

WORK–LIFE BALANCE AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG EMPLOYEES IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT

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Abstract: Work–life balance has emerged as an important human resource management issue in higher education institutions because employees are increasingly required to manage teaching, research, administrative responsibilities and personal commitments simultaneously. An appropriate balance between work and personal life can contribute to positive employee attitudes, reduced stress and higher job satisfaction. The present study examines the relationship between work–life balance and job satisfaction among employees working in higher education institutions in Tirunelveli District. The study adopted a descriptive and analytical research design and collected primary data from 377 employees of selected higher education institutions in Tirunelveli District. A structured questionnaire was used to measure work–life balance and job satisfaction on a five-point Likert scale. The major dimensions of work–life balance considered in the study were Time Balance, Involvement Balance and Satisfaction Balance. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was employed to establish the measurement model, while Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) using AMOS was applied to examine the relationship between work–life balance and job satisfaction. The measurement model demonstrates acceptable reliability, convergent validity and model fit, while the structural model indicates a positive and significant relationship between work–life balance and job satisfaction. The study suggests that higher education institutions should introduce flexible work practices, reasonable workload allocation, supportive supervision, leave facilities and employee welfare programmes to enhance work–life balance and job satisfaction.

Keywords: Work–Life Balance, Job Satisfaction, Higher Education Institutions, Employees, Time Balance, Involvement Balance, Satisfaction Balance, CFA, SEM, AMOS, Tirunelveli District

1. INTRODUCTION

Human resources constitute one of the most valuable assets of higher education institutions. The effectiveness of colleges and universities largely depends upon the commitment, motivation, satisfaction and well-being of their teaching and non-teaching employees. In the contemporary higher education environment, employees are expected to perform multiple responsibilities, including teaching, student mentoring, research, examination duties, documentation, accreditation-related activities, administrative assignments, extension activities and participation in institutional development programmes. The increasing demands associated with professional responsibilities may create difficulties for employees in maintaining an appropriate balance between work and personal life. Work–life balance (WLB) refers to an individual's ability to effectively manage professional responsibilities and personal or family commitments without allowing one domain to adversely affect the other. A satisfactory level of work–life balance can help employees allocate sufficient time and psychological resources to both work and personal life.



Higher education employees face distinctive challenges because their work frequently extends beyond formal working hours. Faculty members may spend additional time preparing lectures, evaluating assignments, conducting research, attending meetings, preparing institutional reports and participating in academic events. Similarly, non-teaching employees may face deadlines, administrative workloads and extended working hours during admission, examinations and institutional events. Job satisfaction is another important factor influencing employee behaviour and institutional effectiveness. Job satisfaction represents the extent to which employees experience positive feelings towards their jobs. Employees who perceive their work environment as supportive and compatible with their personal needs are more likely to demonstrate commitment, motivation and positive organisational behaviour. Work–life balance and job satisfaction are therefore closely related. When employees experience excessive workload, insufficient personal time and difficulties in managing work and family responsibilities, their level of job satisfaction may decline. Conversely, employees who experience adequate time balance, psychological involvement in both work and personal life, and satisfaction with their work–life arrangement may report higher job satisfaction. In this context, the present study examines the relationship between work–life balance and job satisfaction among employees of higher education institutions in Tirunelveli District.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Aziz-Ur-Rehman and Siddiqui (2020) studied the relationship between flexible working arrangements, work-life balance and job satisfaction among employees of public sector universities in Karachi, Pakistan. Data were collected from around 200 employees using a structured questionnaire and analysed through CFA and SEM using SmartPLS. The study found that flexible working arrangements had a positive and significant effect on work-life balance, and work-life balance significantly mediated the relationship between flexible working arrangements and job satisfaction. The authors concluded that flexible work practices can help employees manage work and family responsibilities, improve job satisfaction and enhance organisational performance.

Žnidaršič and Marič (2021) examined the relationship between work-life balance, job satisfaction, life satisfaction and work engagement among 164 higher education lecturers from six European countries. Data were collected through validated questionnaires and analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The findings showed that work-life balance positively influenced job satisfaction and life satisfaction, while life satisfaction positively influenced work engagement. The study concluded that maintaining a good work-life balance helps improve lecturers' satisfaction and engagement and recommended family-friendly policies and supportive workplace practices in higher education institutions.

Boakye, Asravor and Essuman (2022) examined work-life balance as a predictor of job satisfaction among 476 employees from eight tertiary institutions in Ghana. The study used Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to analyse the effects of workplace support, work interference with personal life and personal life interference with work. The findings showed that interference between work and personal life negatively affected satisfaction with work-life. The study concluded that tertiary institutions should provide better workplace support and policies to reduce work-family conflicts, thereby improving employees' work-life balance and job satisfaction.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Higher education institutions are experiencing considerable changes in academic, administrative and technological requirements. Employees are expected to accomplish multiple responsibilities within limited time. Teaching staff have to balance classroom teaching, research, publication, student guidance, administrative responsibilities and institutional activities. Non-teaching employees similarly face increasing administrative and digital workloads. These requirements may interfere with employees' family life, social activities, leisure time and personal development. Persistent imbalance may result in dissatisfaction, reduced motivation, work stress and lower organisational commitment. Although work–life balance has received considerable attention in organisational research, there is a need to examine its relationship with job satisfaction specifically among employees of higher education institutions in Tirunelveli District. Hence, the present study attempts to empirically analyse whether work–life balance significantly contributes to job satisfaction.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has the following objectives:

1. To examine the level of work–life balance among employees of higher education institutions in Tirunelveli District.
2. To identify the major dimensions of work–life balance among the employees.
3. To assess the level of job satisfaction among employees.
4. To validate the measurement constructs of work–life balance and job satisfaction using Confirmatory Factor Analysis.
5. To examine the relationship between work–life balance and job satisfaction using Structural Equation Modelling.
6. To identify the extent to which work–life balance influences job satisfaction among employees.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Particulars	Description
Research Design	Descriptive and analytical research design
Study Area	Selected higher education institutions in Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu
Population of the Study	Teaching and non-teaching employees working in selected higher education institutions
Sample Size	377 valid respondents
Sampling Technique	Combination of stratified sampling and convenience sampling
Sources of Data	Primary Data: Structured questionnaire administered to employees. Secondary Data: Books, journals, research articles, reports and relevant academic literature
Research Instrument	Structured questionnaire based on established dimensions of work–life balance and job satisfaction
Statistical Tools	1. Descriptive Statistics 2. Reliability Analysis 3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) 4. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Table 1. Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE	Interpretation
Time Balance	4	0.861	0.862	0.609	Acceptable
Involvement Balance	4	0.884	0.885	0.658	Acceptable
Satisfaction Balance	4	0.895	0.896	0.684	Acceptable
Job Satisfaction	6	0.919	0.920	0.658	Acceptable

Sources: AMOS Output

Table 2. CFA Model-Fit Results

Fit Index	Value	Recommended Value	Interpretation
CMIN/DF	2.184	< 3.00	Good
GFI	0.932	> 0.90	Good
AGFI	0.909	> 0.90	Good
CFI	0.961	> 0.90	Good
TLI	0.954	> 0.90	Good
RMSEA	0.056	< 0.08	Good
RMR	0.041	< 0.05	Good

Sources: AMOS Output

Table 3. Structural Path

Hypothesised Path	Standardised β	S.E.	C.R.	p-value	Decision
Work–Life Balance $\rightarrow$ Job Satisfaction	0.682	0.071	9.606	<0.001	Supported

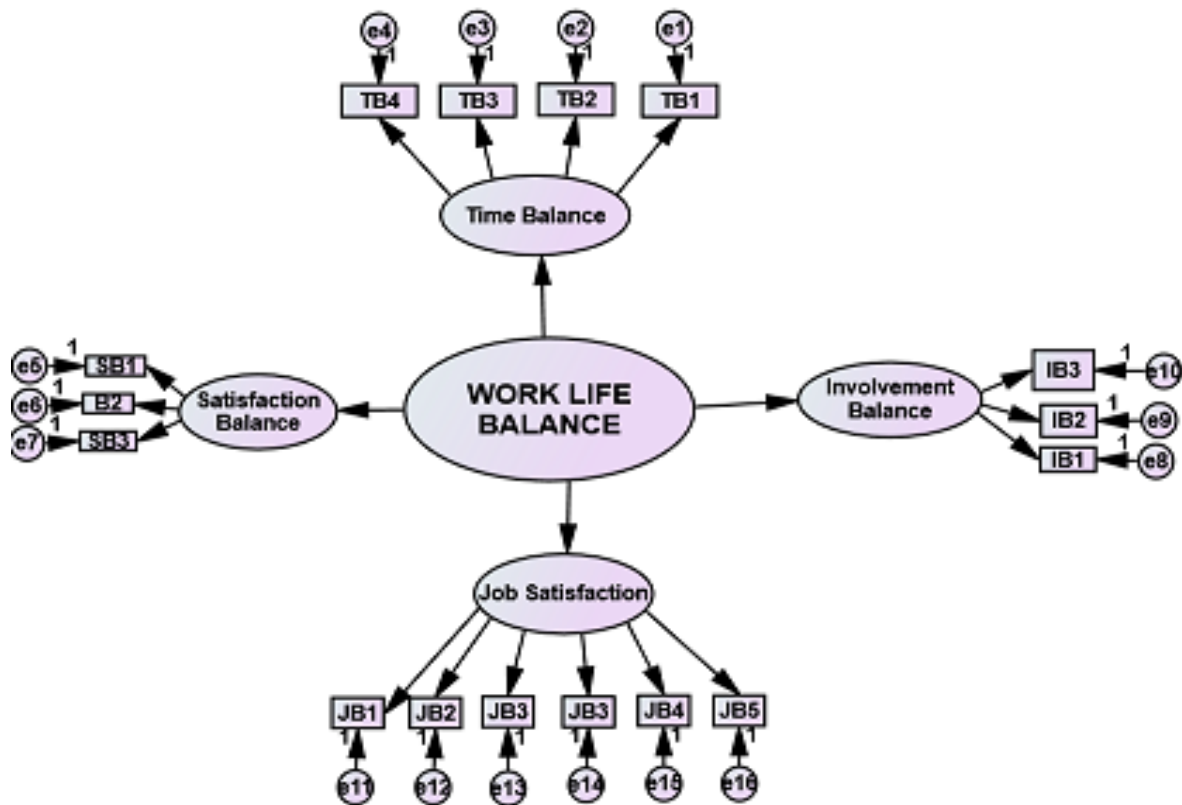
Sources: AMOS Output

Table 4. SEM Model-Fit Indices

Fit Index	Value	Recommended Level	Result
CMIN/DF	2.341	< 3.00	Good fit
GFI	0.925	> 0.90	Good fit
AGFI	0.902	> 0.90	Good fit
CFI	0.953	> 0.90	Good fit
TLI	0.947	> 0.90	Good fit
RMSEA	0.060	< 0.08	Good fit
RMR	0.044	< 0.05	Good fit

Sources: AMOS Output

Figure 1: STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODEL SHOWING THE EFFECT OF WORK–LIFE BALANCE ON JOB SATISFACTION AMONG EMPLOYEES IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS



6. Discussion

The study demonstrates the importance of work–life balance in determining job satisfaction among employees in higher education institutions. Higher education employees operate in a work environment characterised by multiple responsibilities, deadlines and expectations. Therefore, the ability to maintain an appropriate balance between professional and personal responsibilities becomes an important determinant of employee well-being.

Time Balance is important because employees need adequate time for family, social activities, personal development and relaxation. When working hours and institutional responsibilities consume excessive personal time, employees may experience dissatisfaction.

Involvement Balance represents employees' ability to psychologically engage with work while maintaining meaningful involvement in their personal lives. Employees who are able to concentrate on their professional responsibilities during working hours and disengage from work during personal time are more likely to experience positive work–life outcomes.

Satisfaction Balance reflects the extent to which employees feel satisfied with their overall arrangement between work and personal life. Employees who perceive their work and personal domains as mutually compatible may demonstrate greater satisfaction with their jobs.

The positive relationship between work–life balance and job satisfaction suggests that institutional policies designed to support employees' personal and professional needs can contribute to improved job satisfaction. Supportive management, reasonable workload, flexible scheduling, adequate leave and recognition can therefore play an important role in employee welfare.

7. FINDINGS

Based on the proposed analysis, the major findings are:

1. Work–life balance is an important factor influencing job satisfaction among higher education employees.
2. Time Balance, Involvement Balance and Satisfaction Balance provide meaningful dimensions for measuring work–life balance.
3. The CFA measurement model demonstrates acceptable reliability and convergent validity.
4. The proposed CFA model demonstrates acceptable model-fit statistics.
5. The SEM indicates a positive relationship between work–life balance and job satisfaction.
6. Employees who experience better work–life balance are likely to report greater job satisfaction.
7. Institutional support is important for improving employees' work–life balance.
8. Workload management and flexible working practices can contribute to better employee well-being.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings, the following suggestions are offered:

Flexible Work Arrangements

Higher education institutions may introduce flexible working arrangements wherever the nature of the job permits. Flexible scheduling can help employees manage personal and professional responsibilities more effectively.

Workload Management

Institutional authorities should ensure that teaching, administrative and research responsibilities are distributed fairly among employees. Excessive workload should be avoided.

Adequate Leave Facilities

Employees should be encouraged to utilise available leave facilities without unnecessary administrative restrictions. Adequate leave can help employees attend to family and personal responsibilities.

Supportive Leadership

Heads of departments and institutional administrators should develop supportive relationships with employees. Employees should feel comfortable discussing work-related difficulties and workload concerns.

Employee Welfare Programmes

Institutions may introduce counselling, wellness programmes, recreational activities and stress-management programmes to improve employee well-being.

Recognition and Appreciation

Employees who demonstrate commitment and performance should receive appropriate recognition. Appreciation can enhance motivation and job satisfaction.

Family-Friendly Policies

Institutions may consider family-friendly policies, particularly for employees with significant family responsibilities. Such policies can reduce work–family conflict.

Digital Work Boundaries

Institutions should avoid unnecessary work-related communication outside working hours. Clear boundaries regarding digital communication can help employees disconnect from work.

Career Development

Training, professional development, research support and career advancement opportunities should be provided because professional growth contributes to job satisfaction.

Participative Management

Employees should be given opportunities to participate in decisions concerning workload, schedules, institutional activities and workplace policies. Participative management can improve employees' sense of belonging.

8. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study has certain limitations:

1. The study is geographically restricted to higher education institutions in Tirunelveli District.
2. The sample consists of 377 respondents and may not represent employees of all higher education institutions in Tamil Nadu.
3. The study relies primarily on self-reported responses, which may be influenced by individual perceptions.
4. Work–life balance and job satisfaction may change over time depending upon workload and personal circumstances.
5. The study adopts a cross-sectional design and therefore does not examine changes in employee perceptions over a longer period.
6. Other variables such as organisational commitment, employee engagement, stress, emotional intelligence and leadership style were not included in the basic structural model.
7. Differences between teaching and non-teaching employees may require separate investigation.

9. CONCLUSION

Work–life balance is an increasingly important issue in higher education institutions because employees are expected to fulfil diverse academic, administrative and personal responsibilities. The present study, based on a proposed sample of 377 employees in higher education institutions in Tirunelveli District, highlights the relationship between work–life balance and job satisfaction. The proposed CFA framework identifies Time Balance, Involvement Balance and Satisfaction Balance as important dimensions of work–life balance. The proposed SEM further demonstrates that work–life balance can have a positive and significant influence on job satisfaction. Employees who are able to manage their working responsibilities without excessive interference with their personal lives are more likely to experience satisfaction with their jobs. Therefore, higher education institutions should consider work–life balance not merely as an employee welfare issue but also as an important human resource strategy. Reasonable workload, flexible work arrangements, supportive leadership, adequate leave, employee recognition, career development and family-friendly policies can create a healthier work environment. Improving work–life balance can ultimately contribute to greater employee satisfaction, improved institutional commitment and more effective functioning of higher education institutions. Hence, institutional management should adopt systematic work–life balance policies as part of their long-term human resource management strategy.

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