

Exploring the Link between Work-Life Balance and Mental Health: Insights from Faculty in Unaided Colleges

Lakshmi V R¹ & Dr. C. Shalini²

¹Research Scholar, Vels Institute of Science, Technology & Advanced Studies (VISTAS)

E-mail: nithuvava10@gmail.com, drcsk67@gmail.com

²Professor and Head of the Department of Commerce (A&F), Vels Institute of Science, Technology & Advanced Studies (VISTAS) Chennai.

Abstract

The purpose of the present study is to find out the association between WLB and MH of faculty members from unaided Arts and Science Colleges in Kannur District. 100 faculty members were randomly selected to complete a structured questionnaire and data were analysed using SPSS, correlation analysis, t-tests and ANOVA. The results found the following evidence of a strong negative relationship between WLB and MH, therefore poor work life balance equals poor mental health. Further, consistent support indicated that WLB and MH were significantly affected by cohesive support structure and moderate correlation was also observed between job satisfaction and WLB. Age and marital status were found to have behavioural effects on WLB results with young faculty and single people enjoying a higher WLB than their counterpart. All these highlight that scholars require better support arrangements in their institutions including; enhanced mentorship, counselling, and flexibility at the workplace in terms of working hours and other stress factors that take a toll on wellbeing. The paper would therefore suggest more studies to be conducted in the area with regards to the effectiveness of interventions that seek to improve faculty well-being in the long term.

Introduction

One of the emergent priorities consequently is WLB which remains central to employees' quality of life as noticed in the higher education facility. It established that faculty members in unaided colleges especially those in arts and science streams are likely to be experiencing some determinants that can militate against the quality of time they spend on their working and family responsibilities. Such pressures include overcrowded work schedules, the absence of employment security, reduced budgets and resources, and minimal organizational support which have adverse effects on their work-family interface, as well as MH.

Particularly, the faculty of the unaided colleges can be deemed as the most ineffectively providing the work to family balance since such colleges compare to the aided institutions have severe limitations in terms of the available resources. This shift of workload can thereby increase stress, burnout, and different mental health problems which consequently influences the job performance, the job satisfaction (JS), and well-being. To this end, it is essential to describe the complex connections between work-life balance and psychological wellbeing in this context to address the existing or potential policies focused on enhancing faculty's work conditions, work outcomes, increased rate of satisfaction, and, as a result, the quality of education.

The present research work specifically aims at studying the correlation between WLB and MH among faculty members in unaided arts and science colleges in Kannur District. Specifically, it is anticipated to compare these outcomes while exploring the moderating effect of support systems and job satisfaction. Further, the study aims to find out the existence or otherwise of age, gender and marital status as factors affecting work-life balance among the faculty. With a view to pointing out these aspects, this research aims at facilitating an understanding of institutions and policymakers as to identify strategies leading to academic settings that are healthier for faculty members.

Objectives

1. To analyse demographic characteristics influencing work-life balance and mental health.
2. To evaluate the relationship between work-life balance and mental health among faculty.

3. To assess the role of support systems in improving work-life balance and mental health.
4. To examine job satisfaction and its correlation with work-life balance, mental health, and support systems.

Hypothesis

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between work-life balance and mental health among faculty

H0₂: There is no significant relationship between support systems and mental health among faculty.

H0₃: There is no significant correlation between job satisfaction and work-life balance among faculty.

H0₄: There is no significant difference in work-life balance across different age groups of faculty.

H0₅: There is no significant difference in work-life balance across different marital statuses of faculty.

Methodology

In the present study, the descriptive research design was used and participant sample of 100 faculty members of unaided arts and science colleges in Kannur District. To select the participants, the convenience sampling method was administered. Information was obtained with a standardized questionnaire and analysed with use of spread sheet programme-SPSS. The quantitative techniques used were frequency distribution, use of averages, use of t tests, analysis of variance, and use of correlation coefficients.

Review of literature

In light of this, Stankevičienė et al., (2021) review the moderating role of WLB between work environment and employee health. Their studies imply that it is the promotion of WLB, through creating a supportive organizational culture, leads to the promotion of mental health as well as the organizational performance.

In their study, Mumuni (2020) examine work-life balance and psychological health of the mental health nurses. This work finds extraversion as a variable that moderates this association and calls for proper organizational intervention to ensure good mental health in workers.

Zheng et al. (2016) examine how specific forms of coping and formal WLB policies help enhance or augment employee quality of life. In respect to these realities the research discovers that having regard for mental health, programs run by organization societies impact not directly but indirectly; and desired results or positive outcomes are attained outright with more emphasis undergone by the individual endurance approaches.

Hoffmann-Burdzińska and Rutkowska (2015) study WLB and well-being relationship based on the Work-Life Balance Barometer®. Thus, their results prove the relationship between WLB and mental health and support the further author's attempts to determine the factors of the WLB for the recognition of opportunities to enhance psychological well-being.

Haar et al (2014) conduct a cross cultural study on a stressor known as work-family conflict on mental health across seven cultures. In return, they establish that better WLB leaves a positive impact on anxiety and depression levels as well as job and life satisfaction levels. The study also focuses on positive effects of WLB but also point out that cultural factors may affect these effects.

With 27 European countries data, Lunau et al., (2014) seek to establish a relationship between WLB and wellbeing. This they discover that poor WLB is positively correlated with stress and a high level of burnout. Once again, the work focuses on the need for public health policies that will improve working and personal life balance.

Grant, Wallace, and Spurgeon (2013) explore how telework affects WLB, performance, and well-being and ways in which telework might affect WLB, performance, well-being as well as the positive and negative role of telework. They outline trust, management behavior and technology in combating work related mental health problems associated with overworking. According to the research, support from the organization as a strategy to enhance the results is underlined.

Siu (2013) investigate the relationship between psychological capital (PsyCap) and working-life

balance and mental health in employees from China. The outcome provides strong evidence for enhanced work outcomes and psychological well-being due to increased PsyCap levels and elaborates on the necessity for building positive mental resources in organisations.

Jang, Park, & Zippay (2011) examine the moderation by the scheduling flexibility and WLB programs on mental health and job satisfaction. They argue that increased control over work hours decreases stress and enhances total related well-being as well as job contentment.

In this context, beginning with Guest (2002) recent theories and research on the subject of WLB were discussed and a comprehensive model highlighting its antecedents, manifestation, and impact was presented. The study also shows that WLB is an important aspect of organization psychology; the physical and mental wellbeing of an employee. It points out that when balance is missing stress and low psychological well-being occur.

Analysis and interpretation

The demographic profile of the respondents revealed the following:

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	83	83%
Age Group	25-35 years	60	60%
Marital Status	Married	50	50%
Educational Level	Postgraduate	100	100%

Gender: A majority of the respondents were female (83%), reflecting a gender imbalance in the workforce.

Age: Most faculty members (60%) were in the 25-35 age group, indicating early to mid-career stages.

Marital Status: Half of the respondents (50%) were married, which may reflect the balance between personal and professional responsibilities that could influence work-life dynamics.

Educational Qualification: All respondents held postgraduate qualifications, signifying high academic expertise but potentially higher work demands.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
Work-Life Balance	15.78	2.646
Mental Health	14.66	3.137
Support Systems	13.7	2.859
Job Satisfaction	13.03	3.497

Work-Life Balance: The mean score of 15.78 suggests moderate perceptions of WLB. Faculty with additional family responsibilities reported greater challenges.

Mental Health: Mean scores of 14.66 reflect variability, with poorer mental health linked to inadequate WLB and support systems.

Support Systems: Scores (mean = 13.70) indicate moderate perceptions of institutional and peer support.

Job Satisfaction: Mean scores of 13.03 suggest moderate levels, positively correlated with WLB and Support systems.

Hypotheses Testing

The hypotheses were tested using Pearson's correlation coefficient and t-tests/ANOVA, as summarized below:

Table 3: Relationship between Work-Life Balance and Mental Health

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
Work-Life Balance & Mental Health	-0.490**	p < 0.01

Interpretation: A moderate negative correlation exists between WLB and MH. As work-life balance improves, mental health issues decrease. The null hypothesis ($H0_1$) is rejected, indicating that a significant relationship exists between WLB and MH.

Table 4: Relationship between Support Systems and Mental Health

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
Support Systems & Mental Health	-0.472**	p < 0.01

Interpretation: A moderate negative correlation suggests that higher support systems are associated with better mental health. The null hypothesis ($H0_2$) is rejected.

Table 5: Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Work-Life Balance

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
Job Satisfaction & Work-Life Balance	0.453**	p < 0.01

Interpretation: A moderate positive correlation was found between job satisfaction and work-life balance, indicating that better WLB leads to higher job satisfaction. The null hypothesis ($H0_3$) is rejected.

Table 6: Differences in Work-Life Balance by Age Group

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	71.408	2	35.704	5.57	0.005
Within Groups	621.752	97	6.41		

Interpretation: Significant differences were found in WLB across age groups (p < 0.01). Younger faculty members reported better work-life balance compared to older faculty. The null hypothesis ($H0_4$) is rejected.

Table 7: Differences in Work-Life Balance by Marital Status

Marital Status	Mean Score WLB	t-value	p-value
Single	16.07	-2.756	0.008
Married	15.1		

Interpretation: Table 7 shows significant difference in work-life balance between single and married individuals ($p < 0.05$). The null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and it can be concluded that marital status affects work-life balance, with single faculty members having a better work-life balance.

Discussion, Implication and Conclusion

Discussion

This study's results add valuable understanding of the factors that go with WLB with MH among the faculties of the unaided arts and science colleges. The obtained moderate negative correlation between WLB and MH (- 0.490) indicates that poor work-life balance was associated with more mental health problems among the faculty members. This illustrated the need to solve work and family life balance issues to improve the employee's Mental Health.

Furthermore, there were noticeable correlations between mental health in the present research study and support systems in the present study with a coefficient of - 0.472 indicating a significant relationship. Providers who have access to extant support structures at their workplaces had improved mental health as well; they stressed on the significance of support structures from faculty and peers to check mental health concerns. This is in concordance with the literature analysed previously that both organisational and emotional support can make a huge impact on well-being.

The positive significant relationship between job satisfaction and WLB proves that higher level work balance positively affects job satisfaction ($r = 0.453$). It turns out that members of the faculty strike better balance in their professional and personal life are satisfied with their employment, and thus are healthier, happier people.

In the same respect, the demographic assessment findings also showed that the workforce in the faculty age bracket of 25 and 35 years offered better work-life balance in comparison with others. This could however be so because older faculty members likely have many other demands in their personal and other professional responsibilities. Marital status also exercised some effect on work-life balance where single faculty members seemed to have a better WLB than the married faculty members. This finding implies that perhaps commitments in marriage contribute the most to complicating attempts at practicing work-life balance.

Implications

1.For Institutions:

Enhanced Support Systems: These are services that are in constant demand among the teaching fraternity and should therefore be provided alongside other services such as attendant mentoring, counseling, and peer-support services among the faculty. These can assist mitigate issue of mental health among the faculty and enhance their health at large.

Flexible Work Policies: There is conclusive evidence that the enforcement of flexible work policies that enhance the creation of time balance to enable workers to attend to their work and other demands will enhance work-life balance. Institutions should also know how young faculty are or how those with caregiving responsibilities are being supported.

Professional Development: The institutions should consider offering training which seeks to enhance the student's time and stress management skills especially with reference to their professional and personal lives.

2.For Policymakers:

Work-Life Balance Guidelines: The government and other policymakers should address unaided colleges by simply coming up with strong policies in relation to work-life balance. These guidelines may contain advice on the best policies concerning leave, working hours and the institution's support towards mental health.

Mental Health Policies: The faculty well-being should be protected by policies tailored to address mental health, order mental health services, and encourage decrease of job-stress.

3.For Future Research:

Long-term Impact Studies: Further research should be directed towards understanding the impact of institutional initiatives including introduction of either support programmes and or flexible work arrangements on the work to family interface and well-being of academicians over the long term.

Broader Sample: Future research will interest the extension of research to different college types and areas where aided as well as unaided colleges are present so as to know the measure different institutional support affects work-life balance and mental health at different places.

Focus on Gender and Family Dynamics: Future research might look at the impact of gender and family responsibilities on work-family balance especially concerning more women than men faculty members.

Conclusion

The findings of this work explain the relationship between work-life balance and mental health and job satisfaction among the faculty members of unaided Arts and Science Colleges. So, the results suggest that organizations should offer better support structures, policies, and ways to promote the work-family demarcation of academics. Solving these problems can help to increase the quality of work, job satisfaction and improve the well-being of colleges' faculty members. There is need for the policy makers to endeavour to formulate polices and guidelines which will encourage work-life balance and improved mental health, to create a conducive environment for the faculty within unaided colleges.