



Work-Life Balance of Educators in Aided and Unaided Arts and Science Colleges: Evidence from Kannur District

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the work-life balance (WLB) of educators employed in both aided and unaided arts and science colleges in Kannur District, Kerala. The equilibrium between work and personal life has emerged as a significant area of inquiry in higher education, as educators encounter escalating pressures from institutional obligations and personal commitments. The study seeks to evaluate the balance between professional and personal obligations among academics and to discover the elements affecting this equilibrium. Primary data were obtained from 100 college instructors chosen by stratified random selection. Statistical methods, including percentage analysis and chi-square testing, were employed to analyze the data. The findings indicated that while the majority of educators claim to manage their professional and personal obligations effectively, issues pertaining to workload, insufficient institutional support, and the lack of official work-life regulations persistently impact satisfaction levels. Female educators were seen to encounter greater pressure in reconciling family responsibilities with professional obligations. The research underscores the necessity for universities to establish official work-life balance policies, improve faculty support systems, and advocate for gender-sensitive practices. These findings possess significant ramifications for educational administrators and policymakers aiming to improve faculty well-being and institutional efficacy.

Keywords: Work-life balance, Educators, Aided Institutions, Unaided Institutions, Faculty Welfare, Kannur District

Introduction

Work-life balance (WLB) denotes an individual's capacity to fulfill professional and familial obligations while preserving time for additional personal responsibilities and recreational pursuits. It signifies a balance between occupational responsibilities and personal wellness. Greenhaus & Beutell, N. J. (1985) defines work-life balance as the condition of contentment and efficient performance in both professional and personal spheres with little role conflict. Felstead et al. (2002) characterize it as the equilibrium between the institutional and cultural domains of work and non-work, highlighting that contemporary employees encounter escalating demands to handle both proficiently. In the current educational landscape, educators face increasing difficulties in sustaining this equilibrium. In addition to classroom instruction, educators manage administrative responsibilities, engage in research activities, provide mentorship, and conduct ongoing assessments. These various responsibilities frequently result in stress, exhaustion, and diminished personal time. Research indicates that excessive workload and insufficient organizational support adversely impact teachers' job satisfaction and mental well-being (Sumathi & Velmurugan, 2020).

In Kerala, particularly in Kannur District, the distinctions between aided and unaided colleges further impact teachers' work-life balance. Aided institutions offer more organized working environments, whereas unaided colleges typically require extended hours and increased duties with diminished job security. This study seeks to evaluate the work-life balance of educators in both aided and unaided arts and science colleges in Kannur District and to determine the primary factors affecting it.

Literature Review

Miryala and Nagapriya (2012) noted that educators in private institutions faced greater difficulties in managing work and family compared to their counterparts in government institutions. Taranjit Rao et al. (2013) examined educators at the University of Jammu and discovered no significant disparities in work-life balance levels based on teaching disciplines or gender. Nanjundeswaraswamy et al. (2013) indicated that enhancements in quality of work life directly improve the overall work-life balance of faculty members at technical institutions.

Thevanes and Mangaleswaran (2018) investigated the correlation between work-life balance (WLB) and job performance among employees in Sri Lanka's banking sector. Their findings demonstrated a significant positive link between work-life balance and employee performance, suggesting that

improved balance results in enhanced productivity and satisfaction. The study underscored work-life balance as a crucial element of human resource management, emphasizing its significance in improving organizational efficiency and employee welfare.

Shyni (2019) examined the quality of work life and job attitudes of university library professionals in Kerala, revealing that enhancements in work life substantially increased job satisfaction and commitment.

Culpepper et al. (2020) examined work-life balance (WLB) experiences of single faculty members in contrast to those with families, employing the concept of agency as the theoretical framework. The research indicated that single faculty members, especially single women associate professors, exhibited diminished autonomy and had higher challenges in attaining work-life balance compared to their coupled counterparts. The authors advocated for institutional policy improvements to guarantee fair assistance for all faculty members in balancing professional and personal responsibilities.

Chung et al. (2020) investigated disparities in work-life balance (WLB) and career experiences among part-time and full-time academics at Brown University's Division of Biology and Medicine. The study, utilizing survey data from 437 respondents, revealed that part-time academics had diminished work-life conflict and were less inclined to forfeit personal interests for professional obligations. Nonetheless, they also recognized diminished career support from administrators and assigned lesser significance to leadership positions. The results underscore the divergent priorities and support requirements of part-time and full-time faculty in academia.

Sumathi and Velmurugan (2020) investigated female faculty members in Coimbatore and found that stress and workload substantially influenced their job satisfaction, highlighting that women encounter higher difficulties in reconciling professional and domestic obligations.

Ilić (2021) examined work-life balance (WLB) among higher education faculty in Serbia during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study revealed, through interviews with assistants, lecturers, and professors, that remote work exacerbated challenges in achieving balance, particularly for faculty members with school-aged children. The study emphasized that academic responsibilities encompass not only teaching but also research and administrative tasks, hence intensifying pressure during crises. It underscored the significance of institutional initiatives to facilitate educators' work-life balance, especially during crises such as the pandemic.

Greenberg et al. (2021) investigated the determinants of work-life balance (WLB) as a contributing factor to faculty attrition at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine. The analysis of data from 255 former faculty members revealed that 25% identified work-life balance concerns as a factor for their departure. Contributing issues comprised poor remuneration, restricted time for scholarly pursuits, and lack familial support. Conversely, effective leadership and frequent satisfaction evaluations lowered attrition due to work-life balance. The authors underscored that institutional retention strategies must encompass both professional and personal aspects to enhance faculty well-being and stability.

Diego-Medrano and Salazar (2021) conducted a study on higher education professors in the United States utilizing grounded theory, revealing that workload, institutional expectations, and career stages significantly influenced the capacity to sustain work-life balance. Non-tenured teachers encountered heightened challenges stemming from employment uncertainty and research demands.

Kumar and Velmurugan (2022) examined married women employed in self-financing institutions in Kerala, revealing that elevated stress levels and insufficient institutional support adversely affected their work-life balance and overall quality of life. Hasib et al. (2022) investigated the work-life balance (WLB) difficulties encountered by female educators in higher education institutions. The report emphasized that technological improvements have transformed work environments while exacerbating the challenge of balancing career and familial obligations. Notwithstanding the increasing involvement of women in the workforce, conventional domestic roles persist in fostering inequality. The authors suggested a conceptual model for attaining optimal work-life balance, highlighting the necessity of supportive frameworks to assist women in efficiently managing professional and family obligations. Devkota et al. (2022) examined working fathers in Kathmandu Valley and found that 77% encountered challenges in achieving work-life balance. The research highlighted job satisfaction and motivation as critical facilitators, but detrimental workplace attitudes exacerbated the disparity.

Neupane (2023) investigated the correlation between work-life balance (WLB) and job satisfaction among faculty members at management campuses in the Kathmandu Valley. The study identified a favorable correlation between work-life balance and job satisfaction, with the majority of respondents indicating moderate levels of satisfaction. Nonetheless, extended working hours and occupational pressure broke equilibrium, resulting in stress and discontent. The author underscored that institutional support, adaptable work policies, and family-oriented programs are crucial for enhancing faculty well-being and retention. Panlaqui (2023) examined work-life balance (WLB) through a gender lens among middle-level administrators and educators in state institutions and colleges in the Philippines. The study employed a mixed-methods methodology and revealed that the majority of respondents—middle-aged, married women—indicated a "borderline" level of work-life balance (WLB). Despite employing tactics such as strategic planning, delegation, and prioritization, many experienced stress and guilt when juggling several tasks. The study established a gender-specific work-life balance framework and highlighted pragmatic strategies for enhancing equilibrium in academic settings.

No (2024) investigated the correlation between work-life balance (WLB), job engagement, and organizational role stress among teacher educators. The research indicated that workload, flexibility, supportive settings, autonomy, and job satisfaction significantly impact work-life balance, whereas organizational role stress adversely affects it. The author asserted that augmenting job engagement via supporting policies, wellness initiatives, and acknowledgment can elevate educators' happiness, mitigate stress, and cultivate a better institutional atmosphere.

Fauzi et al. (2024) performed a bibliometric analysis of work-life balance (WLB) in higher education, utilizing 307 journal articles sourced from the Web of Science database. The research highlighted significant themes including escalating work pressure among academics, gender-related issues,

determinants of work-life balance, and the impact of imbalance on well-being. The results indicated that heavy workloads and prolonged working hours frequently result in conflicts between professional and personal life. The authors underscored the increasing necessity for research and institutional initiatives to mitigate work pressure and enhance work-life balance among academics.

Amadalli and D'Souza (2024) examined the quality of work-life balance (WLB) among PU college educators in Karnataka by a Likert-scale survey with 33 participants. The research indicated that the evolution of pedagogical approaches, escalating job demands, and shifting familial configurations complicate teachers' ability to maintain a work-life balance. These pressures lead to stress and diminished job performance. The authors determined that supportive institutional contexts that foster both professional and personal fulfillment are essential for teachers' well-being and retention.

Jongruck and Vyas (2024) examined work-life balance (WLB) among higher education professionals in Hong Kong and Thailand during the COVID-19 pandemic using the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model. The study, based on data from 1,800 respondents, revealed that employees in Hong Kong perceived inferior work-life balance compared to their Thai counterparts. Educators in Hong Kong exhibited increased engagement with family-friendly policies, whereas non-educational personnel shown diminished policy utilization and satisfaction. The authors underscored the necessity for context-specific institutional measures to enhance work-life balance and policy support across various staff categories and geographies.

Objectives of the study

1. To investigate the work-life balance of educators in both aided and unaided colleges within Kannur District.
2. To evaluate teachers' satisfaction about institutional support and working conditions.
3. To identify the determinants affecting work-life balance among higher education instructors.

Hypothesis

H₀: No significant difference exists in work-life balance among teaching professionals about gender.

H₁: A substantial difference exists in work-life balance among teaching professionals concerning gender.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a descriptive research approach to examine teachers' perspectives of work-life balance. Quantitative and qualitative insights were combined to achieve a thorough grasp of the situation. Open-ended responses were also reviewed to gather qualitative insights.

Sampling

The population consisted of educators employed in both aided and unaided arts and science colleges affiliated with Kannur University. Stratified random sampling was employed to guarantee representation from both institutional groupings. The final sample comprised 100 respondents 50 from aided colleges and 50 from unaided colleges.

Data Collection

Primary data were gathered by a standardized questionnaire aimed at assessing characteristics including workload, institutional policies, familial support, stress levels, and personal satisfaction. The tool included a five-point Likert scale from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." Secondary data were sourced from journals, books, and online resources pertaining to work-life balance and educational management.

Tools for Analysis

Descriptive statistics (percentages) and chi-square tests were employed to analyze the data. The chi-square test assessed the significance of gender's influence on perceptions of work-life balance. The significance level was established at 5%.

Results and Discussion

The gathered data were examined by percentage analysis and chi-square testing to comprehend the demographic profile of the respondents and their perceptions on work-life balance. The outcomes are delineated below,

Table 1. Analysis of Work-Life Balance Factors by Percentage

Sl. No.	Variable	Major Response / Category	%	Interpretation
1	Age	21–30 years (majority)	62	Most respondents are young faculty members.

Sl. No.	Variable	Major Response / Category	%	Interpretation
2	Gender	Female	72	Teaching is a female-dominated profession.
3	Type of Institution	Aided – 50%; Unaided – 50%	—	Equal representation from both sectors.
4	Teaching Hours (>16 hrs/week)	Sometimes / Always	70	Many teachers exceed normal workload.
5	Work Stress	Agree / Neutral	76	Most experience moderate work stress.
6	Institutional WLB Policy	No	66	Few colleges have formal WLB policies.
7	Fatigue / Depression	Never / Rarely	84	Majority report no major fatigue issues.
8	Relations with Colleagues / Students	Good	82	Healthy interpersonal relations prevail.
9	Satisfaction with Facilities	Satisfied / Neutral	74	Moderate satisfaction with facilities.
10	Balance Between Work and Life	Yes	52	Slight majority achieve work-life balance.
11	Domestic Work Time	2–4 hours daily	60	Shows dual responsibilities, especially for women.
12	Overall Ability to Balance Work and Life	Yes	86	Most manage both roles effectively.
13	Satisfaction with Working Hours	Satisfied	60	Majority are satisfied with working time.
14	Satisfaction with Rewards / Recognition	No	68	Most feel under-recognized and unrewarded.

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation of Percentage Analysis

The results indicate that most respondents are young female educators, highlighting the increasing involvement of women in higher education. Approximately 70% of respondents said that they work beyond standard hours, potentially contributing to the moderate stress levels reported by 76% of teachers. Moreover, 66% of institutions do not possess official work-life balance rules, indicating insufficient institutional support for educators.

Despite the workload, 82% of respondents sustained healthy relationships with co-workers and students, which significantly influences job satisfaction. Nonetheless, 68% conveyed discontent over rewards and recognition, indicating an absence of motivational incentives. The investigation reveals that teachers sustain a moderate work-life balance; yet, institutional deficiencies and insufficient acknowledgment impact their overall satisfaction.

Table 2. Hypothesis Testing: Gender and Work-Life Balance

Hypothesis	Statistical Test Used	Calculated Value (χ^2)	Degrees of Freedom (df)	p-Value	Significance Level (p)	Result	Interpretation
H₀: There is no significant difference between gender and work-life balance among teaching professionals.	Chi-square Test	9.82	2	0.007	0.05	Rejected	Since the p-value (0.007) < 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant relationship between gender and work-life balance. Female teachers experience higher stress and lower satisfaction compared to males.

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation

The chi-square test indicates a statistically significant disparity in male and female teachers' opinions of work-life balance. Female respondents encounter greater difficulties owing to domestic obligations and institutional demands. This discovery corresponds with research conducted by Sumathi & Velmurugan (2019) and Kumar & Velmurugan (2022), highlighting that gender roles exacerbate the challenge of achieving balance in teaching careers.

Discussion

The findings indicate that institutional regulations, workload, gender, and recognition are the principal determinants affecting work-life balance among college educators. While most individuals successfully balance work and personal responsibilities, the lack of explicit institutional norms and insufficient corporate incentives continue to pose significant obstacles.

Instructors at unaided colleges indicated greater workloads and diminished satisfaction relative to their peers in aided institutions. This corroborates prior research by Miryala and Nagapriya (2012) indicating that unaided or private institutions frequently need extended labour hours without commensurate compensation.

The research indicated that female educators encounter greater difficulty in achieving work-life balance owing to their simultaneous obligations at home and in the workplace. This discovery aligns with the observations of Sumathi and Velmurugan (2019), who noted comparable patterns among female professors in Tamil Nadu.

Despite these problems, robust interpersonal interactions and a collaborative work culture emerged as beneficial factors, assisting teachers in managing stress. The results confirm that work-life balance is not solely an individual concern but a collective corporate obligation, necessitating proactive institutional assistance, including flexible scheduling, wellness initiatives, and recognition systems.

Findings and Implications

Major Findings

1. The majority of respondents were young faculty members, predominantly women (72%), underscoring the feminization of the teaching profession.
2. Approximately 70% of educators exceeded 16 hours of work per week, signifying heightened workload and stress levels.
3. Approximately 66% of the colleges did not possess a formal work-life balance policy, indicating insufficient institutional support.
4. While 82% indicated positive relationships with co-workers and students, 68% expressed dissatisfaction with the rewards and recognition systems.
5. Female educators encountered more challenges in reconciling professional and personal obligations, as seen by the chi-square test outcomes.
6. Educators in aided colleges encountered a marginally superior work-life balance and institutional support relative to their counterparts in unassisted colleges.

Implications of the Study

For Educational Institutions: The study emphasizes the necessity for organized work-life balance regulations, adaptable scheduling, and counseling initiatives to assist educational personnel.

For Policymakers: The findings necessitate policy adjustments at both university and governmental levels to advance gender equity, enhance mental health assistance, and implement family-friendly leave policies.

For Faculty Development: Institutions must equitably acknowledge and reward academic contributions, foster engagement in wellness initiatives, and advocate for collaboration to alleviate stress.

For Future Research: Subsequent investigations may encompass several districts and utilize regression or factor analysis to identify specific drivers of work-life balance.

Conclusion

The equilibrium between work and personal life is essential for teachers' general well-being and institutional efficacy. The current study indicated that although the majority of educators in Kannur District successfully navigate their professional and personal responsibilities, considerable obstacles remain due to excessive workload, lack of formal institutional policies, and insufficient recognition. The findings also validated gender as a significant determinant of work-life balance, with female teachers experiencing elevated levels of stress and responsibility. Educational institutions must prioritize

human resource strategies that facilitate flexible work arrangements, promote well-being initiatives, and provide equal recognition systems. "Maintaining a healthy work-life balance will not only augment teachers' personal fulfillment but also elevate the quality of higher education and institutional performance."

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