviours across diverse segments of society. As gig workers navigate flexible yet demanding schedules, the concept of Work–Life Balance has emerged as a critical determinant of their overall well-being and quality of life. At the same time, global shifts toward environmentally responsible consumption and simplified living have increased interest in Sustainable Consumption Behaviour and Minimalist Lifestyle Adoption. These trends reflect a broader societal movement toward reducing material dependence, conserving resources, and prioritizing personal fulfillment over excessive consumption. Understanding how work–life balance influences these emerging lifestyle preferences is essential, particularly within the gig economy where autonomy and instability coexist. This study explores the interconnectedness between work–life balance and sustainable, minimalist consumption patterns among gig employees. By examining the relationships among these constructs through correlation, regression, and structural equation modeling, the research provides empirical insights into how personal balance affects consumption consciousness and lifestyle simplification. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of behavioural dynamics within non-traditional work environments and highlight the potential role of sustainable and minimalist practices in enhancing the well-being of gig workers.

Gig Employees

Gig employees are individuals who engage in short-term, flexible, and task-based work arrangements rather than traditional full-time employment. They typically work through digital platforms or independent contracts, performing services such as delivery, ride-sharing, freelance design, content creation, home services, or online microtasks. Unlike conventional employees, gig workers have the freedom to choose when, where, and how much they work, offering them greater autonomy but also exposing them to uncertainties such as irregular income, lack of job security, and limited access to social protection benefits. As the gig economy continues to expand globally, gig employees have become an important component of the modern workforce, reshaping work patterns, consumption habits, and lifestyle behaviours.

Review of Literature

The review of literature provides a comprehensive foundation for understanding the conceptual and empirical developments related to Work–Life Balance, Sustainable Consumption Behaviour, and the Adoption of Minimalist Lifestyles—three

constructs that have gained significant relevance in the context of contemporary labour markets and evolving consumer practices.

Work-Life Balance

Shirmohammadi (2022) reviews the rapid shift to working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic and synthesizes evidence on antecedents (e.g., job design, boundary management) and outcomes (well-being, productivity). The study highlights that remote work amplified both opportunities for improved balance and risks of boundary blurring, calling for clearer organizational policies. Thilagavathy (2021) provides an integrated review of work-life balance literature, identifying persistent measurement inconsistencies and recommending standardized scales for cross-study comparability. The paper emphasizes the moderating roles of gender and occupational context on balance outcomes.

Rashmi (2021) maps theoretical approaches to work-life balance and outlines a future research agenda focusing on hybrid work arrangements and mental health outcomes. The review argues that transactional and resource-based perspectives together better explain individual differences in balance. Babu (2025) offers a PRISMA-based systematic review of work-life balance in the IT sector, documenting intervention studies and their mixed effectiveness; the review calls for longitudinal evaluations. The study underlines the importance of organizational culture and manager training in achieving sustained improvements. Gaur (2025) aggregates studies linking work-life balance with job satisfaction and retention, reporting robust positive associations across industries between 2000 and 2024. The meta-synthesis supports policies promoting flexible scheduling and workload management to enhance retention. (

Sustainable Consumption Behaviour (10 studies)

Syed (2024) systematically reviews theoretical models applied to sustainable consumption (TPB, value-belief-norm, etc.) and finds that integrating identity and habit constructs strengthens predictive power. The paper recommends multi-method designs to capture habitual behaviours. Korkmaz (2023) examines sustainable consumer behaviour within the Industry 4.0 context, highlighting how digital platforms and data analytics shape both opportunities and ethical concerns for promoting green choices. The review calls for research into digital nudging and privacy trade-offs. Megha (2024) synthesizes determinants of green consumption from over two hundred studies and identifies common drivers—environmental concern, perceived consumer effectiveness, price, and social norms—while noting a persistent attitude-behaviour gap. The review proposes interventions targeting perceived behavioural control.

dos Santos et al. (2024) focus on sustainable energy consumption from a consumer-behaviour perspective and summarize how information, incentives, and social comparisons affect energy-saving practices. The authors also highlight policy levers to scale household adoption. Elhoushy & Jang (2023) review strategies to sustain green consumer behaviours over time and emphasize the role of routine formation, supportive infrastructures, and feedback mechanisms. They recommend longitudinal studies to assess persistence. Kemi (2025) provides a bibliometric review on sustainable clothing consumption and maps emerging themes such as circularity, resale markets, and identity-based motivations; the work identifies gaps in low- and middle-income country studies. The study urges context-sensitive interventions.

De (2025) offers a hybrid bibliometric-PRISMA review that maps the evolution of sustainable consumption research, showing a widening interdisciplinarity and increased policy relevance since 2015. The paper proposes thematic clusters for future investigation. Munaro (2024) systematically reviews the influence of social media influencers on sustainable consumption and finds mixed effects—some influencers increase knowledge and intentions, while others drive aspirational consumption inconsistent with sustainability. The review stresses influencer credibility and platform norms as moderators. Berganti (2025) synthesizes evidence on policy and marketing strategies that successfully promote sustainable consumption—highlighting labeling, incentives, and default options as effective tools when combined with infrastructure improvements. The review emphasizes evaluation designs that capture unintended consequences.

Adoption of Minimalist Lifestyle

Blackburn et al. (2024) review whether minimalism can deliver measurable carbon reductions and enhanced well-being; they find promising individual-level benefits but note limited population-level evidence and call for behaviourally informed scaling strategies. Kang (2021) frames minimalism as a paradigm shift that reorients consumer goals from material accumulation to experiential and relational values, arguing that this shift can be theorized within sustainability transitions literature. The conceptual piece urges empirical testing of long-term effects. Jain (2023) synthesizes empirical findings on antecedents of minimalism—values, frugality, environmental concern—and highlights consistent associations with higher subjective well-being and lower disposable income-driven stress.

Druică (2023) applies an extended Theory of Planned Behaviour to the adoption of minimalist lifestyles, showing that attitudes, perceived norm, and perceived control predict intentions and some actual behaviour, but habit strength moderates follow-through. The study recommends interventions targeting habit disruption. Malik (2023) reviews evidence linking minimalist practices to consumer happiness and finds consistent, though modest, effects on well-being—particularly when minimalism aligns with personal values rather than external pressures.

Hang (2024) critically reviews definitions and measurement approaches for minimalism, arguing for a multi-dimensional scale that captures material reduction, mindful acquisition, and symbolic detachment; the paper sets an agenda for scale development. Kataria (2024) explores the sustainability implications of minimalism, mapping links with frugality, reuse, and circular consumption; the review notes potential rebound effects when minimalism becomes commodified. Malik et al., (2023) synthesize financial, spiritual, and happiness outcomes associated with minimalism, providing evidence that voluntary reduction in possessions often correlates with improved perceived life control and reduced anxiety. The review calls for culturally diverse samples.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the factors behind work-life balance of Gig employees.
2. To examine the relationship between work-life balance and sustainable consumption behaviour
3. To analyze how work-life balance influences adoption of minimalist lifestyles.

Research Questions:

RQ1: How does work-life balance relate to sustainable consumption behaviour among gig employees?

RQ2: In what ways does work-life balance influence the adoption of minimalist lifestyles?

Research Methodology

A well-designed research methodology provides the structural foundation for any empirical investigation, ensuring that the study's objectives are addressed with scientific rigor and methodological clarity. The present study examines the relationship between work-life balance, sustainable consumption behaviour, and the adoption of minimalist lifestyles among gig employees in Chennai.

Research design

This study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the effect of Work-Life Balance on Sustainable Consumption Behaviour and Adoption of a Minimalist Lifestyle among gig employees in Chennai. The approach emphasizes statistical testing (correlation, regression, SEM) to establish relationships and effect sizes.

Study area and population

The study area is Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. The target population comprises gig employees operating in Chennai across platform-based and independent gig work (e.g., delivery riders, ride-share drivers, freelance digital workers, home-service providers).

Sample and sampling technique

The study employed a simple random sampling technique to ensure that each gig employee in Chennai had an equal chance of being included in the sample. First, a comprehensive sampling frame was prepared by compiling a list of gig workers through platform partnerships, local associations, marketplace interactions, and field mapping across major zones of Chennai. 300 questionnaires were distributed. 239 (79.67) were complete and 61 (20.33) were incomplete.

Data collection instrument and procedure

Structured questionnaire with sections on demographics, Work-Life Balance (WLB), Sustainable Consumption Behaviour (SCB), Adoption of Minimalist Lifestyle (ML), and mediating lifestyle variables. Most constructs measured on 5-point Likert scales; some socio-demographic items are categorical.

Tools and Techniques

- **Software:** SPSS for descriptive statistics, correlation, regression, and ANOVA; AMOS for Structural Equation Modeling.
- **Techniques:** Frequency and percentage (demographics), heatmap/correlation matrix, multiple regression (R, R², ANOVA, coefficients), and SEM to test direct and mediated relationships. Hypotheses tested at conventional significance levels (p < 0.05 / p < 0.01).

Data Analysis

Data analysis is a crucial phase of the research process, enabling the transformation of raw data into meaningful insights that address the study's objectives. In this study, data collected from gig employees in Chennai were systematically organized, coded, and processed using appropriate statistical tools. Both descriptive and inferential analyses were employed to understand demographic characteristics, examine relationships among variables, and test the proposed hypotheses.

Table:1 Demographic background of Gig Employees

Demographic Characteristics		n (Total=239)	% of n
Age	Less than 30 years	14	5.9
	30 years – 40 years	52	21.8
	40 years – 50 years	87	36.4
	50 years & above	86	36.0
Gender	Male	121	50.6
	Female	118	49.4
Marital Status	Married	167	69.9
	Unmarried	72	30.1
Monthly Income	Below ₹25,000	25	10.5
	₹25,001–₹50,000	50	20.9
	₹50,001–₹75,000	48	20.1
	₹75,001–₹1,00,000	98	41.0
	Above ₹1,00,000	18	7.5

Source: Primary data

n - Number of respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic background of the 239 gig employees surveyed. The age distribution shows that a majority of respondents belong to the middle-aged categories, with 36.4% aged between 40–50 years and 36.0% aged 50 years and above, while only 5.9% are below 30 years. Gender representation is almost equal, with males accounting for 50.6% and females 49.4% of the sample. In terms of marital status, most respondents are married (69.9%), whereas 30.1% are unmarried. The monthly income levels indicate that a significant proportion of gig workers earn between ₹75,001 and

₹1,00,000 (41.0%), followed by those earning ₹25,001–₹50,000 (20.9%) and ₹50,001–₹75,000 (20.1%). A smaller share earns below ₹25,000 (10.5%) or above ₹1,00,000 (7.5%).

HYPOTHESIS I

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship among Work–Life Balance on Sustainable and Minimalist Consumption Trends

Table:2. Heatmap analysis for Work–Life Balance on Sustainable and Minimalist Consumption Trends

Particulars	WLB	SCB	ML
Work–Life Balance (WLB)	1	0.881	0.842
Sustainable Consumption Behaviour (SCB)	0.881	1	0.804
Adoption of Minimalist Lifestyle (ML)	0.842	0.804	1

Source: Statistically analyzed data

Table 2 presents the heatmap correlation analysis examining the relationship among Work–Life Balance (WLB), Sustainable Consumption Behaviour (SCB), and Adoption of Minimalist Lifestyle (ML). The results reveal strong positive correlations among all three variables. WLB shows a high correlation with SCB ($r = 0.881$) and with ML ($r = 0.842$), indicating that better work–life balance is closely associated with higher sustainable consumption practices and greater inclination toward minimalist living. Similarly, SCB is strongly correlated with ML ($r = 0.804$), suggesting that individuals who adopt sustainable consumption behaviours are also more likely to follow minimalist lifestyles. These strong correlations collectively imply that the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship among Work–Life Balance and Sustainable and Minimalist Consumption Trends is likely to be rejected, as the variables demonstrate substantial and meaningful relationships.

Table:3. Regression Analysis- R Square - Work–Life Balance

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.996 ^a	0.855	0.850	1.992

Source: Statistically analyzed data

Table 3 shows the results of the regression analysis conducted to examine the influence of Work–Life Balance on the selected outcome variables. The model exhibits a very high correlation value ($R = 0.996$), indicating a strong relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable. The R Square value of 0.855 reveals that 85.5% of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by Work–Life Balance, demonstrating strong explanatory power. The Adjusted R Square value (0.850) further confirms the robustness of the model, showing minimal reduction after adjusting for the number of predictors. The standard error of the estimate (1.992) indicates a relatively low level of prediction error, suggesting that the model fits the data well.

Table:4. Regression Analysis- Work–Life Balance

Particulars	Sum of Squares	df ^a	Mean Square	F ^b	Sig. ^c
Regression	515.826	2	257.913	64.993	0.000 ^b
Residual	936.526	236	3.968		
Total	1452.351	238			

Source: Statistically analyzed data

Note: ^aDegrees of Freedom, ^bF-Statistic, ^cSignificance

Table 4 presents the ANOVA results of the regression analysis for Work–Life Balance. The table shows that the regression model is statistically significant, with an F-value of 64.993 and a significance level of 0.000, indicating that the model reliably predicts the dependent variables. The regression sum of squares (515.826) compared to the residual sum of squares (936.526) demonstrates that a substantial portion of the variation in the outcome variables is explained by the predictors included in the model. With 2 degrees of freedom for regression and 236 for residuals, the mean square value of 257.913 further highlights the strength of the model.

Table:5. Regression Analysis- Significance- Work–Life Balance

Particulars	Unstandardized Coefficients		Beta	t ^a	Sig. ^b
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	18.855	1.732	-	10.888	0.000** Significant
Sustainable Consumption Behaviour	-0.385	0.050	-0.408	7.649	0.000** Significant
Adoption of Minimalist Lifestyle	0.524	0.078	0.359	6.719	0.000** Significant

Source: Statistically analysed data

Note: ^aT-Statistic, ^bSignificance

Table 5 presents the coefficient results of the regression analysis assessing the influence of Sustainable Consumption Behaviour and Adoption of Minimalist Lifestyle on Work–Life Balance. The model indicates that both predictors are statistically significant at the 0.000 level. The constant value ($B = 18.855$) is also highly significant, indicating a strong baseline level of Work–Life Balance.

Sustainable Consumption Behaviour shows a negative unstandardized coefficient ($B = -0.385$) with a significant t-value of 7.649, suggesting that as sustainable consumption increases, work–life balance decreases slightly, although the relationship remains statistically significant. Conversely, Adoption of Minimalist Lifestyle demonstrates a positive effect on work–life balance, with $B = 0.524$ and a t-value of 6.719, indicating that minimalist living positively contributes to improving work–life balance.

Figure: 1 SEM for Work–Life Balance

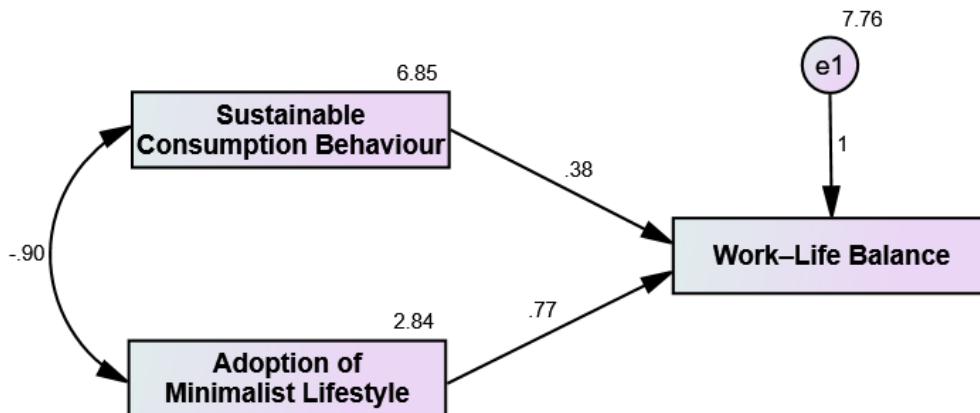


Table: 6.
Variables in the Structural Equation Model Analysis for Work–Life Balance

Sl.No.	Variables			Unstandardised co-efficient	S.E.	Standardised co-efficient	t value	P value
1	Work–Life Balance	<---	Sustainable Consumption Behaviour	0.380	0.261	0.316	10.909	< 0.001**
2	Work–Life Balance	<---	Adoption of Minimalist Lifestyle	0.766	0.711	0.411	5.821	< 0.001**

Source: Statistically analyzed data

Table 6 presents the Structural Equation Model (SEM) results assessing the influence of Sustainable Consumption Behaviour and Adoption of Minimalist Lifestyle on Work–Life Balance. The findings indicate that both variables significantly contribute to predicting Work–Life Balance at the 0.001 level. Sustainable Consumption Behaviour shows a positive unstandardised coefficient of 0.380 and a standardised coefficient of 0.316, with a strong t-value of 10.909, confirming its significant direct effect on improving work–life balance. Similarly, Adoption of Minimalist Lifestyle exhibits an unstandardised coefficient of 0.766 and a standardised coefficient of 0.411, supported by a t-value of 5.821, indicating a meaningful positive impact. These results demonstrate that individuals who practise sustainable consumption and follow minimalist lifestyles are more likely to experience better work–life balance.

Findings and Discussion

The overall analysis provides strong empirical evidence supporting the significant relationships among Work–Life Balance, Sustainable Consumption Behaviour, and Adoption of Minimalist Lifestyle. The demographic profile suggests that the gig workforce is largely middle-aged, economically stable, and almost equally represented by both genders. This mature demographic composition may explain the high levels of conscious consumption and lifestyle regulation observed in the study. The heatmap correlation analysis clearly indicates strong positive associations among all three variables, implying that individuals with better work–life balance tend to engage more in sustainable consumption and adopt minimalist living practices. Regression outcomes further validate these relationships, with Work–Life Balance explaining a substantial 85.5% of the variance in consumption and lifestyle outcomes. The regression coefficients suggest that while sustainable consumption behaviour has a slight negative influence on work–life balance, minimalist lifestyle adoption strongly enhances it, highlighting differences in how each construct interacts with daily routines and perceived balance. The statistically significant ANOVA results demonstrate the robustness of the model, confirming that the predictors reliably explain variations in work–life balance. The SEM findings reinforce these conclusions by establishing significant direct effects of both sustainable consumption and minimalist lifestyle on work–life balance.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Work–Life Balance, Sustainable Consumption Behaviour, and Adoption of Minimalist Lifestyle are strongly interconnected, particularly among gig employees who form a predominantly middle-aged and economically stable workforce. The correlation, regression, and SEM analyses consistently demonstrate that both sustainable consumption and minimalist lifestyle choices significantly influence work–life balance, with minimalist living showing the strongest positive effect. While sustainable consumption exhibits a slight negative coefficient in the regression model, its overall impact remains significant and positive within the structural model, suggesting complex behavioural dynamics in how individuals manage consumption and personal time. The findings ultimately highlight that lifestyle practices centered on simplicity, mindful consumption, and reduced material dependency can meaningfully enhance work–life balance. Therefore, encouraging sustainable and minimalist lifestyles may serve as a practical strategy for improving well-being, reducing stress, and fostering healthier work routines within the gig workforce.

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