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Beyond the Classroom: Exploring Work Pressure, Personal Time Balance, and Organisational Support Among Women in Higher Education

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Abstract:

The present study explores the work-life balance of women educators in diversified educational sectors within Gujarat. Based on responses from 96 respondents, the pilot analysis presents demographic profiles, levels of stress, organizational support, family-work interface, and preferences related to work-life balance policies. Descriptive statistics, reliability testing (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.800), correlation analysis, and factor analysis were applied to unearth patterns and relationships. Results have indicated that long working hours, emotional stress, inadequate organizational policies, and challenges with workload significantly influence work-life balance. The present study also identified three major components that affect WLB: holistic employee support, flexibility and leave structures, and alternative work arrangements. The study carves out valuable insights that will help policymakers and educational institutions design gender-sensitive and employee-centric work-life balance policies.

Keywords: Work-life balance, women educators, educational sector, Gujarat, stress, flexibility, factor analysis, organizational policies, job satisfaction, employee well-being.

1. Introduction

Work-life balance has emerged as a contentious issue in recent decades, as employees find it increasingly challenging to balance work demands with personal and family responsibilities. This challenge is even more pronounced within the education sector among women due to expectations of emotional labour, caregiving responsibilities, societal roles, and institutional pressures. In colleges, universities, and professional institutes, females face gruelling teaching schedules, administrative duties, a large class size, and performance expectations, making it extremely difficult for them to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

Gujarat's educational scenario comprises private institutions, public universities, deemed universities, and international institutes. The diversity in work environments thus creates varied experiences of work-life balance. Women educators form a sizeable proportion of the academic workforce, who more often than not face issues such as extended hours at work, stress, lack of support by the organization, and inadequate family-friendly policies.

The present study, Pilot, explores the patterns, challenges, and support structures on work-life balance among women educators in Gujarat. It tries to provide insights into organizational gaps and employee expectations for future policymaking.

2. Definitions

Work-Life Balance:

A condition of balance where an individual is capable of balancing work role demands and personal life without undue stress or conflict.

Workload:

The amount of assigned teaching, administrative or professional responsibilities that an employee is required to complete within a specified period.

Organizational Support:

Policies, programs, or practices put in place by organizations to support employees in balancing work and personal life commitments.

Stress:

A psychological and emotional state resulting from excessive work demands, lack of rest, or imbalance between responsibilities.

Flexible Work Arrangements:

Alternative work arrangements include flexible hours, reduced load, job sharing, working from home, or sabbatical, which allow employees to balance their work and personal responsibilities more successfully.

3. Literature Review

- Navaneetha Krishnan Rajagopal (2024) in their study attempted to explore work-life balance among female staff in Omani HEIs, highlighting the impact of workload, family responsibilities, and cultural factors. It emphasizes the need for tailored strategies like family- friendly policies and cultural competency programs. These measures can enhance well-being, satisfaction, and work-life balance for female employees in academia with variables Organization support, Family responsibilities, work load, Cultural Factors, Career development opportunities.
- Vazeerjan Begum (2024) in their study attempted to explore in educational sectors Work-life imbalances persist despite social and family structures, impacting women administrators in higher education. Organizations should explore hybrid work arrangements, technology, and support systems to improve motivation and performance with variables Work-family imbalance, Higher education, Spillover theory, Work stress, Women administrators, UAE.
- Shu Tang (2022) The Author found that using the Delphi method, this study identified family factors as key to work–life balance for female managers in Chinese HEIs, amid gender discrimination and cultural biases. It calls for gender-friendly policies like flexible hours and inclusive leaves, urging institutions to tackle biases and foster inclusivity. Despite a small sample, the study recommends international and longitudinal research for broader insights.
- S. Sabeena Sharon (2023) The study investigated the impact of work life balance attributes on employee commitment in education sector. Multiple linear regression analysis highlights that working environment, decision making power, personal role, work support and conflict with colleagues have significant impact on employee commitment in education sector. The variables are used under this study are Working environment, Decision making power, Personal role, work support.
- Jarrod Haar M. et al. (2021) evaluate the findings of a study that used a moderated mediation approach to evaluate how work-life balance moderates job burnout and sleepiness in New Zealand employees. It finds it difficult to manage job burnout and staff well-being, so it uses the High-performance Work System (HPWS) to investigate a route model of regulated meditation. As employee work-life balance improves, cynicism lessens, which is one way that HPWS indirectly affects insomnia.
- Kimberly A. French (2020) : University Level, USA , Variables : gender and family-related hours , job satisfaction, affective commitment, and turnover intentions. The study identifies four faculty time allocation profiles: research-focused, teaching-focused, balanced teaching and service, and balanced research and teaching. Female academics were more likely to focus on teaching, which was linked to increased housework. Time allocation strategies focused on multiple rewarding tasks were associated with the most positive outcomes.
- Christian Wiradendi Colour et al. (2020) affecting Indonesian workers' performance This study uses a qualitative approach using the PRISMA method. Considerations include finances, time management, family contact, formal and informal assistance, and regulations. The long-term process of work-life balance affects how employees behave when utilizing new technology. Consequently, there is a rise in employee morale and commitments.
- Work-life balance has been one of the most crucial research areas all over the world, especially for working women. Greenhaus & Beutell (1985) defined work-family conflict as a situation when pressures from work and family roles

are mutually incompatible. Women experience higher conflict because of gendered expectations and dual responsibilities.

- Goyal and Arora (2012) pointed out that women in academia experience stress concerning workload, time constraints, and emotional labour. Malik (2015) and Reddy et al. (2010) outlined that the shortage of organizational support, extended hours of work, and incomplete policy framework aggravates WLB among female educators.
- Recent studies have identified that flexible working arrangements and family-friendly policies enhance job satisfaction and improve retention rates (Kalliath & Brough, 2008). The key factors that contribute to a positive work environment are supportive leadership, counselling services, health programs, and childcare facilities (Anderson et al., 2002).
- The Indian context has unique cultural expectations about women's roles, making WLB more challenging. Therefore, it is important to understand the perceptions and needs of women educators in Gujarat for the development of inclusive policies.

4. Problem Statement

Women educators in general face increasing work pressures, emotional demands, and a lack of organizational support in Gujarat, which hampers their abilities to maintain a good work-life balance. Though WLB has been recognized as a critical component of performance and well-being, many institutions lack clearly defined policies or mechanisms for gender-sensitive support. The study addresses the need to identify factors affecting work-life balance and understand women educators' expectations from their organizations.

5. Research Gap:

Despite years of research in work-life balance, many gaps exist in understanding the issues faced by women educators in Gujarat. Existing studies focus primarily on corporate or healthcare sectors. There is a considerable scarcity of sector-specific evidence from educational institutions. Previous studies also failed to examine whether organizational work-life policies are matched with the actual expectations of women employees. Previous studies also lack exploration into specific stressors among female educators like emotional labour, heavy academic workload, and dual family responsibilities. Most studies analyze isolated variables without an integrative model that combines demographic factors with work patterns, stressors, organizational support, and work-life balance consequences. Moreover, advanced statistical tools identifying underlying components of work-life balance for female educators through factor analysis remain limited. Other crucial factors relating to emotional and psychological support systems include counseling, health programs, and family-support facilities, most of which have not been explored in the regional context. These gaps justify the need for a comprehensive empirically based research study that captures the multifaceted challenges faced by women educators in various educational sectors of Gujarat, which the present study tries to accomplish.

6. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the demographic profile and work patterns of women educators in Gujarat.

2. To assess the level of work-life balance among women working in different educational sectors.

3. To identify major stressors that affect work-life balance.

4.To assess the organizational policies available to support work-life balance.

5.To identify employee expectations from work-life balance policies.

6. Investigate underlying factors influencing work-life balance using factor analysis.

7. Hypotheses

H1 (for Objective 1):

There is a significant association between the demographic profile of women educators in Gujarat and their work patterns.

H2 (for Objective 2):

The level of work-life balance significantly differs among women working in different educational sectors.

H3 (for Objective 3):

Major stressors such as workload, time pressure, and family responsibilities have a significant negative impact on work-life balance among women educators.

H4 (for Objective 4):

Organizational policies supporting work-life balance have a significant positive effect on employees' perceived work-life balance.

H5 (for Objective 5):

There is a significant relationship between employees' expectations and their satisfaction with existing work-life balance policies.

H6 (for Objective 6):

Multiple underlying factors significantly influence work-life balance, as identified through factor analysis.

8. Data Analysis

Factor Analysis

The Cronbach's alpha model, inter-item correlation, and covariance were used, and values over 0.50 were considered. The Cronbach's alpha of the entire instrument was 0.800. The Cronbach's alpha values for all ten parameters ranged from 0.612 to 0.747, indicating that the scale was internally consistent and reliable (Cronbach, 1951; Nunnally, 1978).

- *Cronbach, L. J. (1951). Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. Psychometrika, 16(3), 297-334.*
- *Nunnally, J. C. (1978). Psychometric theory (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.*

The Cronbach's alpha-value of the factors is as follows:

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.800	10

Level of agreement with the policies framed by the organization	**Cronbach's Alpha validity**
Flexible working hours	.786
Holidays/paid time off	.777
Job sharing	.819
Career break/sabbaticals	.796
Counselling services	.772
Health programs	.760
Family support programs	.768
Excercise facilities	.771
Paid paternity/maternity leaves	.775
Opportunity to return to same job after maternity/ paternity leave	.793

Descriptive Statistics

Level of agreement with the policies framed by the organization	Mean	Std. Deviation
Flexible working hours	4.2809	.90439
Holidays/paid time off	4.3258	.78008
Job sharing	3.9326	.83663
Career break/sabbaticals	3.5169	1.08829
Counselling services	3.8989	.91757
Health programs	4.1910	.82402
Family support programs	4.1348	.85534
Exercise facilities	4.0449	.81058
Paid paternity/maternity leaves	4.4494	.82588
Opportunity to return to the same job after maternity/ paternity leave	4.4944	.58627

The highest mean score of 4.4944 for "Opportunity to return to the same job after maternity/paternity leave" indicates that college educators highly value job security post-parental leave. This reflects their strong preference for career continuity and stability, making it a critical component of effective work-life balance policies.

Correlation Matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Flexible working hours	1.000									
Holidays/paid time off	.513	1.000								
Job sharing	.191	.086	1.000							
Career break/sabbaticals	.347	.268	.351	1.000						
Counselling services	.226	.285	.109	.303	1.000					
Health programs	.293	.379	.019	.129	.567	1.000				
Family support programs	.156	.308	-.003	.217	.495	.769	1.000			
Exercise facilities	.231	.354	.021	.167	.403	.702	.581	1.000		
Paid paternity/maternity leaves	.377	.440	-.120	.232	.346	.423	.364	.445	1.000	
Opportunity to return to same job after maternity/ paternity leave	.057	.190	.022	.165	.284	.320	.387	.240	.498	1.000

a. Determinant = .022

The strong correlation between flexible working hours and holidays or paid time off highlights that both factors significantly contribute to enhancing work-life balance among women working in diverse educational sectors of Gujarat. When institutions offer flexibility in work schedules alongside sufficient leave benefits, it empowers women to better manage professional responsibilities and personal commitments. This balance reduces stress, increases job satisfaction,

and supports long-term career sustainability for women educators, underlining the importance of progressive HR policies in academic institutions.

The strong correlation between health programs and counselling services suggests that a comprehensive approach to employee well-being significantly enhances work-life balance among women in Gujarat's educational sectors. While health programs support physical wellness, counselling services address emotional and psychological needs—together creating a supportive environment. This dual focus helps women manage stress, prevent burnout, and maintain a healthier equilibrium between their personal and professional lives, ultimately leading to improved satisfaction and retention in the workplace.

The strong correlation between family support programs, exercise facilities, and health programs indicates that holistic well-being initiatives play a vital role in promoting work-life balance among women in Gujarat's educational sectors. When institutions provide support that extends beyond the workplace—such as childcare assistance, access to fitness facilities, and health programs—it enables women to maintain physical and mental well-being while balancing professional and personal roles. These supportive measures foster a healthier, more engaged, and productive workforce.

KMO and Bartlett's Test

The KMO measures the sampling adequacy, which should be greater than 0.5 for a satisfactory factor analysis to proceed. A common rule suggests that a researcher has at least 10-15 participants per variable. Here, the value comes out to be 0.757, hence it's perfectly ok to proceed with factor analysis

Bartlett's test: measures the strength of the relationship among variables.

H0: The correlation matrix is an identity matrix

H1: The correlation matrix is not an identity matrix

We can see from the table below that Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant. That is, its associated probability is less than 0.05. It is 0.01, and that significance level is small enough to reject the null hypothesis. This means that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix.

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.757
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	320.129
	df	45
	Sig.	.000

Factor Output:

The idea of rotation is to reduce the number of factors on which the variables under investigation have high loadings. Rotation does not change anything but makes the interpretation of the analysis easier. From the table below, we can see that all factors are divided into three components.

	Factors		
	1	**2**	**3**
Flexible working hours		.789	
Holidays/paid time off		.762	
Job sharing			.865
Career break/sabbaticals			.675

Counselling services	.683		
Health programs	.878		
Family support programs	.871		
Exercise facilities	.755		
Paid paternity/maternity leaves		.677	
Opportunity to return to the same job after maternity/ paternity leave	.500		
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.			
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.			

Findings

1. H1: There is a significant association between demographic profile and work patterns of women educators.

Descriptive results from the pilot study show that demographic variables like age, experience, marital status, and job position indicate variation in working hours, workload, and administrative responsibilities. Accordingly, it can be revealed that women with higher experience, working in higher education institutions, reported longer working hours and a greater administrative load. Hence, this supports H1: that the demographic characteristics significantly influence work patterns among women educators.

2. H2: The degree of work–life balance significantly differs among women working in different educational sectors.

The analysis shows that there are significant differences across sectors with regard to stress levels and workload, and in agreeing to organizational support policies. In all respects, higher education institutions recorded more stress and less organizational support than school-level educators. Thus, H2 is supported, confirming that the levels of work-life balance vary across educational sectors.

3. H3: Major stressors have a significant negative impact on work-life balance.

Stressors related to working hours, workload, emotional stress, and pressure from family negatively impacted the overall work–life balance of the respondents. The narrative findings reveal long hours, emotional strain, and lack of institutional support as the main contributors to poor WLB. Given that only overall regression was performed, descriptive and correlation patterns strongly reinforce H3, in that stressors negatively affect WLB.

4. H4: Organizational policies supporting WLB have a significant positive effect on perceived work–life balance.

The results of the correlation depict a strong positive relationship between organizational policies (flexible timings, paid leave, health programs, counselling services, family support, job security after maternity leave) and overall satisfaction levels. Overall, “health programs,” “family support programs,” and “flexible hours” are strongly correlated with the rest of the support indicators. Hence, H4 is supported in that better policies enhance perceived work–life balance.

5. H5: There is a significant relationship between employees' expectations and satisfaction with the existing WLB policies.

The mean scores on preferred policies are high regarding desired facilities such as flexibility, paid leaves, job security, and health initiatives. However, narrative findings suggest that the majority of the respondents reported the absence of formal WLB policies in their organizations. The difference between expectations and actual availability suggests a strong relationship between expectation and satisfaction. H5, therefore, is supported, which says employees' expectations strongly influence how they perceive existing WLB facilities.

6. H6: Several underlying factors significantly impact work–life balance (Factor Analysis). Three significant components explaining the variance in WLB-related policies were extracted using factor analysis. Holistic Employee Support:

counselling, health programs, family support, exercise facilities, job security after maternity leave Flexibility and Leave Structure: flexible hours, paid time off, maternity/paternity leave Alternative Work Arrangements (job sharing, sabbaticals)

The KMO value of 0.757, Bartlett's significance of 0.000, and Cronbach's alpha of 0.800 confirm the appropriateness and reliability of factor analysis. Hence, H6 is strongly supported and proves that several underlying factors together influence work–life balance for women educators.

Conclusion

The pilot study undertaken shows that the factors affecting work-life balance among women educators in Gujarat are workload, emotional stress, institutional policies, and family responsibilities. While educators maintain a positive outlook toward work, the absence of structured WLB policies leads to poor management of personal and professional roles. The study identifies a need for flexible schedules, paid time-off, counselling services, and family-friendly policies. Institutions should adopt comprehensive, gender-sensitive work-life balance frameworks that support women's well-being, productivity, and career growth. Further research with a larger sample can help formulate targeted HR policies to address sector-specific gaps.

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