# Work-Life Balance among Women Employees in Higher Education Institutions of Kashmir: An Empirical Study

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## Abstract

Women employed in higher education institutions often navigate overlapping demands arising from professional and personal roles. This study examines work-life balance among women employees in higher education institutions of Kashmir, focusing on Work interfering with personal life, Personal life interfering with work and work-life enhancement. Data were gathered from 200 women employees using a standardized work-life balance scale. The findings indicate women experience both interference and enhancement across work and personal domains. Notably, marital status and family type do not significantly shape work-life balance, emphasizing the need for supportive institutional policies and a multidimensional interpretation of work-life balance.

**Keywords:** *Work pressure, Work-life balance, Societal culture, Job Performance, Work-life Interaction*

## Introduction

The fast rate of urbanization and modernization in India has contributed to the fast change in the professional growth of the women; especially that of women in the higher education sector has increased tremendously in the recent past. In this new paradigm, work-life balance has become a new field of research as family setups have changed, gender roles and occupational trends. On the one hand, there has been a trend of under development of theoretical advancement in the area of work-life balance due to the increased literacy on the issue; nevertheless, more intensive and dynamic frameworks are required to capture the complexity of contemporary work and family spheres (Powell et al., 2019).  Another issue that women have to endure in Indian academia is the stress of balancing their arduous professional lives, such as teaching, work with students, work in administration at work and home duties that are defined by culture. The consequence of this

joint motion of balancing can lead to physical, emotional and mental fatigue, especially in an environment where the institutional offer was not as flexible (Jamunarani & Syed, 2024). Long working hours, lack of support and gendered care giving requirements, even though increasing policy efforts promote work-life balance in Indian higher education, are some of the triggers that make women conflict (Mayya et al., 2021).

Research on work-life balance describes various theoretical frame works such as the role theory, border theory and enrichment theory are all descriptions of how people can balance their work and non-work areas. The border theory by Clark (2000) highlights that people discuss these boundary between their work and non-work lives. In expansion of this perspective, Ashforth et al. (2000) clarify that changing regular micro-role transition, is a manifestation of the ongoing adjustment process, which involves interpretation change in moving between various roles. Conversely, theory of work-life enrichment describes the explanation of positive experience amid the various life domains. Greenhaus and Powell (2006) argue that the resources obtained in one sphere of life may produce resource in a form of skills, motivation and social bond that can contribute to the functioning in the other sphere. A positive variety of characteristics have been tracked to this enhancement process, such as an increased job satisfaction (McNall et al., 2009) and a tapestrious work-life integration (Yasir et al., 2019). Continuing on these views, one can state that the absence of conflict cannot be considered the work-life balance but rather the presence of both interference and enrichment, which makes the application of a multidimensional approach inevitable. The academic literature conceptualized the present study in various ways that rely on the perspectives of both the strain-based and resource based viewpoints. Kalliath and Brough, (2008) refer to it as the concept where roles of work and non-work are part and parcel in a way that facilitates personal development and is in tandem with the personal life objectives that emphasize on intrinsic membership rather than achievement of the role. Fisher-McAuley et al. (2003) added more to this by having a multidimensional frame work of work that includes work interference with personal life, personal life interference with work, and work/personal life enhancement which have a significant effect on job stress, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. This multi dimensional interpretation has a serious relevancy on higher learning, which is an era of several persistence requirements in academic work like publication pressure, continuous dealings with pupils, major management responsibilities, and changing shift over profession stages that influence perception of balance or strain over time (Darcy et al. 2012). Consequently, the current research is informed by the integrative nature of conceptualizing the balance between the work and life as outlined by Greenhaus and Allen (2011) as the degree to which a particular individual can achieve satisfaction and efficiency in both work and personal life spheres. Significantly, this definition has not equalized work-life balance as no conflict; it is obvious that the notion of balance is created through the coexistent nature of work-life interference and enhancement processes. In line with this, the operationalization of the work-life balance in the research is done on Haymans (2005) three dimensional model comprising work that interferes with personal life (WIPL), Personal life that interferes with work (PLIW) and work personal life enhancement (WPLE). WIPL and PLIW are negative spill over processes that manifest role strain and competing demands, by contrast, by the transmission of capabilities, the favorable impacts across

domains of life, WPLE exhibits resource optimistic spill over. The work and life aggregate may be determined by coincidence of interference and betterment experienced between people as opposed to competing junction of the same continuum.

Women in Kashmiri context, their professional experiences are fundamentally incorporated into socio-cultural values that still place pressure on them being women being responsible in the homes and looking after children and their mental well-being, requiring complex analysis. Transparent, factual instances in the area underscore these compounded forces, as the institutional inhibitions and repetitive social and political disturbances further increase the work-life issues of women employees (Youseuf, 2024). The multidimensional model used by Hayman is suitable as the favorable tool of explaining the concurrent impacts of the family structure, institutional pressures, marital status and domestic expectations that provides a better understanding of job- home interaction among women working in higher learning institutions in Kashmir. Based on the empirical data, various antecedents that have a positive impact on work-life balance among women in the employment field have been identified, including type of the family, marital status, the number of working hours, and the social support hybrid one enjoys (Balaji, 2014). Working couples have been associated with parenting roles that increase the work-family conflict particularly among mothers since they lack full control over their time together with similar roles (Duxbury and Higgins, 2008). Working women also develop coping mechanisms that are influenced by practices like cultural expectation that glorify selflessness and emotional sacrifice, particularly to the societies in which motherhood and care giving remains part of which they are (Ugwu et al., 2016). Women today are becoming accustomed to technological advances that have led to the smooth flexibility that favors the balance between professional and family roles (Brough and Kalliath, 2009). Nevertheless, being always online has eroded the lines, which has increased demands of being accessible at all times (Wajcman et al., 2010) and the use of the mobile device worsens this situation further as it encourages any time/anywhere work culture which is an additional strain to the balance of women (Nagy, 2020).In higher education within Kashmir, technology has enabled academic education but has also contributed to the pressure to be productive most of the time as it influences the culture of any time/anywhere. The studies, which explore the dark side of work-life balance, have repeatedly reported that the work- interfering- with-personal life correlations contribute to higher levels of stress, less life satisfaction and poor family relationship under work and family contexts (Lu and Kao, 2013). According to the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH, 2015), work-life interference is a significant factor of stress in the workplace and the implications to the staff performance and health. Work life enrichment, on the other hand, is a mediator of networking activities and career commitment, and this positive spill over enhances engagement and well-being (Ngwevu, 2023). More recent studies have been part of the body on India showing that work-family enrichment is a useful factor in job satisfaction and that the positive interrelationship is largely supported by the fact that family support is good ( Kalliath et al., 2019).

Even though work-life dynamics are gaining international interest, the studies conducted in Kashmir higher education sector have not empirically identified the aspect of marital status and family type as contextual determinants. The paper

establishes marital status in case of taking care of the house and in the creation of mental labour within a state of gender based community and the type of family through role strain perspective and spill over perspective. Family type and marital status have been viewed as theoretical contributions in a conflict and collectivist environment that organizes women household role and familial support on both work-life disruption and strengthening.

## Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the level of work-life balance across its dimensions of work interfering personal life, personal life interfering work and work personal life enhancement among working women in higher education institutions of Kashmir.

2. To examine differences in the dimensions of work life balance across marital status among women employees in higher education institutions in Kashmir.

3. To examine differences in the dimension of work-life balance across family type among women employees in higher education institutions in Kashmir.

## Methodology

## Research Design

A descriptive cross- sectional design has been adopted to examine the work-life balance of women employees in higher education institutions of Kashmir. As illustrated in Figure 1, the design is appropriate to assess overall work-life balance and its three dimensions and variations across selected demographic variables, such as marital status and family type.

**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the study**
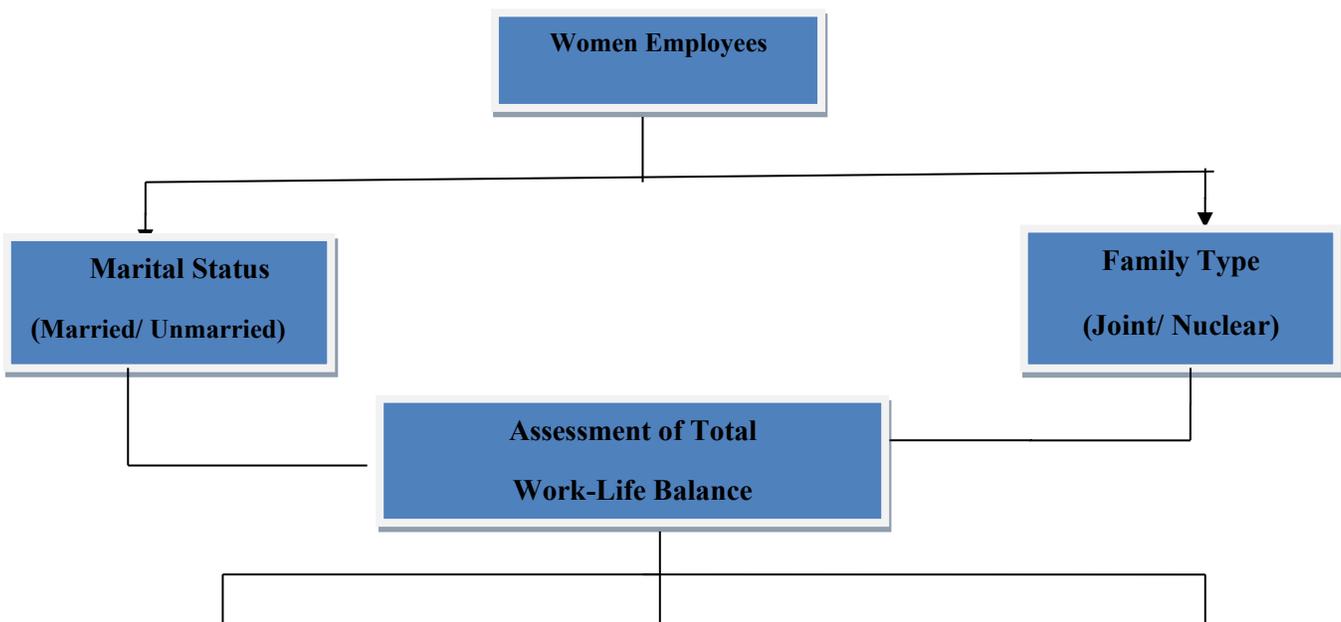
| Work-Interfering With Personal Life | Personal Life Interfering Work | Work-Personal Life Enhancement |
|---|---|---|

## Sampling procedure

The study involved 200 women employees in the institutions of higher learning of Kashmir. The sample that was utilized consisted of nine institutions of higher learning in several districts in Kashmir including universities and colleges of degree programs. Convenience sampling technique was adopted because of limited access; institutional permission and the spread of population over geographical locations. There were both married and unmarried women in the sample along with the employees of nuclear and joint family.

## Tool Used

***Work-Life Balance Scale (Hayman, 2005):*** The scale comprises 15 items, divided into three factors: Work interference with personal life (WIPL), Personal life interference with work (PLIW) and work/personal life enhancement (WPLE) measured on a seven-point likert scale. The reliability of the scale was estimated, using Cronbach Alpha for the three factors of the questionnaire .93 for WIPL, .85 for PLIW and .69 for WPLE.

## Result and Discussion

In this study, descriptive statistics and independent sample t-tests were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 25. Frequency and percentage were employed to categorize the 200 women employees working from higher education institutions of Kashmir across different levels of work-life balance.

**Figure 2:  Levels of Work-Life Balance among women Employees in Higher Education Institutions**

**Levels of Work-Life Balance**
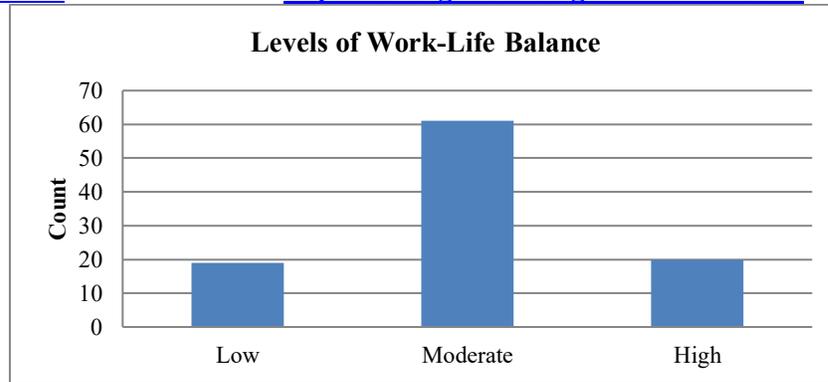


The overall distribution in the figure 2 shows 61% of respondents report moderate level of work-life balance, followed by 20% with a high level and 19% with lower levels, confirming that women in higher education sector of Kashmir maintain a moderate approach between their work and personal lives. Similar pattern has been studied with the framework of theory put forth by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), who stated that conflict between work and family lives originates when incompatibility to effectively balance responsibilities in both the areas, ultimately compromising their the idea of wellbeing and all encompassing contentment.

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Work-Life Balance Dimensions among Women Employees (n=200)**

| Variable | Dimensions | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Work- life balance** | Work Interference with Personal life | 30.2 | 9.02 |
| | Personal Life Interference with work | 19.5 | 6.4 |
| | Work Personal Life Enhancement | 17.1 | 5.4 |
| | Total Work-Life Balance | 66.6 | 18.7 |

Table 1 gives the results indicating the average score and standard deviations of work-life balance and its dimensions on the total sample of women employees working in the higher education sector. The average score of work intrusion on personal life (M=30.2, SD= 9.02) is relatively high meaning that the interference on the part of personal life by the work is not as common and the average score stands at 19.5 (SD=6.4) implying that there are lesser interference of work which is caused by domestic life. Mean of work-personal life enhancement (Mean= 17.1), indicates lack of spill over between the domains. The average, of 66.6 (SD= 18.7), reflecting moderate level of work-life balance in line with the observation in Byron (2005), makes it clear that work pressure is likely to overshadow the family pressure that brings a conflict between work and family life.

| Variables | Marital status | Mean | Std. Deviation | t-value | df | Sig.(2-tailed) | Mean Diff. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Work Interfering personal life** | Married | 29.23 | 8.77 | -1.56 | 98 | .120 | -2.03 |
| | Unmarried | 31.53 | 9.61 | | | | |
| **Personal life interfering work** | Married | 18.49 | 5.28 | -2.23 | 98 | .027 | -2.02 |
| | Unmarried | 20.51 | 4.91 | | | | |
| **Work-personal life enhancement** | Married | 16.72 | 2.70 | -1.23 | 98 | .217 | -.950 |
| | Unmarried | 18.33 | 4.86 | | | | |
| **Total Work-life balance** | Married | 54.27 | 12.29 | -1.94 | 98 | .054 | .512 |
| | Unmarried | 77.07 | 14.63 | | | | |

**Table 2: Marital Status Difference in Work-Life Balance and its Dimensions among Women Employees in Higher Education (Married n=100, Unmarried n=100)**

**Note: p<.05*, p<.001****

The results (Table 2) indicated no statistical significant difference between married and unmarried women employees in work interfering with personal life , work- personal life enhancement and over all work-life balance (p>.05). A statistically significant difference was seen in personal life interfering with work, with unmarried women reported higher mean score of interference than married women across. The small effect size points to limited practical significance, with unmarried women showed slightly higher mean scores across multiple dimensions, the minor variations did not reflect anything meaningful. This outcome coincides with research demonstrating that women's marital status does not predict their ability to maintain adequate work-life balance, instead pervasive factors like job demands, role expectations and gendered organizational norm emerge as more reliable predictors of women's work-life experience ( Soral et al., ; Tekwani & Imran, 2024). Women, irrespective of marital status, often face comparable pressure in work settings, which can diminish long-held assumptions about marital status differences (Sharma & Tiwari, 2023). Collectively, the present study concludes that within the higher education sector in Kashmir, marital status in not a determining factor but a dimension specific factor of work-life balance among working employees.

**Table 4 Family Type Difference in Work-Life Balance and its Dimensions among Women Employees in Higher Education (df=198)**

| Variable | N | Family Type | Mean | Std. Deviation | t-value | Sig. | Mean Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Work interfering personal life** | 105 | Joint | 29.37 | 8.70 | -1.410 | .160 | -1.83 |
| | 95 | Nuclear | 31.21 | 9.74 | | | |
| **Personal life interfering work** | 105 | Joint | 18.65 | 6.19 | -1.955 | .052 | -1.77 |
| | 95 | Nuclear | 20.43 | 6.64 | | | |
| **Work-personal life enhancement** | 105 | Joint | 16.72 | 5.42 | -1.292 | .198 | -.99 |
| | 95 | Nuclear | 17.71 | 5.41 | | | |
| **Total work-life balance** | 105 | Joint | 64.57 | 18.36 | -1.724 | .086 | -4.56 |
| | 95 | Nuclear | 69.13 | 19.05 | | | |

The findings proved the non-significance of the difference of any of the dimensions of work-life balance between women in joint and nuclear family. Despite the fact that women respondents of nuclear family acquired higher on work interrupting personal life than in joint families, it was found that Personal Life Interference with Work Work-Personal Life Enhancement and total work-life balance were significantly greater in nuclear family as compared to joint families. In line with this interpretation, Shirmohammadi et al. (2022) emphasize the fact that family structure may be both an asset and a hindrance based on the prevailing role expectations and the amenity of family support. Similarly, Lodhi et al., report that the existence of multiple family members frequently enhance domestic-related duties, decreased individual time, but does not influence work at personal life assimilation (2021). Following this description of literature, the given research indicates that family type alone cannot be the main predestination to define how women can overcome the difficulties to find a balance between working and personal life, whereas career aspiration, self help, and personal aims seem to have a more significant influence (Ambrose and Soomro, 2024).

**Conclusion**

In this current study, both interference and enhancement are used since this paper will be investigating using the three dimensional model by Hayman and the role of maintaining by the Greenhaus and Allen supports the finding that balance between life and work is a general phenomena that cannot be identified to particular demographic characteristics. In the Kashmiri setting, women irrespective of home organization are anticipated to work under very needy culture and work place setting; the point is the driver and the hierarchical division rather than the demographic variations. The fact that constrain and gains are concurrent gives evidence to the holistic concept wherein relationships are interdependent and reactive. The established gender norms and emotional and domestic obligations on women that surpass their limits are so eminent that the situation elongates to all the women regardless of their marriages and family structure. The study has even more broad theoretical and practical consequences: implementation of family-friendliness, gender responsive policies and a better institutional support. The adaptations may enhance the channels of addressing family- job balance of women in the higher education sector of Kashmir instead of having to operate based on assumptions regarding the marital status and family structure. Future studies require the use of longitudinal and mixed research approaches to understand work-life relationship and how internal and external factors shape the working-life balance on women working in conflict regions.

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