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Original Article

Navigating dual roles: Work-Life balance among married female university teachers in Pakistan.

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Abstract

Background: Despite the global increase in female participation in the labor force, achieving work-life balance (WLB) remains a significant challenge, particularly in patriarchal societies such as Pakistan. While existing literature has examined WLB in various contexts, there is a notable lack of research specifically addressing the experiences of married female university teachers who navigate dual responsibilities.

Methodology: This study aims to investigate the professional factors that influence the work-life balance of female university teachers, a demographic within a traditionally family-friendly profession. A quantitative approach was employed, utilizing stratified random sampling to collect data from university teachers ranging from lecturers to professors.

Results: WLB was assessed using the Hayman Questionnaire, rated on a five-point Likert scale, complemented by open-ended questions to gather demographic information and insights into influential factors. Data analysis was performed using SPSS, which included factor analysis and validation through Chi-square and Fisher's exact tests. The findings revealed a moderate level of work-life balance among university teachers, with job flexibility identified as a significant determinant.

Conclusion: This study provides valuable insights into the work-life balance of female educators in Pakistan and establishes a foundation for future research, particularly within Asian contexts.

Keywords

Work-Life Balance, Teaching Profession, Female University Teachers, Professional Factors, Job Flexibility.

Introduction

The rapid advancement of technology has significantly transformed our lives, leading to notable shifts in family structures and workforce participation, particularly the rise of dual-income families. This global trend presents unique challenges in managing work-life balance (WLB), especially for women in Pakistan, where gender inequalities and societal expectations exacerbate pressures on working mother^{1,2}. Addressing WLB is crucial not only for individual well-being but also for the overall functioning of society³.

Research on work-life balance among female educators indicates that socio-demographic factors, such as income and support systems, profoundly influence their WLB⁴⁻⁷. For instance, higher educational qualifications are often associated with an improved work-life balance. Similarly, job designation plays a significant role; individuals in higher-ranking positions tend to face increased responsibilities, which can impact their WLB. This pattern has been observed among teachers in Sri Lanka and Punjab, where assistant professors report a better work-life balance compared to their lecturer counterparts⁸. Furthermore, job experience has a notable effect on WLB; studies have shown a positive correlation between tenure and work-life balance, with longer-serving employees generally reporting better outcomes⁹.

Job flexibility has emerged as a critical factor in achieving work-life balance. Flexible work arrangements, such as adjustable schedules and remote work options, are increasingly preferred by employees and have been shown to enhance overall well-being¹⁰. Despite the plethora of studies investigating work-life balance in various social contexts and professions, most of this research has been conducted outside of Pakistan. To date, there is a notable lack of significant research specifically focused on the work-life balance of female university teachers in Pakistan. Most existing studies tend to concentrate on school teachers or professionals in non-academic settings, often including both male and female participants. This gap in the literature hinders our understanding of

how the unique socio-cultural factors in Pakistan specifically affect the work-life balance of married female university faculty a group that faces distinct challenges in balancing professional and personal responsibilities.

To address this critical gap, the primary objective of this study is to assess the work-life balance of married Pakistani female university faculty, with a particular focus on the professional factors influencing this balance. The study explores the relationship between work-life balance and five key variables: educational qualification, job designation, personal income, job experience, and job flexibility. These factors have been systematically examined to evaluate their individual and collective influence on the work-life balance of this specific demographic.

Methodology

Study Design

This study employs a quantitative research design utilizing a deductive approach¹¹. The primary aim is to investigate the influence of specific factors on the work-life balance of married female teachers. A quantitative approach is particularly suitable for this investigation, as it seeks to objectively assess the effects and determine the influencing factors and their consequences. This structured approach allows for precise measurements and analyses, thereby ensuring the objectivity of the results¹².

Ethical Considerations

The ethical approval was obtained prior to the study commencement. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection, ensuring their understanding of the study's purpose and their right to withdraw at any time. Additionally, the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants were maintained throughout the study, adhering to ethical research guidelines established by the relevant institutional review board.

Setting

The research was conducted in five universities located in Karachi, Pakistan. These institutions were

selected based on their representation of the diverse demographic and academic landscape of married female university faculty. The setting provided a conducive environment for gathering data relevant to the research objectives.

Participants

The study sample consisted of married female faculty members across different academic ranks, including lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors, and professors. A total of 200 participants were selected to represent the target population. The decision to focus exclusively on married female teachers was driven by the research objective to understand their unique experiences and challenges regarding work-life balance.

Variables

The primary variables of interest in this study include:

- **Independent Variables:** Demographic factors such as age, educational background, job title, work experience, and personal income.
- **Dependent Variable:** Work-life balance, operationalized through the adapted questionnaire measuring perceptions of balance between work and personal life.

Data Sources/Measurement

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire comprises two main sections:

- **Demographic Data:** This section includes 15 closed-ended questions that assess how various demographic factors may impact work-life balance.
- **Work-Life Balance Assessment:** The second section is adapted from Hayman's (2005) work-life balance scale, containing 14 statements that evaluate participants' perceptions of their work-life balance¹⁴. Each statement is rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Bias

Efforts were made to minimize bias throughout the study. The use of purposive and stratified random sampling aimed to ensure a representative sample of married female teachers¹³. Additionally, the questionnaire was pre-tested to identify potential ambiguities or biases in the wording of questions, allowing for adjustments before the main data collection commenced.

Study Size

The total population of married female faculty members in the five selected universities was estimated to be 582. A sample size of 200 participants was determined, allowing for adequate statistical power to detect significant differences and relationships between the variables.

Quantitative Variables

Quantitative variables measured in this study include:

- **Demographic Variables:** Continuous data such as age and years of work experience.
- **Work-Life Balance Scores:** Derived from the responses to the Likert scale items, these scores provide a quantifiable measure of participants' perceptions of their work-life balance.

Statistical Methods

Statistical analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Various statistical methods were employed to analyze the data, starting with descriptive statistics to summarize the demographic characteristics of the participants and their work-life balance scores. To compare the means of independent variables and assess their significance in relation to work-life balance, One-Way ANOVA was utilized. Additionally, the Chi-Square Test was performed to analyze the relationships between categorical variables, enabling the determination of how independent demographic factors influence work-life balance. To further validate the relationships identified through the Chi-Square tests, Fisher's Exact Test was applied as a non-parametric method, particularly useful in cases with small sample sizes or expected frequencies.

Results

Participants

This study evaluated the work-life balance of married female faculty members, aiming to identify the variables influencing this balance. A total of 200 married female teachers participated in the research, providing insights into their experiences and perceptions regarding work-life balance.

Descriptive Data

The analysis revealed that the mean scores for various dimensions of work-life balance ranged from approximately 2.17 to 2.67. The mean scores for individual items, along with their standard deviations, are summarized in Table 1. The results indicate that participants generally experience a moderate level of work-life balance, as evidenced

by the mean scores. However, the standard deviation figures suggest slight variations in perceptions among faculty regarding specific components of work-life balance. For instance, while participants expressed a moderate perception of their overall work-life balance, they appeared to feel more positively about how their personal life contributes to their work rather than the adverse effects of work on their personal life. The item with the lowest mean score, 2.17, indicates dissatisfaction with salary, suggesting that some faculty members may not be fully content with their compensation. Overall, the data indicates a moderate to good work-life balance, but areas such as salary satisfaction and the impact of work on personal time could benefit from further improvement.

Table 1: Work-Life Balance indicators among married female faculty members

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
My personal life does not suffer because of my job (WLB)	2.35	0.81
I do not neglect personal needs because of work (WLB)	2.48	0.78
I do not miss my personal activities because of work (WLB)	2.38	0.80
My personal life does not drain me of energy for work (WLB)	2.37	0.78
I am happy with the amount of time for personal activities (WLB)	2.40	0.76
My work does not suffer because of my personal life (WLB)	2.53	0.72
It is not hard to work efficiently because of my personal matters (WLB)	2.42	0.80
My personal life gives me energy for my job (WLB)	2.59	0.67
My job gives me the energy to pursue personal activities (WLB)	2.54	0.69
I have a better mood at work because of my personal life (WLB)	2.67	0.60
I have a better mood at home because of my job (WLB)	2.61	0.64
My job does not interfere with my personal life (WLB)	2.42	0.73
I am happy with the salary given to me (WLB)	2.17	0.87
I can easily get leave/half leave from work whenever I need (JF)	2.39	0.74

Outcome Data

To test the hypotheses regarding the factors influencing work-life balance, One-Way ANOVA was employed, supported by Chi-square and Fisher's Exact tests for validation. Table 2 summarizes the ANOVA results, showing significant relationships between all independent variables and work-life balance (WLB), as indicated

by p-values below 0.05. The ANOVA results revealed that the variation between group means exceeded the variation within groups, with F-values indicating statistically significant influences of educational qualification (EQ), job designation (JD), personal income (PI), job experience (JE), and job flexibility (JF) on WLB.

Table 2: Impact of independent variables on work-life balance

Variables	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	p-value
EQ-WLB	539.357	3	179.786	4.615	0.004
JD-WLB	580.572	3	193.524	4.995	0.002
PI-WLB	392.87	3	130.957	3.298	0.002
JE-WLB	363.471	2	181.736	4.583	0.011
JF-WLB	1886.261	2	943.131	29.545	0.000

Main Results

The ANOVA results highlight the significant role of various demographic and professional factors in influencing the work-life balance of married female teachers. Specifically, the highest F-value of 29.545 for job flexibility (JF) underscores its critical importance in enhancing work-life balance. Additionally, the Chi-square and Fisher's Exact

tests provided further validation of these findings, as summarized in Table 3. Notably, educational qualification showed a significant association with work-life balance (WLB) with a Chi-square value of 9.588 ($p = 0.008$), suggesting that higher educational attainment correlates with a better work-life balance.

Table 3: Associations Between Work-Life Balance and Various Factors.

Relationship	Test	p-value
EQ-WLB	Chi-Square	0.008
	Fisher's Exact Test	0.008
JD-WLB	Chi-Square	0.069
	Fisher's Exact Test	0.077
PI-WLB	Chi-Square	0.004
	Fisher's Exact Test	0.006
JE-WLB	Chi-Square	0.040
	Fisher's Exact Test	0.026
JF-WLB	Chi-Square	0.000
	Fisher's Exact Test	0.000

Discussion

This study investigated the WLB of married female university teachers and examined how various professional factors influence this balance. The results corroborate previous research, underscoring that WLB is significantly affected by a multitude of personal and professional factors, including educational qualifications, job designations, personal income, marital status, work experience, and job flexibility^{15,16}. Notably, the findings highlight the critical role of workplace flexibility in alleviating stress and enhancing productivity among female educators, with job flexibility emerging as a pivotal component of WL⁸.

While teaching is often viewed as a family-friendly profession, our analysis reveals that married women in Pakistan encounter substantial challenges due to sociocultural and structural constraints prevalent in a patriarchal society¹⁷. These constraints create significant barriers to achieving a satisfactory WLB for female educators, especially when compounded by disparities in policies and support systems between public and private institutions. The variations in institutional support underscore the necessity for a comprehensive approach to addressing WLB, one that considers both institutional frameworks and individual circumstances^{18,19}.

Our results indicate that educators with greater experience, higher income, and better qualifications generally report a more favorable work-life balance. This suggests that as women advance in their careers, they may gain increased control over their personal and professional lives, enhancing their overall WLB. However, the lower satisfaction scores related to compensation indicate that financial aspects still require attention and improvement.

These findings emphasize the importance of creating supportive environments that not only facilitate work flexibility but also address financial and institutional inequities to enhance the overall well-being of female educators.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the significant influence of workplace flexibility on the work-life balance of married female university instructors in Pakistan. Work flexibility emerges as the most critical factor in achieving a satisfactory WLB, while professional and personal aspects such as salary, job titles, and educational backgrounds also play vital roles. The challenges posed by sociocultural norms and organizational disparities call for a paradigm shift and the development of more inclusive policies that prioritize the work-life balance of female educators. Universities hold a pivotal position in this transformative process by implementing work-life policies that empower women and enhance the efficiency and well-being of academic institutions. It is crucial to modernize societal and cultural norms to better support the dual responsibilities of professional women, especially as societal dynamics evolve and women seek opportunities beyond traditional gender roles. Future research should focus on formulating effective strategies in diverse cultural and institutional contexts to further improve work-life balance and satisfaction among female educators.

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