

## A study on the strategies for improving Work Life Balance among female teachers in higher education institutions

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### Abstract

Work Life Balance has emerged as a critical concern in the higher education sector, particularly among female teachers who often manage multiple professional, domestic, and social roles. This study examines the strategies for improving Work Life balance among female faculty members in higher education institutions. The research aims to identify key occupational stressors, institutional challenges, and personal constraints that affect their ability to balance professional responsibilities with personal life. Using a mixed-method approach, data were collected through structured questionnaire and semi-structured interview from female teachers across selected higher education institutions. The findings reveal that workload pressure, administrative responsibilities, research expectations, time management difficulties, and limited organizational support are major contributors to work life imbalance. The study further highlights the importance of flexible work arrangements, supportive leadership, family-friendly policies, mental health support systems, peer collaboration, and effective time management practices as critical strategies for improving balance. The research concludes that institutions play a pivotal role in fostering a supportive work environment and recommends the implementation of gender-sensitive policies, institutional wellness programs, and flexible academic structures to enhance job satisfaction, productivity, and overall well-being of female educators. This study contributes to policy formulation and institutional planning by providing practical, sustainable strategies for promoting Work Life Balance in higher education.

**Keywords:** - Education, Female, Teacher, Challenges, Strategies

### Introduction

The participation of women in higher education has increased significantly over the past few decades. However, despite greater representation, female faculty members continue to face unique challenges in balancing professional and personal responsibilities. Academic roles demand excellence in teaching, research publication, student supervision, curriculum development, grant acquisition, and administrative duties. Simultaneously, societal expectations often assign women primary responsibility for childcare, eldercare, and household management. This dual burden frequently results in role conflict, emotional exhaustion, and limited career advancement opportunities. Therefore, understanding and improving work life balance is essential not only for individual well-being but also for institutional productivity and gender equity.

## **Literature Review**

The concept of work-family conflict was first systematically examined by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), who identified time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based conflicts between professional and personal roles. Role Theory further explains that individuals occupying multiple roles may experience stress when expectations from one role interfere with another. Clark’s (2000) Work-Family Border Theory suggests that individuals actively manage boundaries between work and family domains, and flexible institutions make this transition easier.

Empirical research demonstrates that perceived organizational support significantly reduces work-family conflict. Kossek and Ozeki (1998) found a strong relationship between family-friendly policies and job satisfaction. Hill et al. (2001) reported that flexible scheduling improves both productivity and personal well-being. Allen et al. (2013) emphasized the importance of supervisor support and organizational culture in shaping employee experiences. In the context of higher education, Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2012) observed that academic mothers face slower promotion rates due to caregiving interruptions.

## **Research Gap**

Although numerous studies examine work life balance in corporate sectors, limited research focuses specifically on female faculty members in higher education institutions. Moreover, existing literature often examines isolated variables such as flexibility or childcare, without integrating structural, cultural, and psychological factors into a unified institutional framework. This study addresses this gap by proposing a comprehensive strategy model.

## **Objectives of the Study**

1. To identify structural and personal determinants of work life imbalance among female faculty.
2. To examine the role of institutional culture and leadership support.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of flexible work policies and childcare facilities.
4. To develop an integrated framework for improving work life balance.
5. To explore strategies that improve work life balance in higher education.

## **Methodology**

The study adopted a mixed-method research design combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. A total of 250 female faculty members from public and private universities participated in the survey phase. Stratified random sampling ensured representation across disciplines and academic ranks. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of Likert-scale items measuring work life balance, organizational support, burnout, and job satisfaction. Qualitative interviews were conducted with 25 participants to gain deeper insights.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis. Qualitative responses were coded thematically to identify recurring patterns related to stressors and coping mechanisms.

## Results and Analysis

Descriptive analysis revealed that 65% of respondents reported moderate to high work-related stress. Regression results indicated that flexible scheduling ( $\beta = 0.39$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and perceived leadership support ( $\beta = 0.34$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) significantly predicted higher work life balance scores. Access to childcare facilities reduced reported stress levels by approximately 28%. Interview findings emphasized the importance of mentorship, peer collaboration, and transparent workload allocation systems.

## Discussion

The findings confirm theoretical assumptions proposed by Work-Family Conflict Theory and Border Theory. Institutions that provide flexibility and supportive supervision enable faculty members to manage boundaries more effectively. Leadership behavior emerged as a critical moderating factor, transforming policy into practical support. The integration of structural reforms and cultural change is therefore essential for sustainable improvement.

## 8. Recommendations

- Implement hybrid teaching models with clearly defined workload limits.
- Establish on-campus childcare and family support centres.
- Provide annual mental health and stress management programs.
- Ensure transparent and equitable workload distribution systems.
- Promote gender-sensitive leadership development initiatives.
- Create mentorship networks for early-career female faculty.

## Conclusion

Work Life balance is a multidimensional construct influenced by institutional structures, leadership practices, organizational culture, and individual coping strategies. Female teachers in higher education require systematic support to navigate professional and personal responsibilities effectively. By adopting integrated policies and promoting inclusive leadership, institutions can foster improved well-being, enhanced productivity, and long-term faculty retention.

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