

# STUDYING WORK–LIFE BALANCE OF FEMALE FACULTY IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ISSUES, STRATEGIES, AND CHALLENGES IN CHENNAI DISTRICT

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## ABSTRACT

The issue of work-life balance has risen to the forefront for female college teachers owing to their expanding professional duties and personal commitments. Thus, this research intends to investigate the difficulties of the female faculty members concerning the work-life balance issue, the techniques they resort to, and the amount of institutional support they receive. A total of 150 female faculty members participated in the research and a structured questionnaire was used to gather the data. The data analysis involved the application of various statistical methods such as mean rank analysis, Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance, and the Kruskal–Wallis test. The results indicate that even though a few flexible work arrangements and coping mechanisms are available, still a good number of the respondents' report feeling stressed, burnt out, and have a hard time separating work from personal life after work hours. On the entire, the regular level of happiness with work-life balance is on the lower side and the moderate side. The research signifies the urgency for better institutional policies and support systems that can effectively elevate the well-being of the female teaching staff.



## 1. Introduction

Work-life balance has been a highly discussed topic recently, especially in the context of women's professions. Women college teachers usually perform multiple roles they manage the academic side of their lives, as well as their families and personal things. A large amount of work, administrative duties, and high expectations all add up resulting in more stress and less time for personal life. A balanced work-life schedule is necessary as it is the primary factor influencing mental health, job satisfaction, and professional productivity. The study will focus on the working lives of women teaching staff in Higher education, the difficulties they encountered, and the support systems they managed to tap into.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

- To examine the level of stress and exhaustion experienced by female faculty.
- To study the coping plans adopted by female teaching staff.

## 3. Scope of the Study

The study's reach is restricted to the lady professors only who work in colleges of higher education. Their perceptions and experiences regarding work-life balance, occupational stress, coping strategies, and the level of available organizational support are the main aspects examined by the study. The study considers the academic responsibilities of teaching, lesson planning, evaluation, research activities, administrative duties, and student mentoring, in addition to the personal well-being and family responsibilities.

Male faculty members, non-teaching staff, and employees from other educational levels like schools or universities are not considered in the research. Moreover, the findings are confined to the chosen sample and geographical area, hence cannot be applied to all educational institutions. The study relies on self-reported data that mirror the respondents' personal experiences and perceptions. In spite of the limitations, the research sheds light on the work-life balance difficulties encountered by female teaching staff of similar institutions.



#### **4. Significance of the Study**

The study's importance stems from its help in the comprehension of the work-life balance difficulties suffered by the female academic staff in higher education. Teachers are often caught up in multiple roles, and they have to share their time among the academic duties, family and personal engagements which could lead to stress and burnout. The study, by pinpointing the major stressors and coping methods, gets an insight into the ways female teachers confront the challenges.

The study's results can make a considerable impact on the college management, administrators, and the policymakers with the proper support systems such as flexible work hours, and the regulations on workloads, and also mental health and wellness programs. Better organizational support can lead to job satisfaction, less stress, and finally, an overall improvement in teaching effectiveness. Moreover, the promotion of a good work-life balance for female academic staff can result in a lower turnover rate, higher productivity, and a favourable institutional atmosphere. Also, the research constitutes a valuable source for future work-life balance studies in the education sector.

#### **5. Research Methodology**

- Research Design: A descriptive research design was chosen
- Sample Size: 150 women teaching staff
- Sampling Technique: Convenience sampling
- Data Collection: The primary data was gathered through a structured questionnaire

#### **6. Limitations of the Study**

- The study had a small sample of 150 respondents, which might not represent the whole female teaching staff.
- The process of data collection was through self-reported questionnaires which may introduce personal bias.



- The researchers carried out the study in a few colleges only which has limited the scope of findings generalization.
- Time constraint made the researchers agree on a less comprehensive qualitative analysis.
- The research focuses on female teaching staff and does not compare with male faculty.

## 7. Analysis

To examine the level of stress and burnout experienced by female faculty, for this objective to test the stress and burnout experience to balance the work life

### Kendall's Test

Ranks	
	Mean Rank
Satisfaction level	6.19
My organization offers flexible work hours.	7.09
I have the option to work remotely when needed.	9.24
My employer provides support for personal or family commitments.	8.36
I feel encouraged to take time off for personal well-being.	8.81
The workload I experience allows me to maintain a healthy work-life balance.	9.12
I often feel stressed due to my job responsibilities.	8.30
I have difficulty disconnecting from work after hours.	9.40
I experience burnout from my work-related tasks.	8.96



My work-related stress negatively impacts my personal life.	7.63
I have coping mechanisms in place to deal with work-related stress.	8.79
I feel satisfied with my overall work-life balance.	8.86
I believe my mental health is positively affected by my work environment.	9.08
I feel supported by my employer in maintaining my well-being.	8.62
I engage in self-care practices regularly.	9.04
I have a strong support network outside of work.	8.51

Mean rank results have revealed that the female faculty members are going through different levels of working from home. The overall satisfaction level has received the least mean rank (6.19) which implies that the participants are more or less not satisfied with the working conditions at home and their balances. Increment in the mean ranks of the categories of being unable to disconnect from work after hours (9.40), workload negatively impacting work–life balance (9.12), and burnout (8.96) imply that a significant number of the respondents consider themselves overburdened and the job is mentally presenting to them even after normal working hours. The thing about flexible working is related to the remote work (9.24) and off-timing (7.09) that were so to speak little the offering is not enough to alleviate the tensions. To this extent the average scores of the total support from the employers which includes support related to family commitments (8.36) and inducing to take leave (8.81), reflect that the organization is partially supportive. The respondents also indicate that they utilize coping skills (8.79), self-care habits (9.04), and support systems outside work (8.51) as strategies to mitigate stress. Female teaching staff while some support and coping strategies are available still go through stress, burnout, and problems with the work–life balance. This points out the necessity for better institutional support and workload management.



Test Statistics	
N	150
Kendall's W <sup>a</sup>	.035
Chi-Square	78.996
Df	15
Asymp. Sig.	.000
a. Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance	

To investigate the level of consensus among the respondents about the factors that influence worklife balance, Kendall's W coefficient of concordance was calculated. The derived value of W is 0.035, which denotes that there is very little agreement between the respondents. Consequently, it can be inferred that the women's teaching staff have different views and experiences with regard

to work–life balance, stress, and support from the organization.

(Kendall's W) also indicates that the Chi-square value of 78.996 with 15 degrees of freedom is  $p = 0.000$ , which is a very low probability that the rankings' differences might exist only by chance, hence the substantial claim about the variation of respondents' perceptions of the work–life balance issues and the support systems.

### Kruskal Wallis Test

To study the coping strategies adopted by female teaching staff, in this test analyse the work life challenges and work life balance.

WLC1- Long time working, limited family take care.

WLC2- Physical health, Mental health, Overall wellbeing

WLC 3 -Burnout, Negligence to health

### Kruskal Wallis Test

Ranks			
	Work life balance	N	Mean Rank
WLC 1	Very Easy	10	80.85
	Easy	54	72.66
	Ok	67	77.19
	Vey Difficult	19	74.82
	Total	150	



WLC 2	Very Easy	10	88.40
	Easy	54	80.13
	Ok	67	68.14
	Vey Difficult	19	81.50
	Total	150	
WLC 3	Very Easy	10	63.95
	Easy	54	80.62
	Ok	67	74.28
	Vey Difficult	19	71.34
	Total	150	

The analysis based on mean ranks revealed a disparity in the employees' views of the work-life balance concerning the difficulties experienced at various levels.

In the case of WLC 1, the group of people who considered work-life balance “Very Easy” is the one with the highest mean rank (80.85), while the group that considered it “Ok” is following with a mean rank of 77.19. The ranks of people who found work-life balance “Easy” (72.66) and “Very Difficult” (74.82) are comparatively lower. This reveals that those who consider working life as very easy are more prone to WLC 1 related positive outcomes.

Also in WLC 2, “Very Easy” category again presents the highest mean rank (88.40), following “Very Difficult” (81.50) and “Easy” (80.13). The “Ok” category has the lowest mean rank (68.14), implying that the respondents who are neutral regarding their work-life balance don't experience many of the positive aspects connected with WLC 2.

The mean ranks (grades) of the three categories are: for the “Easy” (80.62) the highest and for the “Very Easy” (63.95) the lowest. The ranks for the “Ok” (74.28) and “Very Difficult” (71.34) are in between indicating the differing views of the respondents.



The outcomes signify that the opinions about the work–life balance are not the same when comparing the difficulty levels and the three WLC dimensions. Those respondents who believe in an easier work–life balance, on average, have higher ranks, but the pattern changes from WLC 1, through WLC 2, to WLC 3, thus reflecting the intricacy of the work–life balance among the female teaching staff.

Test Statistics <sup>a,b</sup>			
	WLC 1	WLC 2	WLC 3
Chi-Square	.531	4.302	1.814
Df	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.912	.231	.612
a. Kruskal Wallis Test			
b. Grouping Variable: Work life balance			

The Kruskal–Wallis test was applied in order to determine the impact of the different levels of work–life balance (Very Easy, Easy, Ok, Very Difficult) on WLC 1, WLC 2, and WLC 3. For WLC 1, a Chi-square value of 0.531 was obtained along with 3 degrees of freedom, and the final result was not statistically significant with a p-value of 0.912. This suggests that WLC 1 is not significantly

different among the various work–life balance groups.

Likewise, for WLC 2, a Chi-square value of 4.302 was obtained with 3 degrees of freedom, and the final result was non-significant with  $p = 0.231$ . This indicates that the perceptions associated with WLC 2 do not show significant variation among the work–life balance categories.

For WLC 3, a Chi-square value of 1.814 was obtained with 3 degrees of freedom, which is also non-significant statistically with  $p = 0.612$ . This indicates that group differences regarding WLC 3 are not significant.

The findings indicate that WLC 1, WLC 2 and WLC 3 have been unaffected significantly by the categories of work–life balance. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted which means that the female teaching staff has the same experiences in these aspects no matter how easy or difficult they perceive their work–life balance to be.

## 8. Findings

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The research looked into the issue of work–life balance in the case of female teaching staff in colleges. The results indicate that the average satisfaction with work–life balance is quite low, although some flexibility and support systems have been put in place. The majority of the respondents pointed out that they would not be able to completely disconnect from work after hours, and that they were feeling stressed and even burnt out as a result of their high workload.

The average rank results suggest that stress-related issues and workload problems are more noticeable than satisfaction-related aspects. Even if the respondents try to take care of themselves and employ coping techniques, this is still not enough to completely handle the stress coming from work.

Using Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance, a very low level of unanimity among the participants has been revealed, implying that work–life balance experiences of female teaching staff are drastically different. The results from the Kruskal–Wallis test demonstrated that there were no significant differences in WLC 1, WLC 2, and WLC 3 among the different work–life balance categories, which suggests that difficulties are prevalent in all groups, regardless of the extent to which they find the balance between work and life easy or hard.

## **9. Suggestions**

### **Workload Management**

Higher education institutions ought to distribute teaching, administration, and other duties in a just manner so that the load on staff is lessened and the risk of burnout is minimized.

### **Mental Health and Well-being Support**

Teaching staff should have access to counselling services, relaxation training, and wellness workshops that are either newly introduced or made more potent.

### **Encouraging WorkLife Boundaries**

It is necessary to lay down firm rules for work-related communication outside of business hours with a view to enhancing the quality of personal time.

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## Institutional Support for Family Responsibilities

The support systems consisting of flexible leaves, subsidized childcare, and patience from the management should be strengthened.

## 10. Conclusion

The study reveals that female college instructors are facing a lot of issues which make it hard for them to have a work-life balance. Stress and burnout are largely caused by heavy workload, strict academic timetables, administrative tasks, and not able to draw a line between work and personal life. Faculty use some coping strategies like time management, peer support, and personal resilience, and there are some institutional measures to support, but often, these are not enough to deal with properly the dual roles of the faculty.

The discovery reiterates that work-life balance difficulties are prevalent within the entire female teaching staff rather than confined to a few individuals. This serves as a strong signal for colleges to craft policies that are comprehensive, inclusive, and gender-sensitive across the board, and which push the well-being of employees front. Such policies may consist of flexible job options, shifting of workloads, mental health support programs, and professional development opportunities along with a friendly organizational culture that admires work-life integration.

A special attention to work-life issue has costly implications not only for individual wellness but also for whole faculty. Professor happy staff, less stressed employees, better motivated personal, and higher teaching quality in general are among the positive outcomes of the work-life balance. Besides, by tackling these issues, the schools could create a workplace that is more conducive, thus bringing about faculty retention and the strengthening of institutional performance and quality of education. Therefore, it is not only women faculty that benefit from the promotion of a sustainable work-life balance but also the overall higher education ecosystem and the long-term viability of colleges.



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