

Determinants of Work-Life Balance among Female Teachers in Higher Education: An Empirical Study from the Rohilkhand Region of Uttar Pradesh, India

Sonia Singla^{1*}, Prof. (Dr.) Tulika Saxena²

^{1*}Research Scholar, Department of Business Administration, MJP Rohilkhand University, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh

²Head & Dean, Department of Business Administration, MJP Rohilkhand University, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

Work-life balance (WLB) has become a critical issue in higher education due to increasing work intensification, performance pressures, and expanding role expectations. Female teachers are particularly vulnerable to work-life imbalance as they simultaneously manage professional responsibilities and socially ascribed family and caregiving roles. Despite growing scholarly interest in work-life balance, empirical studies focusing on female academicians in semi-urban Indian contexts remain limited. This study examines the determinants of work-life balance among female teachers serving in higher education institutions in the Rohilkhand region of Uttar Pradesh.

Adopting a descriptive and analytical research design, primary data were collected from 407 female teachers working in universities and colleges across nine districts of the Rohilkhand region. A structured and validated questionnaire was used to measure work-life balance, work interference with personal life (WIPL), personal life interference with work (PLIW), and personal work-life enhancement (PWLE). Data were analysed using SPSS through reliability testing, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis.

The findings reveal that WIPL and PLIW exert a significant negative influence on work-life balance, whereas PWLE positively contributes to overall balance. The study confirms the relevance of spillover theory and role conflict theory in explaining female teachers' work-life experiences in a regional Indian context. The paper offers important theoretical contributions and provides practical and policy-oriented recommendations for higher education institutions to design gender-sensitive work-life balance interventions.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance; Female Teachers; Higher Education; Work-Family Conflict; India



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1. Introduction

Work-life balance (WLB) has emerged as a central concern in organisational and educational research due to its strong association with employee well-being, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and performance outcomes (Greenhaus & Allen, 2006; Haar et al., 2014). Contemporary work environments are characterised by work intensification, extended working hours, and blurred boundaries between professional and personal life, making the attainment of work-life balance increasingly complex (Kossek et al., 2014). In the higher education sector, academic work has expanded beyond traditional teaching roles to include research productivity, administrative responsibilities, accreditation requirements, and continuous performance evaluation, thereby intensifying work demands (Kinman & Jones, 2008; Bell et al., 2012). The challenge of work-life balance is particularly acute for female teachers. Gender-based research consistently

demonstrates that women experience higher levels of work-family conflict than men due to the unequal distribution of unpaid domestic labour and caregiving responsibilities (Hochschild & Machung, 2012; Byron, 2005). In academic contexts, female faculty members often perform multiple roles simultaneously-as educators, researchers, administrators, caregivers, and household managers-leading to role overload and emotional exhaustion (Gatrell et al., 2014; Eikhof et al., 2007). These challenges are further compounded by institutional cultures that prioritise productivity and availability over employee well-being.

In the Indian context, socio-cultural norms strongly shape women's work-life experiences. Despite increased female participation in higher education, traditional gender expectations regarding family responsibilities continue to persist, placing disproportionate pressure on working women (Rani & Kaur, 2018; Bhargava & Baral, 2009). Empirical studies

in India indicate that female teachers frequently experience stress due to rigid work schedules, administrative workload, lack of flexible work arrangements, and limited organisational support (Padmasiri & Mahalekamge, 2016; Malik et al., 2020). These pressures are often more pronounced in semi-urban and regional settings, where institutional resources and formal support mechanisms are limited. The Rohilkhand region of Uttar Pradesh represents a distinctive socio-academic context characterised by a growing higher education sector operating within traditional social structures and resource-constrained institutional environments. Although female teachers play a critical role in sustaining academic quality and institutional functioning in the region, systematic empirical research examining their work-life balance remains scarce. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the determinants of work-life balance among female teachers serving in higher education institutions in the Rohilkhand region, with specific attention to work interfering with personal life, personal life interfering with work, and personal work-life enhancement. By doing so, the study contributes to the work-life balance literature from a regional Indian perspective and offers evidence-based insights for institutional and policy-level interventions.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Conceptualising Work-Life Balance

The concept of work-life balance has evolved significantly over time. Early perspectives viewed work and family as separate domains that should be segmented to minimise conflict (Kanter, 1977). Subsequent theoretical developments challenged this view by emphasising the interdependence of work and personal life domains. Spillover theory suggests that experiences in one domain influence outcomes in another, either positively or negatively (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Similarly, role conflict theory posits that incompatible role demands across domains deplete individual resources, leading to stress and reduced effectiveness (Kahn et al., 1964).

Contemporary research conceptualises work-life balance not merely as the absence of conflict but as an individual's subjective evaluation of satisfaction and effectiveness across multiple life roles (Greenhaus & Allen, 2006). This multidimensional perspective recognises both negative interactions, such as work interfering with personal life (WIPL) and personal life interfering with work (PLIW), as well as positive interactions, often described as work-life enrichment or personal work-life enhancement (PWLE).

2.2 Work-Life Balance and Female Employees

A substantial body of literature indicates that women experience greater challenges in achieving work-life balance compared to men. Meta-analytic evidence suggests that women report higher levels of work-family conflict due to role overload and time-based pressures (Byron, 2005). The unequal distribution of domestic labour and caregiving responsibilities remains

a significant determinant of women's work-life experiences across cultures (Hochschild & Machung, 2012).

In professional and academic settings, female employees often encounter structural and cultural barriers, including limited access to flexible work arrangements, implicit gender bias, and expectations of constant availability (Eikhof et al., 2007; Özbilgin et al., 2011). These challenges contribute to stress, burnout, and career stagnation among women, particularly in knowledge-intensive professions such as higher education.

2.3 Work-Life Balance in Higher Education

Higher education institutions present a unique work environment characterised by high cognitive demands, emotional labour, and role multiplicity. Academic work increasingly extends beyond classroom teaching to include research output, publication pressure, student mentoring, administrative responsibilities, accreditation compliance, and community engagement (Kinman & Jones, 2008; Bell et al., 2012). These expanding role expectations often blur the boundaries between professional and personal life, making work-life balance particularly challenging for faculty members.

Empirical studies indicate that academic staff experience higher levels of work stress and emotional exhaustion compared to many other professional groups (Winefield et al., 2003; Kinman & Wray, 2018). Long working hours, weekend work, and the expectation of constant availability through digital technologies further intensify work-life conflict in academia (Baruch & Jenkins, 2007). These pressures have been found to negatively affect job satisfaction, mental health, and overall well-being among university teachers.

For female faculty members, the challenges of academic work are often compounded by gendered expectations related to family and caregiving roles. Research suggests that women in academia experience greater difficulty in balancing professional responsibilities with personal life demands, particularly during child-rearing and mid-career stages (Gatrell et al., 2014; Sang et al., 2015). The lack of institutional support mechanisms such as flexible scheduling, childcare facilities, and workload rationalisation further exacerbates work-life imbalance among female teachers.

2.4 Indian and Regional Studies on Work-Life Balance

In the Indian context, work-life balance research has highlighted the influence of socio-cultural norms, organisational practices, and institutional policies on employees' work-life experiences. Studies focusing on Indian women professionals consistently report high levels of work-family conflict due to rigid work structures and traditional expectations regarding women's domestic roles (Bhargava & Baral, 2009; Rani & Kaur, 2018).

Research on female teachers in India reveals that workload pressure, administrative duties, lack of autonomy, and insufficient institutional support are major contributors to work-life imbalance (Padmasiri &

Mahalekamge, 2016; Malik et al., 2020). Female faculty members often report stress arising from managing teaching responsibilities alongside household and caregiving duties, particularly in public and state-funded institutions where resources are constrained. However, most Indian studies on work-life balance are concentrated in metropolitan areas or private institutions, with limited attention to semi-urban and regional contexts. Regions such as Rohilkhand, characterised by traditional family structures and limited organisational support systems, remain underrepresented in empirical research. Consequently, there is a lack of context-specific evidence to inform institutional policies aimed at improving work-life balance among female teachers in such regions.

2.5 Research Gap and Theoretical Positioning

The review of existing literature highlights several critical gaps. First, there is a scarcity of empirical studies focusing on female teachers in higher education institutions located in semi-urban and regional Indian contexts. Second, existing research often examines work-life balance in a fragmented manner, without integrating negative spillover (WIPL and PLIW) and positive spillover (PWLE) within a single analytical framework. Third, limited attention has been paid to the applicability of established work-life balance theories—such as spillover theory and role conflict theory—in explaining female teachers' experiences in regional Indian settings.

Addressing these gaps, the present study adopts a multidimensional conceptualisation of work-life balance by simultaneously examining work interfering with personal life, personal life interfering with work, and personal work-life enhancement. The study is theoretically anchored in spillover theory (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) and role conflict theory (Kahn et al., 1964), providing a robust framework to analyse both negative and positive interactions between work and personal life domains among female teachers.

3. Objectives of the Study

Based on the identified research gaps and theoretical framework, the study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To examine the level of work-life balance among female teachers serving in higher education institutions in the Rohilkhand region.
2. To analyse the impact of work interfering with personal life on work-life balance among female teachers.
3. To assess the influence of personal life interfering with work on work-life balance.
4. To evaluate the role of personal work-life enhancement in improving work-life balance among female teachers.

4. Research Hypotheses

Grounded in spillover theory and role conflict theory, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- **H1:** Work interfering with personal life has a significant negative effect on work-life balance among female teachers.
- **H2:** Personal life interfering with work has a significant negative effect on work-life balance among female teachers.
- **H3:** Personal work-life enhancement has a significant positive effect on work-life balance among female teachers.

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Research Design

The study adopts a **descriptive and analytical research design**, appropriate for examining relationships among multiple variables and testing theoretically grounded hypotheses (Creswell, 2014).

5.2 Sample and Study Area

Primary data were collected from **407 female teachers** employed in universities and colleges across nine districts of the Rohilkhand region of Uttar Pradesh, namely Pilibhit, Bareilly, Budaun, Bijnor, Rampur, Moradabad, Shahjahanpur, Amroha, and Sambhal. The region was selected due to its growing higher education sector and limited representation in empirical work-life balance research.

5.3 Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire was used to collect data. The instrument comprised validated scales measuring work-life balance, work interfering with personal life, personal life interfering with work, and personal work-life enhancement, along with demographic variables. Content validity was ensured through expert review and pilot testing.

5.4 Reliability and Validity

The internal consistency of the measurement scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. All constructs demonstrated reliability coefficients exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

5.5 Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analysed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise respondent characteristics and variable distributions. Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to examine relationships among variables, followed by multiple regression analysis to test the study hypotheses.

6. Results and Analysis

The data were analysed using SPSS to examine the reliability of the measurement scales, describe the characteristics of the respondents, and test the proposed hypotheses. The results are presented in a structured manner to ensure clarity and analytical rigor.

6.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 presents a summary of the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The majority of the respondents were married, indicating the presence of

family responsibilities alongside professional commitments. A substantial proportion of respondents had less than ten years of teaching experience, reflecting the growing participation of women in higher education in the region.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 407)

Variable	Category	Percentage
Marital Status	Married	72.0
	Unmarried	28.0
Teaching Experience	Less than 5 years	34.0
	5-10 years	41.0
	More than 10 years	25.0

The demographic profile suggests that a large segment of female teachers is simultaneously managing early to mid-career professional demands and family responsibilities, making work-life balance a particularly relevant concern in this context.

6.2 Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach’s alpha to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales. As shown in Table 2, all constructs exhibited Cronbach’s alpha values above the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory reliability.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Construct	Cronbach’s Alpha
Work-Life Balance (WLB)	0.87
Work Interfering with Personal Life (WIPL)	0.84
Personal Life Interfering with Work (PLIW)	0.81
Personal Work-Life Enhancement (PWLE)	0.79

The reliability results confirm that the scales used in the study are internally consistent and suitable for further statistical analysis.

6.3 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to examine the central tendency and dispersion of the key study variables. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Key Constructs

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Work-Life Balance	3.12	0.68
Work Interfering with Personal Life	3.74	0.71
Personal Life Interfering with Work	3.41	0.66
Personal Work-Life Enhancement	3.29	0.62

The mean score for work-life balance indicates a **moderate level of balance** among female teachers. The relatively higher mean value for work interfering with personal life suggests that professional responsibilities frequently encroach upon personal and family life. Personal life interfering with work also shows a moderately high mean, reflecting the dual role pressures faced by female teachers. Personal work-life enhancement exhibits a moderate mean, indicating limited but present positive spillover between work and personal life.

6.4 Correlation Analysis

Pearson’s correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among work-life balance and its key dimensions. The correlation matrix is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix

Variable	WLB	WIPL	PLIW	PWLE
Work-Life Balance	1			
Work Interfering with Personal Life	−0.62**	1		
Personal Life Interfering with Work	−0.55**	0.48**	1	
Personal Work-Life Enhancement	0.51**	−0.34**	−0.29**	1

Note: p < 0.01

The results indicate a **strong and significant negative relationship** between work interfering with personal life and work-life balance, as well as between personal life interfering with work and work-life balance. Conversely, personal work-life enhancement shows a **significant positive relationship** with work-life balance. These findings provide preliminary support for the proposed hypotheses.

6.5 Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the combined effect of work interfering with personal life, personal life interfering with work, and personal work-life enhancement on work-life balance. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Regression Analysis (Dependent Variable: Work-Life Balance)

Predictor	Standardised β	t-value	p-value
Work Interfering with Personal Life	-0.41	-8.62	< 0.001
Personal Life Interfering with Work	-0.33	-6.74	< 0.001
Personal Work-Life Enhancement	0.29	5.98	< 0.001

The regression results indicate that work interfering with personal life is the **strongest negative predictor** of work-life balance among female teachers, followed by personal life interfering with work. Personal work-life enhancement exerts a **significant positive influence** on work-life balance. All three hypotheses (H1, H2, and H3) are supported at the 1 per cent level of significance.

6.6 Summary of Results

The empirical findings demonstrate that work-life balance among female teachers in higher education is shaped by both negative and positive spillover processes. Excessive work demands and family responsibilities significantly undermine balance, while positive interactions between work and personal life contribute to improved well-being and role satisfaction.

7. Discussion

The present study provides robust empirical evidence on the determinants of work-life balance among female teachers in higher education institutions in the Rohilkhand region of Uttar Pradesh. The findings clearly demonstrate that work-life balance is a multidimensional construct shaped by both negative and positive spillover processes, consistent with established theoretical frameworks.

The strong negative influence of work interfering with personal life on work-life balance corroborates earlier research indicating that excessive workload, administrative responsibilities, and extended working hours significantly erode personal and family time (Kinman & Jones, 2008; Byron, 2005). In line with spillover theory, the intrusion of work demands into personal domains generates stress, emotional exhaustion, and dissatisfaction, particularly among women who already shoulder substantial domestic responsibilities (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Hochschild & Machung, 2012). The magnitude of this effect in the present study underscores the intensification of academic work in regional higher education institutions.

Similarly, the significant negative effect of personal life interfering with work supports role conflict theory, which posits that competing role demands deplete individual resources and reduce effectiveness across

domains (Kahn et al., 1964; Michel et al., 2011). The findings suggest that family responsibilities, caregiving duties, and socio-cultural expectations continue to constrain female teachers' professional engagement, especially in semi-urban contexts where institutional support systems are limited. This result aligns with Indian studies highlighting the persistence of gendered role expectations and their adverse impact on women's professional lives (Bhargava & Baral, 2009; Rani & Kaur, 2018).

Importantly, the positive influence of personal work-life enhancement on work-life balance lends empirical support to enrichment and positive spillover perspectives (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Haar et al., 2014). The findings indicate that when female teachers experience satisfaction, support, and meaning in one domain, these positive experiences can enhance functioning in the other domain. This highlights the potential of organisational interventions that foster supportive work environments and acknowledge employees' non-work roles.

By situating these findings within the socio-cultural context of the Rohilkhand region, the study extends existing work-life balance literature and demonstrates the relevance of established theories in explaining women's work-life experiences in regional Indian settings.

8. Implications of the Study

8.1 Theoretical Implications

The study contributes to work-life balance literature by empirically integrating negative spillover (work interfering with personal life and personal life interfering with work) and positive spillover (personal work-life enhancement) within a single analytical framework. By grounding the analysis in spillover theory and role conflict theory, the study reinforces the explanatory power of these frameworks in understanding female teachers' work-life experiences in higher education. Furthermore, the regional focus adds contextual depth to predominantly urban-centric and Western-dominated scholarship.

8.2 Practical Implications

The findings have significant implications for higher education institutions. Institutional leaders and administrators should recognise the disproportionate work-life pressures faced by female teachers and adopt gender-sensitive human resource practices. These may include flexible working arrangements, rationalisation of administrative workload, mentoring support, and recognition of non-academic contributions. Creating supportive organisational cultures can enhance personal work-life enhancement and mitigate the negative effects of work-family conflict.

8.3 Policy Implications

At the policy level, regulatory bodies and university authorities should encourage the implementation of comprehensive work-life balance policies, particularly in state and regional institutions. Provision of childcare facilities, leave flexibility, mental health support services, and workload transparency can play a crucial role in improving female teachers' well-being and retention. Such interventions are essential for promoting gender equity and sustaining academic excellence in higher education.

9. Conclusion

The present study examined the determinants of work-life balance among female teachers serving in higher education institutions in the Rohilkhand region of Uttar Pradesh. Using primary data and rigorous statistical analysis, the study demonstrated that work interfering with personal life and personal life interfering with work significantly undermine work-life balance, while personal work-life enhancement contributes positively to overall balance.

The findings highlight the urgent need for institutional and policy-level interventions to address work-life challenges faced by female teachers, particularly in semi-urban and resource-constrained contexts. While the study is limited to a specific region, it offers valuable insights that can inform future research and practice in similar settings. Future studies may adopt longitudinal designs or comparative approaches across regions to further advance understanding of work-life balance in higher education.

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