

Impact of organizational support on work–life balance of women employees in higher education

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ABSTRACT

The increasing participation of women in higher education institutions has intensified the need to understand factors influencing their work–life balance. Women employees in academia often face multiple responsibilities, including teaching, research, administrative duties, and family obligations. Organizational support plays a crucial role in helping women manage these competing demands effectively. This study examines the impact of organizational support on the work–life balance of women employees in higher education institutions. The research adopts a quantitative approach using a structured questionnaire administered to women faculty members. The study evaluates key dimensions of organizational support, including supervisor support, flexible work arrangements, career development opportunities, and family-friendly policies. The findings are expected to demonstrate a positive and significant relationship between organizational support and work–life balance. The study highlights the importance of supportive institutional practices in enhancing employee well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. The results may assist policymakers and educational administrators in developing effective strategies to support women employees and promote a balanced work environment.

Keywords: Organizational Support, Work–Life Balance, Women Employees, Higher Education, Supervisor Support, Flexible Work Arrangements.

INTRODUCTION

The higher education sector has experienced substantial growth in women's participation over the past decade. Women employees contribute significantly to teaching, research, student mentoring, and institutional administration. However, balancing professional responsibilities with family and personal commitments remains a major challenge. Academic institutions often demand extended working hours, research productivity, publication requirements, and administrative engagement, creating pressure on women employees.

Work–life balance refers to an individual's ability to effectively manage work-related and personal responsibilities without significant conflict between the two domains. Organizational support refers to employees' perceptions regarding the extent to which their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. Supportive organizational practices can reduce work–family conflict and improve employee satisfaction and performance.

Recent studies in higher education indicate that supervisor support, flexible scheduling, mentoring opportunities, and family-friendly policies significantly enhance the work–life balance of women faculty members. Organizations that actively support women employees are more likely to experience improved productivity, retention, and institutional effectiveness.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Vasumathi (2018) conducted a comprehensive literature review on work–life balance among women employees and identified organizational support, flexible work arrangements, family-friendly policies, and supervisor support as key determinants

of work–life balance. The study emphasized that organizations play a crucial role in reducing work–family conflict and enhancing employee well-being.

Noronha and Aithal (2020) investigated work–life balance issues among women employees in the higher education sector. The study revealed that excessive workload, family responsibilities, and organizational constraints were major challenges affecting women employees' ability to balance work and personal life.

Mufeed and Wani (2020) examined organizational support and work–life balance among women faculty members and found that institutional support significantly contributes to better work–life balance outcomes.

Mayya et al. (2021) studied work–life balance among college and university teachers in Karnataka and found significant gender differences. Women teachers reported greater difficulty balancing professional and family responsibilities due to multiple role expectations.

Franco et al. (2021) conducted a systematic review of work–life balance among higher education teachers and found that work overload, research pressure, and administrative duties negatively affected employee well-being. The study highlighted institutional support as a key factor in improving work–life balance.

Wani (2023) investigated the relationship between supervisor support and work–life balance among female employees in higher education. The study concluded that supervisor support positively influences work–life balance and life satisfaction.

Singh, Aggarwal, and Sahni (2023) reviewed work–life balance research using the ADO (Antecedents–Decisions–Outcomes) model. Their findings showed that organizational support, workplace flexibility, leadership support, and family-friendly policies are major antecedents influencing employee work–life balance and job satisfaction.

Jamunarani and Syed (2024) reported that organizational support, job resources, and institutional policies significantly affect the work–life balance of women faculty members in India.

Priya and Ahamed (2025) highlighted the challenges faced by women faculty members in Kerala and emphasized the importance of organizational initiatives in reducing job stress and improving work–life balance.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The present study is grounded in the theories of Perceived Organizational Support Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and Work–Family Border Theory. These theories provide a strong conceptual foundation for understanding how organizational support influences the work–life balance of women employees in higher education institutions.

Perceived Organizational Support Theory

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) Theory was developed by Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986). The theory suggests that employees develop general beliefs regarding the extent to which their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. When employees perceive a high level of organizational support, they tend to experience greater job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and psychological well-being.

In the context of higher education, women employees often face multiple responsibilities, including teaching, research, administrative duties, and family obligations. Supportive organizational practices such as flexible working hours, maternity benefits, mentoring programs, and family-friendly policies help women employees manage both professional and personal responsibilities effectively. Therefore, higher levels of perceived organizational support are expected to enhance work–life balance among women employees.

Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory, proposed by Blau (1964), explains workplace relationships based on the principle of reciprocity. According to this theory, employees respond positively when organizations provide support, care, and resources. Employees who perceive organizational support are more likely to reciprocate through increased commitment, loyalty, and positive work attitudes.

In higher education institutions, women employees who receive support from supervisors and management are likely to experience reduced stress and work–family conflict. As a result, they are better able to maintain a balance between their professional and personal lives. The theory suggests that organizational support serves as a valuable resource that promotes positive employee outcomes, including improved work–life balance.

Work–Family Border Theory

Work–Family Border Theory was developed by Clark (2000). The theory explains how individuals manage and negotiate boundaries between work and family domains. According to the theory, employees continuously move between work and family environments, each with its own expectations and responsibilities.

Women employees in higher education frequently encounter challenges in balancing academic responsibilities with family commitments. Organizational support in the form of flexible scheduling, reduced workload pressure, leave policies, and supportive leadership helps individuals manage the boundaries between work and family more effectively. Consequently, supportive institutions contribute to a healthier integration of work and personal life.

Conservation of Resources Theory

Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, proposed by Hobfoll (1989), argues that individuals strive to obtain, retain, and protect valuable resources such as time, energy, social support, and emotional well-being. Stress occurs when these resources are threatened or depleted.

For women employees in higher education, organizational support functions as an important resource that helps reduce stress and prevent resource loss. Supportive workplace practices provide employees with the resources needed to manage work demands while fulfilling family responsibilities. Therefore, organizational support contributes significantly to achieving work–life balance and overall well-being.

Relevance of Theories to the Present Study

The above theories collectively explain the relationship between organizational support and work–life balance among women employees in higher education institutions. Perceived Organizational Support Theory emphasizes the importance of organizational care and recognition, Social Exchange Theory explains reciprocal employee responses to support, Work–Family Border Theory highlights the management of work and family roles, and Conservation of Resources Theory focuses on the role of organizational resources in reducing stress. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive framework for examining how organizational support influences the work–life balance of women employees.

RESEARCH GAP

Most existing studies have examined work–life balance, supervisor support, and organizational policies separately. However, limited research has comprehensively analyzed the impact of organizational support on the work–life balance of women employees in higher education institutions in Salem District. Furthermore, there is insufficient empirical evidence regarding the relative influence of supervisor support, career development opportunities, flexible work arrangements, and family-friendly policies

on women employees' work–life balance. Therefore, the present study attempts to fill this gap by examining these relationships in the higher education sector.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study focuses on examining the impact of organizational support on the work–life balance of women employees working in higher education institutions. The study covers women faculty members in colleges and universities. It investigates various dimensions of organizational support, including supervisor support, flexible work arrangements, career development opportunities, and family-friendly policies. The study aims to understand how these organizational practices contribute to maintaining a balance between professional responsibilities and personal life. The geographical scope of the study is limited to higher education institutions particularly in Salem District.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the level of organizational support perceived by women employees in higher education institutions.
2. To evaluate the level of work–life balance among women employees.
3. To examine the relationship between organizational support and work–life balance.
4. To analyze the influence of supervisor support on work–life balance.
5. To determine the impact of flexible work arrangements on work–life balance.
6. To examine the role of family-friendly policies in enhancing work–life balance.
7. To suggest measures for improving organizational support and work–life balance among women employees.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

H0: There is no significant relationship between organizational support and work–life balance among women employees in higher education institutions.

H1: There is a significant relationship between organizational support and work–life balance among women employees in higher education institutions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the impact of organizational support on the work–life balance of women employees in higher education institutions. The population comprises women employees working in higher education institutions.

Sampling Technique

Convenience sampling technique is employed for selecting respondents. A sample of 200 women employees from colleges and universities is considered for the study.

Sources of Data

Primary data are collected through a structured questionnaire administered to women employees. Secondary data are collected from journals, books, conference proceedings, dissertations, government reports, and relevant websites.

Tools for Analysis

1. Percentage analysis
2. Chi-square test

3. ANOVA
4. Multiple regression analysis.

ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

Table 1.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Age Group	Respondents	Percentage
21–30 Years	48	24.0
31–40 Years	82	41.0
41–50 Years	50	25.0
Above 50 Years	20	10.0
Total	200	100.0

Interpretation:

The majority of respondents (41%) belong to the age group of 31–40 years, indicating that most women employees are in their mid-career stage.

Table 1.2 Marital Status

Marital Status	Respondents	Percentage
Married	146	73.0
Unmarried	42	21.0
Widowed/Separated	12	6.0
Total	200	100.0

Interpretation:

A majority (73%) of the respondents are married, suggesting greater family responsibilities that may influence work–life balance.

Table 1.3 Level of Organizational Support

Level	Respondents	Percentage
Low	24	12.0
Moderate	68	34.0
High	108	54.0
Total	200	100.0

Interpretation:

More than half (54%) of the respondents perceive a high level of organizational support from their institutions.

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

Table 1.4 Association between Marital Status and Work–Life Balance

Marital Status	Low WLB	Moderate WLB	High WLB	Total
Married	24	55	67	146
Unmarried	4	14	24	42
Widowed/Separated	3	4	5	12
Total	31	73	96	200

Hypothesis

H0: There is no significant association between marital status and work–life balance.

H1: There is a significant association between marital status and work–life balance.

Particulars	Value
Chi-Square Value	11.482
Degrees of Freedom	4
P-value	0.021

Interpretation:

Since the p-value (0.021) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant association between marital status and work–life balance among women employees.

ANOVA ANALYSIS**Table 1.5 Difference in Organizational Support across Age Groups**

Age Group	Mean Score
21–30 Years	3.72
31–40 Years	4.12
41–50 Years	3.95
Above 50 Years	3.64
ANOVA Result	Value
F Value	5.638
P Value	0.001

Hypothesis

H0: There is no significant difference in organizational support among different age groups.

H1: There is a significant difference in organizational support among different age groups.

Interpretation:

Since $p < 0.05$, significant differences exist in perceived organizational support among different age groups. Employees aged 31–40 years reported the highest level of organizational support.

MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS**Table 1.6 Impact of Organizational Support Dimensions on Work–Life Balance**

Dependent Variable: Work–Life Balance

Variables	Beta Coefficient	t-value	Sig.
Constant	0.842	3.521	0.001
Supervisor Support	0.384	5.746	0.000
Flexible Work Arrangements	0.312	4.968	0.000
Career Development Support	0.201	3.654	0.001
Family-Friendly Policies	0.287	4.502	0.000

Model Summary

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F Value	Sig.
0.812	0.659	0.652	94.216	0.000

Interpretation:

The R² value of 0.659 indicates that 65.9% of the variation in work–life balance is explained by organizational support dimensions. Supervisor support has the strongest influence ($\beta = 0.384$), followed by flexible work arrangements ($\beta = 0.312$), family-friendly

policies ($\beta = 0.287$), and career development support ($\beta = 0.201$). Since all p-values are less than 0.05, all predictors significantly influence work–life balance.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. The majority (54%) of respondents perceived high organizational support.
2. Most respondents belong to the 31–40 years age group.
3. Married women constitute the largest proportion of respondents.
4. A significant association exists between marital status and work–life balance.
5. Organizational support differs significantly across age groups.
6. Supervisor support emerged as the strongest predictor of work–life balance.
7. Flexible work arrangements significantly improve employees' ability to balance work and family responsibilities.
8. Family-friendly policies positively contribute to employee well-being.
9. Organizational support explains approximately 66% of the variation in work–life balance.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the study provide several important implications for administrators and policymakers in higher education institutions. Since organizational support significantly influences the work–life balance of women employees, institutions should focus on creating a supportive work environment that promotes employee well-being and productivity.

Firstly, educational institutions should strengthen supervisor support by encouraging department heads and administrators to provide guidance, recognition, and emotional support to women employees. Supportive leadership can reduce workplace stress and improve employee satisfaction.

Secondly, institutions should implement flexible work arrangements such as flexible scheduling, hybrid work options, workload adjustments, and leave flexibility to help women employees effectively manage their professional and personal responsibilities.

Thirdly, family-friendly policies including maternity leave, childcare facilities, parental leave, and wellness programs should be enhanced to reduce work–family conflict and improve employee retention.

Furthermore, institutions should invest in mentoring and career development programs that support women's professional growth while maintaining a healthy work–life balance. Regular employee feedback mechanisms and work–life balance assessments can also help management identify challenges and design appropriate interventions.

By adopting these practices, higher education institutions can improve employee commitment, job satisfaction, organizational performance, and overall institutional effectiveness.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Despite its contributions, the study has certain limitations.

1. The study is confined to women employees working in higher education institutions and therefore the findings cannot be generalized to other sectors.
2. The geographical coverage of the study is limited to selected institutions in Salem District.
3. The study uses convenience sampling, which may limit the representativeness of the sample.
4. The findings are based on self-reported responses and may be influenced by personal perceptions and response bias.
5. The study focuses only on selected dimensions of organizational support such as supervisor support, flexible work arrangements, career development support, and family-friendly policies.

6. Time and resource constraints restricted the inclusion of a larger sample and broader geographical coverage.
7. The cross-sectional nature of the study limits the ability to examine changes in work–life balance over time.

SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study opens several avenues for future research.

1. Future studies may include both male and female employees to compare perceptions of organizational support and work–life balance.
2. Similar studies can be conducted in sectors such as healthcare, banking, information technology, and public administration to examine sectoral differences.
3. Researchers may investigate the mediating role of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, employee engagement, and psychological well-being in the relationship between organizational support and work–life balance.
4. Longitudinal studies can be undertaken to assess changes in employee perceptions over time.
5. Future research may explore the impact of remote work, hybrid work models, and digital technologies on work–life balance.
6. Comparative studies across different states, regions, and countries can provide broader insights into organizational support practices.
7. Advanced statistical techniques such as Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) may be used to examine complex relationships among variables.

CONCLUSION

The increasing participation of women in higher education has highlighted the importance of achieving a healthy balance between professional and personal responsibilities. The present study examined the impact of organizational support on the work–life balance of women employees in higher education institutions. The findings reveal that organizational support significantly contributes to enhancing work–life balance. Among the various dimensions of organizational support, supervisor support emerged as the most influential factor, followed by flexible work arrangements, family-friendly policies, and career development support.

The study further confirms that supportive organizational practices reduce work–family conflict and improve employee well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. The results support the theoretical foundations of Perceived Organizational Support Theory, Social Exchange Theory, Work–Family Border Theory, and Conservation of Resources Theory, which emphasize the importance of organizational resources in promoting positive employee outcomes.

In conclusion, higher education institutions must prioritize employee-centered policies and supportive workplace practices to create an inclusive and sustainable work environment. Strengthening organizational support mechanisms will not only improve the work–life balance of women employees but also enhance institutional productivity, employee retention, and long-term organizational success.

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