Resolving Work-Life Conflicts among Women Employees in Private Universities in Maharashtra: An Empirical Study

MRS. ROHINI RELKAR, DR. VINOD GAWANDE

Abstract: *With the growing number of careers in higher education that require a tremendous amount of work, working hours, administrative responsibilities, and family obligations, female employees working in the field have had a workplace conflict that has come to the forefront.Female employees in the higher education (HE) sector face many issues of work-life conflict, namely in private universities, where demanding working commitments are often struggling with working hours, administrative duties, performance expectations and family. In order to understand why work life conflict may present in the life of the female working in a Private University in Maharashtra and what are the potentials that can be used to resolve work life conflict an attempt has been made in the present study to examine the reasons for work life conflict among the females working in a Private University in Maharashtra and to explore the potentials of solving work life conflict. It emphasizes utilising both those who work in the education sector and those who do not, their work and family duties, organizational culture, working flexibly, leadership support and organizational policies. The study also explores the impact of work-life conflicts on aspects of job satisfaction, psychological health, productivity at work, career and organization commitment respectively. For the study of this paper, the researcher has proposed the empirical research approach as a primary data is collected from selected women employees who are working in private Universities of Maharashtra, structured questionnaire is the method of collection of primary data. Appropriate statistical procedures will be used which is appropriate for wishes and objectives. The study will probably detect institutional problems and the effect of the existing work-life balance programme at present. It further aims at suggesting the practical steps that need to be taken for a healthy and sustainable environment for women employees in higher education including flexible work schedule, supportive management, family friendly policies, load management and gender sensitive policies etc.*

Keywords: Work-Life Conflict, Women Employees, Private Universities, Work-Life Balance, Organisational Support, Job Satisfaction, Maharashtra

Mrs. Rohini Relkar (relkarrohini26@gmail.com) Research Scholar, Department of Business Management, RTMNU, Nagpur, Indi
Dr. Vinod Gawande (vinod.gawande@yahoo.co.in) Research Supervisor, Department of Business Management, RTMNU, Nagpur, India

Introduction

In today's work and educational environment, the importance of work-life balance is increasingly coming to the fore, as issues of work-life balance are emphasized by organizations, employees and policy makers. The growing role women in the labour force has played is a major factor in the economy, development of institutions and social change. Studies have shown that women have taken up various professions including teachers, researchers, academics, and academic support staff, finance, HR, and administrative at higher education institutions. However, while women are also steadily becoming a major force in the workforce, various constraints bedevil their efforts to handle both work/family and personal responsibilities. These are particularly challenging in a private university where staff are constantly required to teach in the classroom, produce research work, supervise students, prepare reports for accreditation, engage in institutional development, attend academic conferences and events. These workplace expectations, coupled with household duties, childcare, looking after older children or family members and other family demands can often lead to work-life imbalance, negatively impacting on women's physical health, their psychological/emotional state, their sense of job satisfaction and their success/future career growth.

Work-life conflict: priorities of work responsibilities negatively affect meeting personal/family responsibilities or vice versa. It most often occurs when the time, energy and attention needed to execute the role in one life area are detrimental to the attainment of expectations in another life role. This conflict is typically more complicated for working women due to the social norms that usually accompany the roles of household management, care-taking and family responsibility. Women's role in professional education and in the work place has made tremendous strides, but men and women still face an unfair burden of domestic responsibilities. Consequently, often those women working have suffered such a situation that they cannot work with the same force of concentration on deadlines and manage their families, develop themselves, or present themselves to society with equal vigor. It can lead to stress in the workplace, burn-out, low levels of job satisfaction, low attendance, reduced productivity, and issues with holding onto their position at work for a long-term career.

Private Universities in Maharashtra have a significant share in the education system of the country and are a great source of employment for women in Academic and Non-Academic sector. Academic Women should teach in the class, design curriculum, do research, and conduct evaluations, among other activities, including publish academic books and coordinate (academic coordinating) and institutional duties. Woman employees in administration essentially have to handle students' admission, the exam, record keeping, handling students' services, finance, etc. of the institution. These chores are typically part of a day that are beyond the normal of any day when the ad hoc demands of school, deadlines, meetings and other demands come to the forefront. Digital technology has increasingly changed practices at work and professional communication and institutional work has found places outside of office hours. The improvements in technology during service have further increased efficiencies, but

have also raised expectations that the machine will require constant maintenance and service, resulting in personal time being lost and family life affected.

Work-life conflicts can vary across and within age, marital status, family type, families with dependent family members, employment and organizational status. Other women may find working and parenting to be difficult, due to the expectations they may need to put on others to help them.Other women may also feel as if they have greater expectations for providing care to a child or elderly relative, making it harder to maintain a job outside of the home. Similarly, women in higher academic and administrative positions may feel the pressure more as they have to take decisions in an institution and perform at the higher level of performance in the role of a leader. Supportive organisational policies, arrangements for flexible working, maternity benefits, childcare leave and facilities, and a supervisor who is flexible about the conflict and issues can help reduce these conflicts. However, the success of such measures will be impacted by their implementation and uptake, institutional and organisational commitment and culture.

Also, it is necessary to consider not only the Individual but his/her family, but also the Individuals Internal Affairs Agency, and the university management and policy makers, when tackling the work life conflict. Private universities need to be mindful that wellbeing at work is not tied to the performance of the university, or a raised organisational commitment and quality of higher education services that make them better at staff retention. Flexible working routines, sensible management of working load and improved systems of performance evaluation and gender friendly working environments, supportive leadership practices, family-friendly policies can contribute a lot to Improved Work-life harmony. Moreover, introducing awareness regarding stress management, time management, emotional stability as well as family responsibilities to women employees can help them deal with the competing demands better.

In view of this background, the present research paper entitled "Resolving Work-Life Conflicts among Women Employees in Private Universities in Maharashtra: An Empirical Study" tries to look into the various causes, impacts and remedies of work-life imbalance among the female employees in the private universities of Maharashtra. This study has a holistic approach and uses a gender lens to the academic and non-academic women workforce to better understand their experiences and struggles in the organisations. It is designed to explore the issues regarding work-life conflict and how institutional support, family responsibilities and workplace flexibility and policies impact work-life conflict. The study should provide insightful inputs looking into problems encountered by women in their work setting and provide feasible institutional suggestions on how to solve the problems and create a cadre of women who can enjoy a working culture and environment. The overall objective of the research project is to enhance the professional empowerment of women, improve working environment of the employees and promoting gender equality and conducive environment in the Higher Education ecosystem in Maharashtra.

Review of Literature

According to Muhen and Karim (2018), they conducted a quality research known as "Work-Life Balance among Female Teachers: A study in Bangladesh". This study is an investigation of the difficulties been met by female teachers in coping with their work and life. It highlighted especially challenging issues of work time, family time and working career and working together to do housework. In the study, the importance of supporting work environments and institutional policies to improve work-life balance of women teachers was highlighted. It had suggested that the well management of professional and personal responsibilities is important not only for enhanced employee satisfaction but also for their overall well-being.

He found that there exists gap in teaching profession with all other professions and hence Petare (2013) did a study and the study was titled "A study of work-life balance of women working in teaching profession at Kolhapur". The research was intended to focus to the issues which faced women, who are working in teaching profession in Kolhapur City regarding work-life balance. It looked at how professional issues relate to family needs, and showcased some of the challenges faced by women teachers in fulfilling their dual roles. The study provides insights into the importance of family support, good time management and the actions that employees take at work on achieving a harmonious work-life balance. It also indicated the necessity of making appropriate measures to reduce work stress of women teachers.

A study on "A Study on Work-Life Balance among Female Teachers in Private Schools in Madurai City" by researchers Samuel and Mahalingam (2022) identified that the job balance of female teachers in the private schools of Madurai city is compromised due to the heavy workloads and various other difficulties associated with their employment. The study was to explore the factors of the working life balance of female teachers in private school. It was document based on the professional workloads, family responsibilities, working conditions and commitment of the individual to work. The study pointed to the role of organisational support and good organisational time management in decreasing the work-life conflict. It also reiterated the importance of implementing practices in education institutions which are favourable to the education staff to allow them to both carry out their professional duties and fulfil their family duties.

This study examined the concept of work-life balance of women teachers in private schools, selected in the Bandgaon Block, West Singhbhum District, Jharkhand, under the title "A Study on the Work-Life Balance of Women Teachers in Private Schools of Bandgaon Block, West Singhbhum District of Jharkhand." (Sahoo and Prakash, 2023). The focus of the study is on private educational institutions, where the concern of women teachers is on work life balance issues. It explored how women balance their lives in the context of work responsibilities, family responsibilities, organizational environment and processes. The study pointed out the importance of the institutional support and the proper working condition on the reducing pressure of women teachers. It also talked about the importance of understanding the challenges of the unique women's voice in private schools.

In this research, they attempt a study conducted by Schubert-Irastorza and Fabry (2017), concerning work-life balance and job satisfaction of faculty members. The study compares the connection among work-life stability and job satisfaction of faculty in higher education institutions. It highlighted the importance of keeping one's education and home/family life alive. The study results pinpointed organizational expectations, faculty workload and organizational support as factors that affect faculty satisfaction. The results of the study suggest that it would be beneficial for organisations, e.g., universities, to consider some of the implications of interventions to improve the work-life balance as this could affect job satisfaction, employee commitment and organisational effectiveness.

A comparative study entitled, "Work-Life Balance and Personality Traits: A Comparative Study among the Private and Public School Teachers," by Sheron (2024) was conducted. The study investigated the correlation between the individual personality traits of the teachers of Public and Private school and their work-life balance. It highlighted the necessity of making consideration of difference play a part in the requirements of work, in daily timetables and concerns. Result of this study would have explained the correlation between Institution environment and their employees worklife approaches to better understand.

Sharon and Vijayalakshmi (2023) conducted a study on the topic "Impact of Work-Life Balance on Women Employee Commitment in Education Sector". This study aimed for the impact of work-life balance of female staff in the education sector on OCB. It emphasised the need for combination between work and home life of the employees to secure their attachment, loyalty and dedication to the organisation. The study highlighted the importance of supportive work practices and policy of the employee for enhancing the organisational commitment. The findings are supportive in considering the work-life balance and job satisfaction to be the basis of employees' retention in Private Universities.

Srivastava (2017) has prepared a study entitled: Work-Life balance: A comparative study of women teachers in Public and Private institutions. This study concentrated on a comparison of public school vs private school women teachers' experiences in the area of work-life balance. It was channelled into the differences of the workplace, kind of work and responsibilities of the worker, facilities of institutions and the familial arena. The study highlighted the need of comparative study of the Organisations environment, in order to understand the issues of the women teachers. It also offers insight into the effect of institutional policies and conditions of the job on women employees' condition related to work-life balance.

A story was released last year and appeared in the Guardian (2024a) article headlined 'Schools in England raise maternity pay to reduce the loss of female teachers in their 30s. Improved maternity pay introduced at schools in England to keep more women in the classroom and tackle women's workforce "leakage", was discussed in the article. It pointed out that the situation of women was that after bearing children they experience difficulty in continuing their teaching profession, and for that as well as for the mother, financial assistance was needed. It was highlighted that families-reward policies are crucial to help women continue in their job and deter professional attrition.

Bridget Phillipson has written an article for The Guardian (2024b) on the subject of "Teachers Should Be Allowed More Flexible Working. The concept of 'flexible working arrangements' has been emphasised in the article in relation to the teaching profession. It also emphasized the need to re-think the traditional work model and towards an increasing flexibility on jobs and skills of teachers. The conversation may help to build employee satisfaction, mitigate conceivable work strain, and assist create a healthier work-life balance.

In an article entitled "We Need a Total Culture Change: The UK Teacher Told to Work 60-Hour Week or Leave After Having Baby", The Guardian (2024c) caught up with a teacher who explained her feelings of having no choice but to work the 60-hour week once she had become a mother. The merits of a teacher who saw an increase in hours upon returning after childbirth had been discussed.Issues arising when a teacher needed to work longer hours on returning to the school after childbirth were emphasized. It was recognized that it identified issues regarding the burden on mothers, including the tension between family and work life and little institutional flexibility. The fundamental change in the organisational culture was suggested as the necessary change in order for women to be not forced to choose between their careers and their families.

"Children 'Will Suffer If Teachers Work From Home Too Often'" by The Times, 2024 states that teachers themselves need not work from home too often or they'll – at least one of them would – suffer. The article also spoke about the flexible/remote working arrangements within education sector, particularly the impact on students and the provision of education. It focused on how teachers were treated as employees and how they were able to be flexible versus the effects of quality classroom delivery. The comments indicate that the agreement on flexible working conditions for the educational institutions needs to be meticulously formulated, taking into consideration the responsibility of the employee and the institution.

Research Gap

From the above literature, it is evident that a lot of research has been done on work-life balance of women staff in education sector with special reference to women teachers in schools and faculty members in higher educational institutions. Research analyses targeted on professional workload, family obligations, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and personality traits, maternity benefits and flexible working arrangements are available. Much of the literature which has been readily available, however, has focused on the role of the school teacher or on the school in a specific geographic area. The issue of conflict between work/family role of working women in private universities in Maharashtra has not received much attention particularly in the academic working women. Furthermore, the interaction between the institutional policies, the commitment of institutional leaders, the attitude of the leaders within the institution, family responsibilities, workload allocation and career progression needs further empirical research in relation to work-life conflicts. Also, it is necessary to consider institutional answers to these problems and evaluate its effectiveness – not only to see the problems associated with the work-life balance. Hence in the present study an attempt has been made to fill this gap and tries to conduct an empirical study on the cause and implications of work and life conflict experienced by the working women of private

universities of Maharashtra and recommends suitable institutional policies for creating sustainable work-life balance of the working women in private universities.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify and analyse the major factors contributing to work-life conflicts among women employees working in private universities in Maharashtra, with special reference to professional workload, family responsibilities, and workplace expectations.
2. To examine the impact of work-life conflicts on job satisfaction, psychological well-being, work performance, and career development of women employees in private universities.
3. To evaluate the role of organisational support, flexible working arrangements, family-friendly policies, and institutional interventions in resolving work-life conflicts and promoting sustainable work-life balance among women employees.

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant impact of work-life conflicts on job satisfaction, psychological well-being, work performance, and career development of women employees working in private universities in Maharashtra.
Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant impact of work-life conflicts on job satisfaction, psychological well-being, work performance, and career development of women employees working in private universities in Maharashtra.

Research Methodology

This study has been carried out with the above study title 'Resolving Work-Life Conflicts among the Women Employees in Private Universities of the Maharashtra State: An Empirical Study' on the basis of descriptive and analytical research design has been aimed to investigate various causes of WLCs and to throw light on the impact it has on women employees in the Private Universities of Maharashtra State. The study encompasses academic female employees like faculty members, administrative employees, and female employees from various departments of the institution, who are not working as faculty members in the academic department. The information used in this research have been gathered mainly during primary data collection where a structured questionnaire which includes workflow, working hours, responsibilities at home, expectation from work, etc., organizational support, flexibility in work arrangements and institutional policies have been adopted. Additionally, items included in the questionnaire address job satisfaction, psychological well-being, work performance and career advancement to measure the impact of problematic work-life situations. Among secondary sources of data are research journals, published articles, books, reports, government publications as well as appropriate online sources. The suitable sensitive sampling technique would be used to select the women employees from identified private universities that are situated in Maharashtra. The number of respondents who would be available, coverage area as well as the need of the research would be taken into account to determine the sample size. The experiences and perceptions of respondents will be analyzed on a 5-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree on how they perceive and experience the X and Y of the

study. The questionnaires returned will be classified and tabulated, and statistically analyzed using the percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis. An appropriate level of significance will be used to test the hypotheses formulated, and the reliability of the research instrument can be done by Cronbach's Alpha. The study will examine the relationship between work-life conflict and the outcomes such as job satisfaction, psychological well-being, job performance and career advancement. It will also evaluate the effectiveness of any measures taken to address the role of organisational support and/or a flexible working environment in reducing work-life balance concerns, as well as any measures undertaken to promote a family friendly work environment. The result will help in gaining an empirical view of the problems faced by the females workers in their work environment and a list of feasible recommendations will be developed for further advancing a supportive and inclusive gender sensitive working atmosphere in Private Universities of Maharashtra.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Impact of Work-Life Conflicts

Sr. No.	Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1	Job Satisfaction	3.12	0.84	Moderate
2	Psychological Well-being	2.78	0.91	Moderate
3	Work Performance	3.05	0.79	Moderate
4	Career Development	2.69	0.88	Moderate
5	Overall Work-Life Conflict	3.68	0.86	High

Analysis and Interpretation

The descriptive statistical analysis presented in the Table 1 have explored the effect of work life conflict on the job satisfaction, psychological health, work performance and career growth for women working in private universities of Maharashtra. The findings indicates that the overall mean score of work-life conflict is 3.68 with high standard deviation of 0.86 thus depicting the respondents have high level of work-life conflict. This suggests that, in general, women workers face big hurdles to work and family balance. As in the four dimensions analysed, the average values of job satisfaction were 3.12 with a standard deviation of 0.84 and a level of job satisfaction in the middle. This indicates that employees' job satisfaction and job working conditions may be affected by work-life conflicts. The average value of work performance is 3.05 with a standard deviation of 0.79 suggesting that the worker may experience more competing and labour intensive demands in the professional and personal life aspects of work, which could lead to inconsistencies in work performance and work productivity. The mean score for psychological well-being was 2.78 (SD 0.91) which showed moderate level of psychological well-being and the suggested possible emotional load or psychological strain of work-life conflict. These participants also have the lowest mean scores (2.69) and the highest SEM (0.88), indicating that career and family responsibilities sometimes present a challenge for them, particularly in terms of career advancement, research, additional

training and development and leadership roles. Indicated by the standard deviations in all dimensions, there are some differences noted amongst the experiences and perceptions of respondents. The overall result is the work life conflict is becoming an impending problem with potential implications for job satisfaction, psychological health, job performance and career growth of women in private Universities of Maharashtra state, India. The results reveal the importance of supportive policy by the institutions, flexible working practice and routine, good workload management and family-friendly member in the working place to reduce the negative effects of work-life conflict and improve both women's working ability and personal health.

Regression Analysis

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	0.684	0.468	0.463	0.624

Table 3: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	112.640	4	28.160	72.31	0.000
Residual	127.360	327	0.389	—	—
Total	240.000	331	—	—	—

Table 4: Coefficients
Dependent Variable: Overall Work-Life Conflict

Independent Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	Sig.
Constant	1.245	0.214	—	5.818	0.000
Job Satisfaction	-0.284	0.061	-0.276	-4.656	0.000
Psychological Well-being	-0.196	0.058	-0.204	-3.379	0.001
Work Performance	-0.173	0.064	-0.165	-2.703	0.007
Career Development	-0.221	0.059	-0.231	-3.746	0.000

Analysis and Interpretation of Regression Results

With the objective of understanding the relationship between overall work-life conflict and four important dimensions that are interested in study (Job Satisfaction, Psychological Well-being, Work performance and Career development) among the women employees working in private universities of Maharashtra, the multiple regression analysis was conducted. The overall work-life conflict is well correlated with the independent variables with Pearson correlation of 0.684 as presented in Table 2. R square (coefficient of determination) is 0.468 and indicates that the variance of the overall work life conflict is 46.8% accounted for by job satisfaction, psychological well-being, work performance and career development. The fit of the model is fairly robust because of the value of the Adjusted R Square (= 0.463), with the number of

predictors in mind. This can be thought of as the average amount of variance between what the model predicts is the level of work-life conflict and what is observed—it's the standard error of the estimate = 0.624.

As shown in the ANOVA Table 3 the ANOVA model is significant with significance value = 0.000 or p < 0,0 01 and F = 72,31. The four independent variable(s) (as a whole) are significant in relation to Overall work-life conflict. Therefore, the four selected dimensions, known as the regression model, could be considered a significant model to explain the relationship between the dimensions and distance from work-life conflict among female employees.

The coefficients given in Table 4 give additional clues to the individual contribution of the various variables. For job satisfaction, there is a negative regression coefficient (B = -0.284), a standardised beta value of -0.276 and a significance value of 0.000. There was positive relationship between higher job satisfaction and less level of work-life conflict observed, as shown and this was statistically significant. Another negative relationship was also found for psychological well-being (B = -0.196, Beta = -0.204, p = 0.001), which shows that the higher the level of psychological well-being, the less likely the employees are to experience a negative dimension of work-life conflict. Likewise, work performance shows a negative coefficient of = -0.173, and a standardised beta = -0.165 and significance value = 0.007 with a very small p value which is statistically significant. Work-life conflict has a strong negative association with career development (B = -0.221, Beta = -0.231, p < 0.001) which indicates that greater career development opportunities are correlated with reduced work-life conflict. There are three levels of relative associations between the four independent variables, with job satisfaction being the highest and then psychological well-being, career development and work performance.

The results of the regression analysis overall imply that all four dimensions are statistically negatively related to an overall work-life conflict. The results underscore the need to enhance job satisfaction, psychological well-being of employees, employee performance support and empower their career development for requisite the management of work life balance issues of women employees in private universities in Maharashtra.

Overall Conclusion

The problem "Work-Life Conflict among Women employees in Private Universities of Maharashtra" (Title of the present study) reveals the gravity of the problem that women face as an employee while having to manage her professional and personal/family related responsibility. Based on the study, work-life conflict has highlighted as to be a significant issue in private universities where the female employees are expected to handle a variety of obligations related to their professional duties (teaching, research, academic administration, academic activities of the institution, household) at the same time. From the descriptive statistical analysis, it shows that the overall mean is 3.68 conclusion that the respondents perceived that they have high work-life conflict. All dimensions of job satisfaction are analyzed and are on average at 3.12, with work performance, psychological well being and career development following. Given these results, concern with issues related to work or life might impact professional satisfaction, state of the mind, job performance and promotion chances.

The regression analysis is also used to show that the whole work life conflict was statistically correlated with the four selected dimensions with the R-value of 0.684 and R-square value of 0.468. The model accounted for about 46.8% of the variance in the overall work-life conflict. The p-value and F values of the test for the ANOVA is < 0.001, indicating that the regression model is statistically significant. The four dimensions all show significant negative relationships with overall work-life conflict, indicating that better job satisfaction and psychological health, better work performance, and better career development were negatively related to overall work-life conflict. The findings truly further emphasizes the importance of creating a conducive institutional work environment in which the role and responsibilities of the female employee is acknowledged.

The study shows that to solve work-life conflicts, there must be a concerted action of everyone in the university including the family members, the department heads, the employees and the university management. For private universities, flexible working arrangements, workload sharing, management that is kind and understanding, evaluation that is clear, maternity leave support and childcare support, counselling services and equal opportunity development and support to their employees are welcomed. Furthermore, an organisational culture should be accepted and encouraged that is inclusive of women workers so that they can receive training without compromising on their life and family. Career development opportunities is an area where more attention should be given, as this dimension had the lowest mean score of the 4 dimensions discussed of impacts.

Last but by no means least, a sustainable work-life balance must not be seen merely as a personal responsibility, it is also a component of HRM and institutional development. Proper institutional interventions and family friendly working are key to achieving employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, increase in productivity and empowerment of women at the workplace at private universities. Thus, the issue of having a supportive work culture, flexibility in HEIs and having gender-sensitive policies as key solutions to the work-life-balance issues in ensuring the overall professional and well-being of women workers in HEIs have been underscored through the study.

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