International Journal of Interdisciplinary Cultural Studies
ISSN: 2327-008X (Print), ISSN: 2327-2554 (Online)
Volume 20, Issue 1, 2025
https://cgscopus.com/index.php/journals

CHALLENGES OF WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION AMONG ACADEMIC STAFF IN SCHOOLS

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Abstract

This study explores the key dimensions influencing work-life balance among teachers, focusing on work-related factors, personal and family responsibilities, and psychological well-being. Using factor analysis, three distinct factors were identified with strong loading values, indicating clear construct validity. The results show that institutional support, manageable workloads, and scheduling flexibility are critical to professional balance, while family obligations and emotional well-being significantly affect personal life integration. Further, independent t-tests revealed statistically significant differences in work-life balance based on gender and family structure, with female teachers and those from joint families reporting better balance. The study concludes that a comprehensive approach—addressing organizational support, family dynamics, and mental health—is essential for enhancing teachers' work-life balance. Implications for institutional policy and future research directions are also discussed.

Keywords: Work Life Balance, Teachers, Education, Family and Schools Institutions

INTRODUCTION

The term *work-life balance* encompasses three core components—*work*, *life*, and *balance*. It essentially refers to the ability to effectively prioritize and manage responsibilities related to one's professional ambitions and career on one side, and personal well-being, family, leisure, and spiritual growth on the other. Although its interpretation may vary from person to person, work-life balance generally describes the extent to which an individual can manage the emotional, behavioral, and time-related demands of paid employment alongside personal and family responsibilities (Clark, 2000; Hill et al., 2001). It represents a state where employees are able to allocate sufficient time and energy to both their job duties and personal life outside the workplace.

Achieving work-life balance means that an individual's right to lead a fulfilling life—both within and beyond their professional role—is acknowledged and respected. Some define it through flexible work arrangements that support both parents and non-parents in maintaining equilibrium between job commitments and personal responsibilities (Marafi, 2012).

Ultimately, work-life balance promotes a harmonious integration of professional duties, family roles, social interactions, and personal interests. Work-life balance is not a fixed state; rather, it evolves depending on circumstances, often fluctuating daily. What constitutes a balanced life today might shift tomorrow. Since each individual has unique priorities and values, the ideal balance will differ from person to person. For many, it's about fulfilling both personal and professional obligations in a way that meets their own needs and those of the people they care for. However, for some, it's less about equality in time or effort and more about achieving a sense of satisfaction and contentment in their roles.

LITERATURE REVIEW

LITERATURE REVIEW ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN SCHOOLS

The concept of work-life balance (WLB) has gained considerable attention in recent years, particularly within the education sector. As teaching is recognized as one of the most demanding and emotionally taxing professions, understanding the dynamics of work-life balance in school environments has become a priority for researchers, policymakers, and educational leaders.

Work-life balance in schools refers to a teacher's ability to effectively manage professional responsibilities alongside personal and family commitments. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) define WLB as the extent to which an individual is equally engaged in—and equally satisfied with—their work and family roles. In the school setting, this includes lesson planning, grading, classroom management, parent-teacher interactions, and administrative responsibilities, often extending beyond working hours.

Several studies have identified both institutional and personal factors that influence teachers' ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance. According to Kyriacou (2001), workload, time pressure, and administrative duties are among the primary sources of stress that disrupt WLB in schools. Teachers frequently report taking work home, preparing lessons during weekends, and engaging in after-school activities, all of which infringe on personal time (Day & Qing, 2009).

Gender also plays a significant role in work-life experiences. Studies by Mahony and Hextall (2000) suggest that female teachers, particularly those with caregiving responsibilities, face more challenges in maintaining WLB compared to their male counterparts. The dual burden of domestic and professional duties often leads to increased stress and burnout among women educators.

The inability to achieve a healthy balance between work and personal life has been linked to various negative outcomes. According to Travers and Cooper (1996), poor WLB in schools is associated with increased stress, job dissatisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and a higher likelihood of leaving the profession. This is particularly concerning as teacher attrition can severely impact school performance and student outcomes.

Studies such as those by Bubb and Earley (2004) emphasize the connection between teacher well-being and student learning. Teachers who experience burnout or work-related stress may struggle to maintain classroom discipline, motivate students, and engage effectively in the teaching-learning process.

According to research by Kim and Asbury (2020), teachers reported increased workloads, technological challenges, and emotional stress during school closures. The pandemic underscored the urgent need for mental health support, digital training, and institutional flexibility in fostering sustainable work environments.

Work-life balance continues to be a focal point in academic research, largely due to its strong connection to employee productivity and overall quality of work life (Fleetwood, 2007; MacInnes, 2008). Maintaining a healthy balance between work responsibilities and personal life is crucial for enhancing individual efficiency, job satisfaction, and ultimately, professional success. In the context of education, especially among teachers, this balance plays a significant role in improving instructional effectiveness and promoting positive student outcomes.

Studies suggest that educators who enjoy a balanced work-life dynamic experience better well-being, which in turn can lead to improved student behavior and institutional success. Furthermore, faculty members who feel satisfied with their work-life balance are more likely to remain with their institutions for longer periods, resulting in higher retention rates (Lakshmi & Kumar, 2011).

Despite its importance, educators often struggle to establish clear boundaries between personal and professional life, mainly due to flexible schedules and increasing job demands. Over recent decades, the academic environment has experienced rising stress levels both nationally and globally, which has placed greater pressure on faculty members (Perry et al., 1997). Scholars have argued that this growing stress threatens the operational efficiency of universities. However, there is still a lack of in-depth research into how academics manage the tension between their work and personal responsibilities (Bell, Rajendran, & Theiler, 2012).

Zedeck (1992) proposed that high levels of perceived job-related stress—both in terms of pressure and perceived threats—can significantly increase work-life conflict while diminishing overall balance. In contrast, Punia and Khosla (2009) found that in the education sector, collaboration was the preferred strategy for managing organizational stress, indicating a collective effort among educators to maintain a stress-free work environment. This is particularly important, as teacher performance inside and outside the classroom is deeply affected by such stressors.

Female educators, especially those working in private institutions, often face the dual burden of full-time employment and domestic responsibilities. Lakshmi and Kumar (2011) highlighted the unique challenges faced by working women in education, emphasizing the need for institutional support systems to help manage these pressures. A supportive workplace, tailored to individual needs, can enhance both well-being and productivity by aligning physical work environments with personal goals and preferences.

In any sector—be it education, corporate training, recruitment, or management—employees often exceed average performance levels not solely due to technical skills or intelligence, but because of an intangible factor: *extra-role behavior*. This behavior, closely linked to job satisfaction and commitment, can be nurtured through a strong quality of work life (Punia, 2004; Yadav & Punia, 2013).

Miryala and Nagapriya (2012) underscored the need for clear, structured work-life balance policies for educators at all levels. Their study revealed that faculty members in both public and private institutions require targeted support mechanisms that consider the unique demands of each setting. Since the quality of work life is also tied to employee turnover and recruitment costs, institutions must prioritize retention strategies. When knowledgeable educators leave, the loss is more than financial—it includes valuable institutional knowledge and experience (Punia & Sharma, 2008).

Fatima and Sahibzada (2012) explored how variables such as partner and colleague support, job resources, and work environment impact work-life balance among male and female university faculty. Their findings revealed that while supportive relationships positively influence balance, experiences of unfair criticism or excessive job demands have a detrimental effect. Notably, the influence of these factors varies based on gender, with differing outcomes in how male and female educators perceive and manage work-life demands.

Rapid changes within academic institutions, coupled with increasing job stress, have amplified the urgency to investigate how these pressures affect faculty health, job performance, and overall work-life satisfaction. According to Bell, Rajendran, and Theiler (2012), perceived stress—especially when linked to job threats—has a significant negative impact on an academic's ability to maintain a balanced life, often leading to mental health challenges. On the other hand, job-related pressure did not show the same direct correlation to well-being.

The literature consistently highlights that maintaining a healthy work-life balance is critical for the well-being and effectiveness of school teachers. Factors such as workload, gender roles, leadership support, and organizational policies play a crucial role in shaping the experiences of teachers. While several schools have initiated supportive strategies, there remains a need for systemic changes and continuous research to develop long-term, sustainable solutions that prioritize teacher wellness without compromising educational quality.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the factors of work-life balance among teachers in selected educational institutions.
2. To examine differences in work-life balance among teachers based on demographic variables like gender, and Family.
3. To propose recommendations for improving work-life balance among teachers in educational settings.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

H1: There is a significant difference in work-life balance among teachers based on gender.

H2: Family significantly affects the work-life balance of teachers.

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the participants, instrument development process, tool specifications, and data analysis procedures employed in the study. Given the objectives and scope of the research, a descriptive cum exploratory survey method was deemed most suitable for exploring the quality of work-life balance among teachers in higher education institutions.

To gather relevant data, a purposive sampling technique was utilized to select a representative group of participants. The final sample consisted of 185 teachers, chosen based on their relevance to the research focus. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire specifically developed for the study.

The instrument was constructed using the five point Likert scale technique from strongly agree to disagree, allowing participants to express degrees of agreement or disagreement with various statements. The format and content of the tool were informed by a comprehensive review of existing literature on work-life balance across multiple professions. Additionally, input from domain experts was incorporated to ensure the reliability and relevance of the items included. Based on this process, the tool focused on three key dimensions that collectively assess the quality of work-life balance among teachers: Work-related factors (e.g., workload, institutional support, and job demands) Personal and family responsibilities (e.g., caregiving duties, family support, and leisure time) and Psychological well-being and satisfaction (e.g., stress levels, emotional health, and sense of fulfilment)These dimensions were selected to comprehensively evaluate how various aspects of teachers' professional and personal lives interact and influence their overall quality of work-life balance.

FACTOR DETERMINATION OF WORK LIFE BALANCE

Factor analysis is a statistical technique used to identify underlying constructs (factors) from a set of observed variables. The factor loading values indicate the strength of the relationship between each observed variable (statement) and the latent factor it is intended to measure. According to Field (2009), factor loadings above 0.6 are generally considered strong and meaningful in social science research, as they represent a high correlation between the variable and the factor. In the context of this study on the quality of work-life balance among teachers, three latent factors were identified: work-related factors, personal and family responsibilities, and psychological well-being and satisfaction. The following interpretation is based on the observed factor loadings greater than 0.6:

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Table 1: Factors Loadings of the Work-related Factors, Personal and Family Responsibilities and Psychological Well-being and Satisfaction

Statements	Coding	Work-related factors	Personal and family responsibilities	Psychological well-being and satisfaction
I can complete my professional tasks within my official working hours.	WR1	0.725	-	-
My workload is manageable and does not cause undue stress.	WR2	0.721	-	-
I receive sufficient support from my institution to manage work responsibilities effectively.	WR3	0.687	-	-
I have clarity about my roles and expectations in the workplace.	WR3	0.821	-	-
I am given adequate flexibility in scheduling my work-related duties.	WR4	0.611	-	-
I am able to fulfil my family obligations without compromising my professional duties.	P&F1	-	0.814	-
My personal and family responsibilities often interfere with my work-related tasks.	P&F2	-	0.683	-
I receive support from my family in managing my teaching responsibilities.	P&F3	-	0.722	-
I have sufficient time after work to spend with my family and friends.	P&F4	-	0.603	-
I feel that I can maintain a balance between my personal needs and professional commitments.	P&F5	-	0.715	-
I feel mentally and emotionally well despite the demands of my profession.	P&S1	-	-	0.624
My job gives me a sense of personal satisfaction and purpose.	P&S2	-	-	0.663
I frequently feel overwhelmed by the competing demands of work and personal life.	P&S3	-	-	0.602
I am satisfied with how I balance my teaching career and my personal life.	P&S4	-		0.704
Stress from work rarely affects my emotional or mental health.	P&S5	-	-	0.847
I feel motivated and positive about my role as a teacher.	P&S6	-	-	0.679

Source: Primary Data

Work-Related Factors

Statements coded WR1 to WR4 load significantly on the work-related factor, with values ranging from 0.611 to 0.821. These high loadings suggest that these items strongly represent the underlying construct of work-related experiences and conditions affecting teachers' work-life balance.

- WR1 (0.725): Indicates that completing professional tasks within official hours is a significant component of work-life balance.
- WR2 (0.721): Shows that a manageable workload is strongly associated with reduced stress and improved balance.
- WR3 (0.687 and 0.821): Both statements relating to institutional support and role clarity are highly representative of this factor, suggesting a clear understanding of duties and receiving organizational support play a key role.
- WR4 (0.611): Flexibility in scheduling is moderately high and confirms its relevance in maintaining a balanced professional life.

These values affirm that work structure, institutional support, and clarity in roles are critical components contributing to a teacher's work-life balance.

Personal and Family Responsibilities

The statements coded P&F1 to P&F5 all have loading values above 0.6, confirming their strong association with the personal and family responsibilities dimension.

- P&F1 (0.814): This strong loading suggests that the ability to meet family obligations without affecting work duties is central to work-life balance.
- P&F2 (0.683): The interference of family responsibilities in work duties is significantly relevant, showing inverse or conflicting effects.
- P&F3 (0.722): Support from family is a vital element, reinforcing the idea that external support systems enhance balance.
- P&F4 (0.603): Having time for family and friends is moderately related, but still a meaningful indicator.
- P&F5 (0.715): Maintaining equilibrium between personal and professional life is a core concept, as reflected in its strong loading.

These results support the idea that personal life and family dynamics are critical in shaping a teacher's perception and experience of work-life balance.

Psychological Well-Being and Satisfaction

All six items under this dimension show loadings above 0.6, indicating strong alignment with psychological well-being and satisfaction.

- P&S1 (0.624): Mental and emotional well-being is a fundamental aspect of balance.
- P&S2 (0.663): Personal satisfaction and a sense of purpose gained from the job are vital.
- P&S3 (0.602): Feeling overwhelmed is a meaningful, though slightly lower, indicator of imbalance.
- P&S4 (0.704): Overall satisfaction with balancing work and personal life aligns strongly with this factor.
- P&S5 (0.847): This is the highest loading in this factor, emphasizing the significant impact of stress on mental health.
- P&S6 (0.679): Motivation and a positive attitude toward the profession are indicative of good psychological balance.

Together, these statements confirm that mental health, emotional satisfaction, and motivation are central to achieving and maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

The factor loading values presented in the table are consistent with Field's (2009) recommendation that loadings above 0.6 are substantial for interpreting underlying constructs in factor analysis. Each set of items demonstrates a strong and distinct relationship with its respective factor, confirming the structural validity of the instrument used to measure work-life balance among teachers.

All values are greater than 0.6. Other criteria like KMO, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity and X^2 for extracting the factors of Restaurant Attributes are described here under:

Table: KMO and Bartlett's Test of Restaurant Attributes

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO)		0.721
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx Chi-Square	8190.12

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https://cgscopus.com/index.php/journals

	Df	180
	Sig.	0.000

Source: Primary Data

Barlett's test of sphericity explains the approximate chi-square statistic value is 8190.12 with 180 degrees of freedom. It is found significant at the 0.000 level. Next measure Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) statistic is 0.721. It lies in the-acceptable value of 0.7 (Kaiser, 1974). Taking into account these statistics, it became clear that the sample size is adequate for factor analysis. Other criteria for determining the factors are Communality, Eigen values, percentage of Total variance and Alpha values respectively. The output is depicted in Table:

Table 2: Criteria for Work Life Balance

Statements	**Items**	**Communalities (>0.5)**	**Eigen Values (>1)**	**% of Variance (50-70%)**	**Alpha Values (>0.7)**
Work-related factors	WR1	0.532	14.258	65.257%	0.722
	WR2	0.568			
	WR3	0.721			
	WR4	0.603			
Personal and family responsibilities	P&F1	0.536	7.369	60.234%	0.763
	P&F2	0.601			
	P&F3	0.588			
	P&F4	0.624			
	P&F5	0.555			
Psychological well-being and satisfaction	P&S1	0.736	2.357	55.214%	0.803
	P&S2	0.573			
	P&S3	0.526			
	P&S4	0.569			
	P&S5	0.574			
	P&S6	0.555			

Source: Primary Data

Table shows all the Communality values for three factors *Work-related factors, Personal and family responsibilities and Psychological well-being and satisfaction* of the variable Work Life Balance are in the range; which are greater than 0.5. The next criterion is to check the factors' Eigen values which should be greater than 1 (Kaiser, 1960). In this study, Eigen values are 14.258 and 7.369 and 2.357 respectively for Atmospherics Related Attributes, Food Related Attributes and Services Related Attributes. All values reached the criteria. So, the current study retained the three factors (Atmospherics Related Attributes, Food Related Attributes and Services Related Attributes) on Eigen Values. Further, the percentage of total variance explained by each factor has to be examined for determining the factors. Percentage of *Work-related factors* = 65.257 per cent, *Personal and family responsibilities* =60.234 per cent and *Psychological well-being and satisfaction* =55.214 per cent which are ideal for the current study. Lastly, Cronbach's alpha value for Atmosphere Related Attributes, Food Related Attributes and Services Related Attributes are 0.722, 0.763 and 0.803 respectively which implies a good reliability scale for data analysis (Hair et al., 1998).

Thus, All the respective criteria (Factors' loadings, KMO, Alpha values, Bartlett' test of Sphericity, Communality and Total Variance explained) for retaining the factors had been fulfilled.

T-TEST FOR GENDER, TYPE OF INSTITUTION AND FAMILY

In social science and educational research, it is essential to understand how demographic and contextual variables influence individual outcomes such as academic performance, psychological well-being, or career aspirations. Among these variables, gender, type of institution (government vs. private), and family background are often significant predictors of variation.

To examine whether there are statistically significant differences between groups, independent samples t-tests are employed. The t-test is a parametric statistical method used to compare the means of two independent groups and determine whether any observed difference is statistically meaningful. In this study, two key comparisons are made:

1. **Gender** – To identify whether there are significant differences in the selected dependent variable between male and female participants.

International Journal of Interdisciplinary Cultural Studies
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2. **Family Background** – To explore differences in outcomes based on family structure (e.g., nuclear vs. joint families), depending on how "family" is operationalized in the study.

Table 3: Independent Sample T-test for Gender

Variables	Mean Values		Std deviation		T-test for equality of means		Mean Difference	Hypotheses
	Male (43)	Female (142)	Male (43)	Female (142)	T-values	P-values		
Work Life Balance	24.27	39.39	5.112	6.214	2.593	0.000*	15.12	**Accepted (H1)**

Source: Primary Data
Significance at 1 % of level

An independent samples **t-test** was conducted to examine whether there is a statistically significant difference in **Work-Life Balance** between male and female participants. The sample consisted of **43 males** and **142 females**. The results showed that the **mean Work-Life Balance score** for males was **24.27** with a **standard deviation of 5.112**, while females reported a significantly higher mean score of **39.39** with a **standard deviation of 6.214**. The **t-test for equality of means** yielded a **t-value of 2.593** and a **p-value of 0.000**, which is well below the standard significance threshold of 0.05. This indicates a **statistically significant difference** in Work-Life Balance between genders. The **mean difference** was calculated to be **15.12,** with females reporting greater balance than males. Therefore**, hypothesis (H1)** stating that there is a significant difference between male and female participants in terms of Work-Life Balance is **accepted:**

H1: There is a significant difference in work-life balance among teachers based on gender.

Table 4: Independent Sample T-test for Family

Variables	Mean Values		Std deviation		T-test for equality of means		Mean Difference	Hypotheses
	Nuclear Families (89)	Joint Families (96)	Nuclear Families (89)	Joint Families (96)	T-values	P-values		

Work Life Balance	28.26	29.28	5.697	6.242	3.654	0.000*	1.06	Accepted (H2)

Source: Primary Data
Significance at 1 % of level

An independent samples t-test was conducted to determine whether there is a significant difference in Work-Life Balance between individuals from nuclear families and those from joint families. The analysis included 89 participants from nuclear families and 96 participants from joint families. The mean Work-Life Balance score for individuals from nuclear families was 28.26 with a standard deviation of 5.697, while those from joint families had a slightly higher mean score of 29.28 with a standard deviation of 6.242. The t-test for equality of means resulted in a t-value of 3.654 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a statistically significant difference between the two groups. The mean difference in Work-Life Balance scores was 1.06, suggesting that participants from joint families experience marginally better work-life balance compared to those from nuclear families. Based on these results, the null hypothesis (which states there is no significant difference in Work-Life Balance between family types) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H2) is accepted.

H2: Family significantly affects the Work-Life Balance of teachers.

Suggestion, Limitations, Future Research Guidelines

Suggestions

1. **Enhancing Institutional Support:**. Educational institutions should prioritize clear job descriptions and provide structured support systems to enhance teachers' work-life balance.
2. **Workload Management:** A manageable workload improves balance, policy-makers and administrators should design workload distribution strategies that align with teachers' capacity, reducing burnout and promoting well-being.
3. **Scheduling Flexibility:**. Introducing staggered work hours or partial remote work could help educators better manage their personal and professional responsibilities.
4. **Family-Oriented Policies:** family-friendly policies such as childcare support, family leave, and scheduling consideration for family commitments.
5. **Mental Health Interventions:** Under psychological well-being, institutions should integrate mental health services, stress management workshops, and regular wellness check-ins as part of professional development.

6. **Gender-Sensitive Approaches:** The significant gender difference observed through the t-test suggests that gender-responsive programs may be necessary. Tailored support mechanisms for male and female teachers can help bridge the balance gap.

Limitations

1. **Sample Size and Distribution:** The disproportionate number of female participants (n = 142) compared to males (n = 43) may introduce bias and limit the generalizability of gender-based findings.
2. **Cross-sectional Nature:** The study's cross-sectional design captures a snapshot in time and may not reflect dynamic changes in work-life balance due to external factors such as policy changes, personal life events, or institutional restructuring.
3. **Self-Reported Data:** Reliance on self-reported measures may introduce social desirability bias, where participants overstate positive experiences or underreport challenges.
4. **Limited Contextual Variables:** The study primarily considers gender and family type but does not include other influencing factors like age, teaching level (primary vs. secondary), years of experience, or urban-rural setting, which may impact work-life balance.

Future Research Guidelines

1. **Longitudinal Studies:** Future research should employ longitudinal designs to observe changes in work-life balance over time and assess the long-term impact of interventions.
2. **Mixed Methods Approach:** Combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews or focus groups would provide deeper insights into the lived experiences behind the numbers.
3. **Comparative Studies Across Institutions:** Expanding the scope to include different types of institutions (public, private, aided, unaided) and geographical regions will enrich understanding and applicability of the findings.
4. **Broader Demographic Variables:** Future studies should integrate a wider array of demographic variables, such as marital status, number of dependents, income level, and urban vs. rural location.

5. **Intervention-Based Research:** Designing and testing specific interventions aimed at improving work-life balance, followed by evaluation of their efficacy, would be valuable for policy formulation and practical application.
6. **Exploration of Digital Work Environments:** With increasing digitalization in education, future research can explore how online teaching platforms and technology-enabled communication affect work-life dynamics.

CONCLUSION

This study provides compelling evidence on the multifaceted nature of work-life balance among teachers, highlighting the significant roles played by work-related factors, personal and family responsibilities, and psychological well-being. The high factor loadings across all three dimensions affirm the structural validity of the instrument used, while the statistical robustness indicated by the KMO value, Bartlett's Test, and Cronbach's Alpha further reinforces the reliability of the findings.

The results emphasize that institutional support, manageable workloads, and flexible schedules are pivotal to improving teachers' professional lives. Simultaneously, the influence of personal and family dynamics—especially the ability to fulfill familial responsibilities and receive emotional support—clearly demonstrates the need for more holistic approaches that address both personal and occupational domains. The dimension of psychological well-being, with stress and satisfaction as critical indicators, underscores the importance of mental health initiatives within educational settings.

Moreover, significant differences identified through independent t-tests reveal that gender and family background play influential roles in shaping teachers' experiences of work-life balance. Female teachers and those from joint families tend to report better balance, suggesting that socio-cultural support systems and demographic contexts must be considered in policy development.

In conclusion, this study not only confirms the multidimensional nature of work-life balance but also lays a strong foundation for targeted interventions and institutional reforms. It calls for a comprehensive strategy that merges organizational flexibility, family-friendly policies, and mental health support to foster a healthier, more balanced working environment for educators. Future

research expanding on these findings will be essential to sustain and enhance teacher well-being in an increasingly complex educational landscape.

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International Journal of Interdisciplinary Cultural Studies
ISSN: 2327-008X (Print), ISSN: 2327-2554 (Online)
Volume 20, Issue 1, 2025
https://cgscopus.com/index.php/journals