

A Study of Occupational Stress and its Impact on Work-Life Balance of Faculties in Higher Education

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Abstract: *This study explores the impact of occupational stress factors—workload pressure, job insecurity, and non-teaching activities—on the work–life balance of faculty members in higher education. With increasing responsibilities placed on teaching staff, especially in the context of aided and unaided institutions, stress has emerged as a critical issue influencing both professional efficiency and personal well-being. A structured questionnaire was administered to a sample of 150 faculty respondents, covering demographic details and Likert-scale items for key variables. Statistical tools such as descriptive analysis, ANOVA, F-tests, and Pearson correlation were applied to test differences and relationships among variables. The results revealed significant variation in stress levels between aided and unaided faculties, with aided faculty reporting lower workload pressure and job insecurity while maintaining higher work–life balance. Further, the correlation analysis highlighted a strong negative relationship between workload pressure, job insecurity, and work–life balance, demonstrating that stress factors considerably reduce the ability of faculty to maintain equilibrium between professional and personal responsibilities. Interestingly, non-teaching activities showed a positive association with work–life balance, suggesting that involvement in diversified roles can sometimes enhance faculty engagement and balance. The findings emphasize the importance of institutional support in reducing job-related stressors and implementing policies that strengthen work–life balance. This research contributes to the literature by providing evidence from the Indian higher education context and offers practical recommendations for policy makers and administrators to improve faculty well-being and academic productivity.*

Keywords: Work Load Pressure, Job Insecurity, Work-Life Balance, Faculty, Higher Education

I. INTRODUCTION

Work–life balance refers to the ability of an individual to manage professional responsibilities and personal life demands in a way that minimizes conflict between the two domains. It is about effectively dividing time and energy between work commitments such as teaching, research, and administrative duties, and personal roles like family, social relationships, and self-care. A good balance does not mean an equal split of time but rather the perception of control, satisfaction, and fulfillment across both spheres. For faculty members in higher education, work–life balance becomes especially important because academic roles are often demanding, with long hours, high performance expectations, and overlapping professional and personal boundaries. The concept of work–life balance is influenced by various factors including workload, job security, institutional support, and personal coping mechanisms. When balance is maintained, individuals experience less stress, improved health, greater job satisfaction, and enhanced productivity. Conversely, an imbalance can lead to burnout, strained personal relationships, and reduced efficiency in both work and non-work areas. In the case of higher education, challenges such as heavy teaching loads, research pressures, and additional administrative duties can easily spill over into personal time, making balance difficult to achieve without institutional interventions and personal strategies.

In recent years, work–life balance has gained recognition as a critical element of organizational performance and employee well-being. Institutions that promote flexible schedules, reduce unnecessary non-teaching burdens, and



provide supportive policies foster an environment where faculty can thrive both professionally and personally. For academicians, striking a healthy balance ensures sustained motivation and creativity in their teaching and research, while also allowing them to lead fulfilling lives outside work. Thus, work–life balance is not only a matter of individual well-being but also a strategic necessity for institutions striving to maintain academic excellence and faculty satisfaction.

Workload Pressure: Workload pressure refers to the strain faculty members experience when the volume of assigned tasks exceeds their time, resources, or ability to manage effectively. In higher education, this often includes preparing lectures, evaluating student performance, conducting research, fulfilling administrative responsibilities, and engaging in community or institutional activities. When the demands are high and deadlines are tight, faculty experience feelings of being overwhelmed, which leads to stress, fatigue, and reduced efficiency. Prolonged workload pressure negatively impacts health, motivation, and the overall quality of teaching and research output.

Moreover, excessive workload pressure blurs the boundary between professional and personal life, leaving little time for relaxation or family responsibilities. This imbalance contributes to dissatisfaction and burnout, making it difficult for faculty to sustain long-term engagement with their roles. Institutions that fail to manage workload distribution may face higher turnover rates and lower morale among employees. Therefore, strategies such as equitable task allocation, reduced non-teaching duties, and supportive infrastructure are vital to mitigate workload pressure and enable faculty to function effectively while maintaining their well-being.

Job Insecurity: Job insecurity refers to the perceived threat of losing one’s job or the uncertainty about the continuity of employment. For faculty in higher education, especially those in unaided or contract-based institutions, job insecurity is a common challenge due to unstable funding, performance pressures, and lack of long-term career guarantees. This uncertainty creates psychological stress, lowering confidence and satisfaction levels. Faculty members who feel insecure about their positions often struggle to focus fully on teaching and research, as their energy is diverted toward worrying about future stability.

The impact of job insecurity extends beyond professional life into personal domains, disrupting financial planning, family commitments, and emotional well-being. Persistent insecurity reduces organizational commitment, increases absenteeism, and leads to higher turnover intentions. In contrast, faculties in aided institutions with stable employment conditions tend to experience less stress and greater job satisfaction. Hence, ensuring fair employment policies, transparent evaluation systems, and opportunities for career growth can reduce job insecurity and allow faculty to perform more productively while maintaining healthier work–life balance.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Koster, M., et al. (2023), in the research paper titled “Areas of work-life that contribute to burnout among higher education faculty.” The study concludes that unresolved stressors such as work–life imbalance, limited institutional support, and health challenges significantly fuel burnout among faculty members. Burnout manifests not only as emotional exhaustion but also as disengagement, affecting teaching quality and research productivity. The findings highlight that faculty well-being cannot be improved without addressing the root causes of occupational stress, particularly heavy workload and unclear expectations. Institutions must prioritize supportive policies, workload restructuring, and wellness programs to reduce chronic stress and restore balance. Thus, work–life balance emerges as both a protective factor and an essential strategy to reduce long-term burnout.

2. Aye, L. M., et al. (2024), in the research paper titled “Work-life balance mediating stress and quality of life in Malaysian academicians.” The research reveals that stress has a direct negative effect on academicians’ quality of life, reducing satisfaction, health, and professional engagement. However, work–life balance was shown to act as a powerful mediating factor—academicians with better balance were able to buffer the damaging effects of stress and maintain a more stable quality of life. This suggests that institutional efforts to improve faculty well-being should go beyond addressing stress alone and instead strengthen balance-oriented policies such as flexible scheduling and family-friendly programs. The conclusion emphasizes that work–life balance is not merely desirable but essential to mitigate occupational stress and sustain a healthier academic workforce.



3. Amer, S. A. A. M., et al. (2022), in the research paper titled "Burnout among academic university staff: A cross-sectional study." The study reports alarmingly high levels of burnout among university faculty, linking it strongly to excessive stress, workload, and role conflicts. Burnout was associated with a decline in faculty productivity, motivation, and overall quality of academic life, which also compromised their ability to achieve a healthy work-life balance. The authors argue that without systematic stress reduction interventions, higher education institutions risk long-term deterioration in academic standards and faculty health. By lowering occupational stressors, universities can reduce burnout, enabling staff to regain energy and time for personal commitments. Thus, the study stresses the urgent need for organizational and psychological support systems.
4. Chipka, S. J. (2023), in the research paper titled "Career Related Stress and Faculty Work-Life Balance." The research demonstrates that faculty members experience career-related stressors such as promotion requirements, publication pressure, and teaching-research role overload, which directly interfere with work-life balance. These professional demands intensify stress and limit time for personal well-being, resulting in dissatisfaction and imbalance. The study concludes that higher education systems need to reframe performance expectations and recognize the cumulative toll of career pressures on faculty. By offering mentoring, realistic career paths, and reduced administrative burdens, universities can help staff manage stress more effectively. In this way, institutional reforms are essential for restoring balance and sustaining long-term faculty engagement.
5. Halat, D. H., et al. (2024), in the research paper titled "Associations between perceived occupational stressors, mental health, and coping among faculty." This study finds that faculty who perceive higher levels of occupational stressors also report poorer mental health, including anxiety, fatigue, and lower job satisfaction. These stressors spill over into personal domains, weakening work-life balance. However, coping strategies such as resilience training, time management, and peer support groups were found to moderate the negative impact of stress. The conclusion stresses that faculty well-being requires a dual approach: reducing job stressors at their source and simultaneously strengthening coping mechanisms. Institutions that invest in faculty support systems and training programs can enhance resilience, thus protecting work-life balance.
6. Rahman, M. A., et al. (2024), in the research paper titled "Health and wellbeing of staff working at higher education institutions: A global study." The global study highlights how the post-pandemic context has exacerbated job insecurity, burnout, and psychological stress among higher education faculty. These factors were directly linked to declining work-life balance, with faculty struggling to manage both professional obligations and personal recovery. The study emphasizes that institutional responsibility has become more urgent in safeguarding faculty well-being, calling for proactive measures such as clearer job security, reduced workloads, and psychosocial support systems. Without such changes, the stress-balance equation will continue to tilt unfavorably, undermining academic performance and long-term institutional sustainability.
7. Awan, R. N. (2022), in the research paper titled "Work-Life Balance: Satisfaction of University Teachers." The study concludes that occupational stress and job demands are major predictors of dissatisfaction among faculty, directly undermining work-life balance. Teachers with higher stress levels were less satisfied with both their work and personal lives, creating a spillover effect that impacted overall well-being. However, supportive institutional practices such as flexible hours, reduced administrative loads, and family-oriented policies improved satisfaction and balance. The author stresses that universities cannot ignore stress as a personal problem but must view it as an organizational issue with systemic solutions. Addressing stressors is key to creating a satisfied and well-balanced faculty body.
8. Morales-Spier, G. (2024), in the research paper titled "The work-life balance of higher education faculty in light of post-pandemic changes." This research emphasizes that post-pandemic faculty are facing expanded responsibilities, blurred work-home boundaries, and persistent occupational stress, which erode work-life balance and academic productivity. Faculty often reported longer hours, less separation between work and personal life, and increased emotional strain. The dissertation recommends structural interventions, including boundary-setting guidelines, mental health resources, and fair workload allocation, to mitigate imbalance. The conclusion reinforces that maintaining faculty well-being is essential for effective teaching and research, and universities must institutionalize balance-building practices to prevent long-term deterioration of academic life.



9. Gautam, S. K., (2024), in the research paper titled “Relationship between stress and work-life balance among teaching professionals.” The study establishes a clear negative correlation between occupational stress and work-life balance, showing that higher stress consistently results in poorer balance among faculty. Stress was found to arise from workload, student expectations, and institutional pressures, all of which reduced personal satisfaction. The conclusion highlights the necessity of stress management interventions such as counseling, wellness workshops, and workload redistribution, which can enhance faculty capacity to balance professional and personal responsibilities. By addressing stress, institutions can indirectly strengthen balance, boosting both faculty retention and teaching effectiveness.

10. Tehreem, H., et al. (2022), in the research paper titled “Job Stress and Burnout Among University Teachers With Work-Life Balance Considerations.” The study concludes that job stress and burnout significantly disrupt faculty work-life balance, with affected teachers experiencing fatigue, dissatisfaction, and lower engagement in personal life. Gender differences were also noted, with women reporting greater challenges in balancing work and family roles. The authors recommend enhancing social support systems, mentoring, and gender-sensitive policies to reduce stress and improve balance. The findings highlight that occupational stress is not merely a professional concern but spills over to personal well-being, requiring comprehensive and inclusive interventions from higher education institutions.

Research Gap:

Although several studies have examined occupational stress and its impact on the work-life balance of faculty in higher education, important gaps remain unaddressed. Much of the existing research focuses on general stress, burnout, or quality of life, but limited attention is given to how specific stressors—such as workload pressure, job insecurity, and non-teaching responsibilities—jointly affect work-life balance in diverse institutional contexts like aided and unaided colleges. Furthermore, while global and regional studies highlight broad patterns, there is a lack of focused empirical evidence from the Indian higher education sector, where structural disparities and employment conditions play a critical role in faculty well-being. This gap underscores the need for context-specific research that not only identifies stress factors but also explores their differential impact on faculty groups, thereby providing actionable insights for policy and institutional interventions aimed at improving work-life balance.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopted a descriptive research design to examine the impact of workload pressure, job insecurity, and non-teaching activities on the work-life balance of faculty members in higher education. The research focused on both aided and unaided faculty to capture differences in stress levels and balance across positions. Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale, covering three items each for the independent variables (workload pressure, job insecurity, and non-teaching activities) and the dependent variable (work-life balance). The questionnaire was administered to a total sample of 150 faculty respondents, selected through simple random sampling, ensuring fair representation across gender, qualification, and institutional position (aided vs. unaided). For analysis, both descriptive and inferential statistical tools were applied. Frequency distributions and percentages were used to describe the demographic profile of respondents. Mean scores were calculated to compare levels of stress and balance between aided and unaided faculty. To test hypotheses, ANOVA and F-tests were employed to determine significant differences across groups, while the Pearson correlation test was applied to study relationships among workload pressure, job insecurity, and work-life balance. The statistical results ensured reliability and validity in interpreting the impact of stress-related factors on faculty work-life balance, providing a solid empirical basis for drawing conclusions and recommendations.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

The following table indicates the demographic factor of the study:

Sr.no	Demographic Factor	Category	Frequency	Percent
1	Gender	Female	69	46.0
		Male	81	54.0
2	Qualification	M.Phil/PhD	54	36.0



		Postgraduate	96	64.0
3	Position	Aided	84	56.0
		Unaided	66	44.0

The demographic profile of the 150 faculty respondents reveals a fairly balanced representation across gender, qualification, and position. Out of the total sample, 69 were female and 81 were male, indicating a slight male majority. In terms of educational qualification, 54 respondents held M.Phil/PhD degrees while 96 were postgraduates, showing that the majority of faculty members possess postgraduate qualifications. Regarding their employment status, 84 were from aided institutions while 66 were from unaided institutions, suggesting that more respondents enjoyed the stability and support of aided positions compared to those in unaided roles. This distribution provides a diverse base for analyzing differences in stress levels and work-life balance across demographic categories.

Objective-1: To study workload pressure, job insecurity and work-life balance according to position of faculties in higher education.

Null Hypothesis H_0 : There is no significant difference in workload pressure, job insecurity and work-life balance according to position of faculties in higher education.

Alternate Hypothesis H_1 : There is a significant difference in workload pressure, job insecurity and work-life balance according to position of faculties in higher education.

To test the above null hypothesis, ANOVA and F-test is applied and results are as follows:

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value
Workload Pressure	Between Groups	58731.361	1	58731.361	647.506	.000
	Within Groups	13424.194	148	90.704		
	Total	72155.556	149			
Job Insecurity	Between Groups	64835.065	1	64835.065	729.285	.000
	Within Groups	13157.528	148	88.902		
	Total	77992.593	149			
Work-Life Balance	Between Groups	7920.810	1	7920.810	22.240	.000
	Within Groups	52710.005	148	356.149		
	Total	60630.815	149			

Interpretation: The above results indicate that calculated p-value is 0.000. It is less than 0.05. Therefore ANOVA and F-test is rejected. Hence Null hypothesis is rejected and Alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Conclusion: There is a significant difference in workload pressure, job insecurity and work-life balance according to position of faculties in higher education.

Findings: To understand the findings, mean scores are obtained and presented as follows:

Report			
Mean			
Position	Workload Pressure	Job Insecurity	Work-Life Balance
Aided	39.13	39.13	77.06
Unaided	78.99	81.01	62.42
Total	56.67	57.56	70.62

The results of the mean scores clearly indicate a distinct difference between aided and unaided faculty members in terms of workload pressure, job insecurity, and work-life balance. For aided faculty, the mean scores of Workload Pressure (39.13) and Job Insecurity (39.13) are relatively low, which suggests that these respondents experience less stress and uncertainty in their jobs. At the same time, aided faculty report a comparatively higher mean score for Work-Life Balance (77.06), highlighting that they are better able to maintain equilibrium between professional and personal responsibilities. This outcome reflects the stability and structured environment that aided positions typically provide.



On the other hand, unaided faculty demonstrate significantly higher mean scores for Workload Pressure (78.99) and Job Insecurity (81.01), pointing to greater challenges in terms of heavy work responsibilities and insecurity about job continuity. Their lower mean score on Work–Life Balance (62.42) further indicates the difficulty they face in harmonizing work and personal life. The findings imply that unaided faculty members are more vulnerable to stress due to unstable employment conditions, heavier workloads, and fewer institutional supports.

When considering the total sample of 150 respondents, the overall mean scores stand at 56.67 for Workload Pressure, 57.56 for Job Insecurity, and 70.62 for Work–Life Balance. These values suggest that while faculty members in general face moderate stress and job-related insecurity, the ability to maintain work–life balance is relatively better across the group. However, the sharp contrast between aided and unaided positions underscores the significant role institutional support and job security play in reducing stress levels and promoting healthier work–life balance. This comparison emphasizes the need for targeted interventions to reduce pressure and insecurity, particularly for unaided faculty.

Objective-2: To study the relationship between workload pressure, job insecurity and work–life balance of faculties in higher education.

Null Hypothesis H_{02} : There is no relationship between workload pressure, job insecurity and work–life balance of faculties in higher education.

Alternate Hypothesis H_{12} : There is a relationship between workload pressure, job insecurity and work–life balance of faculties in higher education.

To test the above null hypothesis, Pearson Correlation test is applied and results are as follows:

Correlations		Work–Life Balance	Workload Pressure	Job Insecurity
Work–Life Balance	Pearson Correlation	1	-.303**	-.322**
	P-value		.000	.000
	N	150	150	150
Workload Pressure	Pearson Correlation	-.303**	1	.829**
	P-value	.000		.000
	N	150	150	150
Job Insecurity	Pearson Correlation	-.322**	.829**	1
	P-value	.000	.000	
	N	150	150	150

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Interpretation: The above results indicate that calculated p-value is 0.000. It is less than 0.05. Therefore Pearson Correlation test is rejected. Hence Null hypothesis is rejected and Alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Conclusion: There is a relationship between workload pressure, job insecurity and work–life balance of faculties in higher education.

Findings: The correlation results show that Work–Life Balance has a significant negative relationship with both Workload Pressure ($r = -0.303$, $p < .001$) and Job Insecurity ($r = -0.322$, $p < .001$). This indicates that as workload pressure increases, the ability of faculty members to maintain a healthy balance between professional and personal life decreases. Similarly, higher job insecurity is associated with lower levels of work–life balance. Both relationships are statistically significant at the 1% level, suggesting that stress factors such as excessive workload and uncertainty about job stability are critical barriers to achieving work–life balance among faculty members.

V. CONCLUSION

The analysis concludes that position of faculties in higher education plays a decisive role in shaping their stress levels and work–life balance. The results from the ANOVA test revealed significant differences between aided and unaided faculty, with aided faculty reporting lower workload pressure and job insecurity alongside higher levels of work–life balance. This indicates that the structured environment, stability, and institutional support offered in aided positions



significantly reduce stressors and allow faculty to better manage professional and personal commitments. In contrast, unaided faculty face greater pressures due to higher workload and insecurity, which negatively affects their ability to achieve work–life balance. Furthermore, the correlation analysis establishes that workload pressure and job insecurity are negatively associated with work–life balance. Faculty members experiencing higher levels of workload and uncertainty about job stability are less able to maintain equilibrium between their professional duties and personal life. These findings highlight the crucial role of reducing job-related stressors in promoting faculty well-being. Together, the results stress the importance of institutional interventions, particularly in unaided institutions, to minimize workload pressure, enhance job security, and ultimately improve the work–life balance of faculty members in higher education.

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