



WORK LIFE BALANCE CHALLENGES AMONG WOMEN FACULTY IN SELF – FINANCE ARTS AND SCIENCE COLLEGES: EVIDENCE FROM MADURAI REGION

Mrs. Karunanithi Chendur Priyadharshini* **Dr.C.S.Edhayavarman****

**Research Scholar, Alagappa University, Karaikudi.*

***Associate Professor, Arumugam Pillai Seethai Ammal College, Tirupattur.*

Abstract

With the increasing number of women in higher education, especially in self-financing liberal arts and science colleges, how they balance their academic load with domestic responsibilities has become a growing concern. Based on secondary data and theoretical analysis, this article examines the work-life balance of female faculty members in Madurai. Evidence suggests that excessive workloads, rigid schedules, and lack of flexible policies significantly impact female faculty work, making schools less conducive to family-friendly environments. Structural and cultural barriers such as long working hours and inflexible schedules lead to increased stress, lower quality of life, and reduced opportunities for professional growth. Drawing on the literature on gender and organizations, this article emphasizes the importance of gender-responsive everyday organizational practices. Possible future applications include task personalization, equitable workload distribution, and organizational strengthening. Addressing these issues professionally is crucial to reducing gender disparities in the careers of female professors and fostering a supportive academic environment in self-financing universities.

Keywords: *Work-life balance, female professors, self-financing universities, Madurai, gender discrimination in academic stress.*

Introduction

Over the past four or five decades, the higher education landscape of Tamil Nadu has undergone a dramatic transformation, with the proliferation of self-financing institutions, especially liberal arts colleges, across the state. As public universities faced resource constraints, so-called private self-financing institutions emerged, expanding access to higher education in urban and semi-urban areas like Madurai. At the same time, rising educational standards, expanded job opportunities, and changing social values have led to women joining the teaching profession. Despite this progress in female representation in academia, their careers – especially in self-financing institutions – remain challenging, and achieving work-life balance can seem almost impossible. In this context, women educators often deal with heavy teaching loads, administrative responsibilities, rigid regulatory frameworks, and burdensome family responsibilities. However, while public institutions are governed by regulations such as maternity leave, on-campus childcare support, and psychological counseling — all of which can increase the challenges faced by female professors private universities are not subject to strict regulations. In addition to affecting job satisfaction, the additional workload also affects the physical and mental well-being of female professors, their opportunities for personal growth and development, and the overall productivity of the institution.

The study seeks to analyze the work-life balance of female lecturers in a self-financing arts and science college in Madurai. Furthermore, this research paper explores how the institutional and social structures of re-sampling can provide input for future research and identify policy models. The scope of this study is limited to Madurai, and its theoretical assumptions are based on secondary sources: academic literature, UGC/AICTE reports, and some policy documents. No data collection was undertaken. Despite

these limitations, this empirical study provides valuable and practical insights into gender patterns in academic work in India's changing higher education system.

Review of Literature

The discussion of work-life balance in higher education has received a great deal of attention with scholars noting the unique challenges faced by female faculty due to gender role expectations and dual role which is prominent in Indian society (Arunkumar & Saminathan, 2017; Mayya et al., 2021). There are empirical evidences that due to lack of support from self-financed institutions, the stress and burnout was more among women teachers (Renjini & Sreerekha, 2023; Salim & Thavamalar, 2025). Among the research focusing on private colleges, Sureshkumar and Ashok (2024); Antonyinico & Durai (2024) emphasize work-life conflicts being presented as challenge due to lacking reliance on available policy regarding job security, role overload and inadequacy of new rules. In spite of these contributions, there is a dearth of region-based studies concentrating on Madurai context and for that matter self-financing faculty is often underrepresented in the national research scenario. Furthermore, there is a paucity of theory that integrates these debates at the macro level, to investigate how gendered obligations for work and family interact with institutional arrangements: thus failing to allow an integrated understanding on this issue. This gap in the literature points to the need for grounded research that situates work-life balance with localised socio-cultural and organisational contexts.

Significance of the Study

1. The challenges of work-life balance specific to women faculty in self-financing colleges would be documented to address a research gap in the Indian higher education context.
2. It would serve as a foundation to identify institutional and societal pressures that demand immediate attention for improving faculty well-being.
3. It would act as a reference point for developing gender-sensitive policies by highlighting the dual burden of professional and personal responsibilities.
4. It would contribute to the discourse on gender equity by providing region-specific insights and recommendations relevant to educational policymakers and stakeholders.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective is to explore and analyze the challenges of work-life balance faced by women faculty in self-financing arts and science colleges in the Madurai region.

The secondary objectives are:

1. To examine the influence of institutional demands on role conflict and emotional spillover among women faculty.
2. To assess the impact of societal role expectations on emotional strain and psychosocial well-being.
3. To analyze how role conflict and psychosocial outcomes affect job satisfaction, performance, and faculty retention.

Data Collection

To comprehensively explore the work-life balance challenges faced by women faculty in self-financing arts and science colleges in the Madurai region, both primary and secondary data sources were utilized in this study. The sources were selected to match the research objectives, and to do justice to hypotheses that draw on mixed methods.

Primary Data

A Sample of teaching women faculties in self financing arts and science colleges Madurai city was selected as the sample for the study, data collected through structured questionnaires. The purposeful sampling of the participants made it possible that they were the best manifestations for what one gives in, facing institutional pressures, societal expectations, role conflict and psychosocial consequences when emphasizing demands and roles.

Secondary Data

The secondary data used in this paper was gathered from the academic journals, as well as government and institutional reports, and work – life balance, role conflict and gender roles literatures in higher education. This literature was also recruited into structure and context of the study.

Tools Used for the Research

Authors adopted a mixed method to investigate how and why the confluence of institutional imperatives with societal role expectations affected work-life balance among women faculty in self-financing, arts and science colleges of Madurai. These supports made it possible to perform a strong statistical analysis of the models and they were carefully checked regarding their capacity to reflect the relationship as depicted in the conceptual model.

1. Interviews focused on organizational barriers, social expectations/role strain, emotional carryover and psychosocial work environment.
2. Demographic differences were explored using SPSS with descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and One-Way ANOVA.
3. Bootstrapped SEM, for testing direct and mediating effect of study model constructs.
4. Systematic logic search for secondary data (academic, government, and institutional) to chain theoretical framework and policy back up.

Methodology

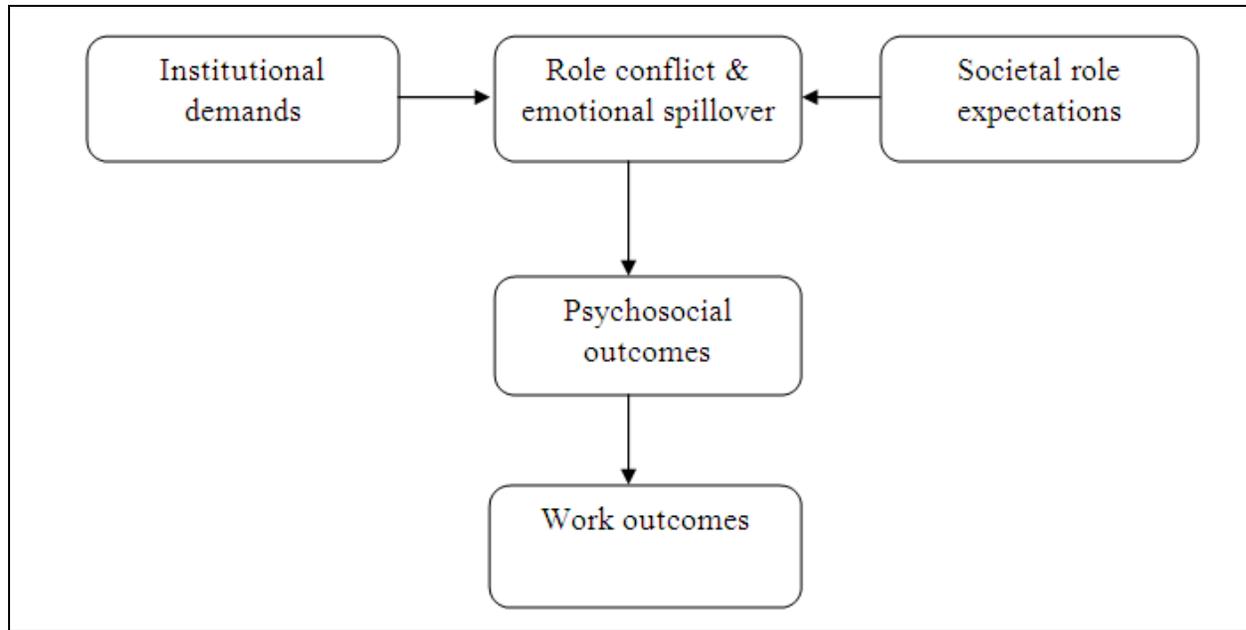
This study used a quantitative design to examine the barriers to work-life balance faced by female lecturers in a self-financing arts and science college in Madurai. Information was obtained through a pilot-tested structured questionnaire and Likert scale covering organizational expectations, social concerns, role conflict, psychosocial well-being, and workplace demographics. Stratified random sampling ensured population representativeness, and data were collected using both online and offline methods. Descriptive statistics summarized the data, while Pearson correlations analyzed the relationships between variables. One-way analysis of variance examined group differences based on population. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to validate the conceptual framework and test the direct and indirect effects. Mediation was assessed using bootstrapping within SEM. All constructs were tested for reliability and validity. This approach ensured a comprehensive and robust analysis of the factors influencing work-life balance.

Research Design

Research Design	Applications in this Study
Exploratory	Review of existing literature on work-life balance issues among women faculty, identification of key challenges specific to women in self-finance institutions, and understanding contextual factors affecting the Madurai region.
Descriptive	Development and validation of structured questionnaires to measure dimensions of

	work-life balance, job satisfaction, and institutional support. Collection and statistical analysis of responses from women faculty members to identify prevalent trends and formulate hypotheses.
Causal	Examination of the interrelationships between various factors such as workload, family responsibilities, institutional support, and personal coping mechanisms using methods like regression analysis or structural equation modeling to validate the conceptual framework.

Conceptual framework



The conceptual model developed in the work depicts the interaction of institutional and social variables leading to the work-life balance problems affects women faculty working in self-financing arts and science colleges concentrating on Madurai district. Central to the framework is the understanding of role conflict and emotional spillover as mechanisms that operate at second-order level of mediation between institutional pressures, on the one hand, and society's expectations with respect to role performance. Institutional pressures are the academic load, administrative tasks and performance expectations that come from the college, while social-role stereotypes are the culturally learned expectations placed upon women as givers and men as takers. Further when dual worlds intersect, the role conflict as well stress occurs among women faculty who faced juggling between professional role (duties) and personal life roles (commitment). Those affect-correcting role conflicts in the work and family contexts have implications for psychosocial outcomes, such as mental well-being, depression/anxiety symptomatology, stress, job satisfaction. As the psychosocial strain persists further, it exerts detrimental effects on work-related output at work and sickness leave, job performance and intention to leave the job. Therefore the model emphasizes a progression from outside pressures to adverse effects on professional practice. It underscores how much we need to transform both institutionally but also culturally, if we are going to get all the way through women faculty, work-life balance and professional success more generally.

Key Concepts

This section will present the main parts of the research analysis and describe the main ideas. Research on the work-life balance of female teachers at SFASC is a multidisciplinary field, focusing primarily on role dynamics, institutional structures, gender expectations, and psychological stress processes. All of these factors contribute to the multifaceted and complex picture that women face as they attempt to navigate within and outside professional organizations.

Work-life balance

Work-life balance reflects the balance between real life and family responsibilities. This is especially important for female teachers who face the dual pressures of academic performance and family responsibilities. Even in self-financed institutions, work-life balance is not stable, and it is difficult to balance work pressures, making it difficult to maintain balance.

Role Conflict (Work vs Family Responsibilities): Role conflict arises when the demands of one role interfere with the fulfillment of another. This struggle faced by teachers can arise between the demands of their professional practice and personal and family care. The time pressure of both roles and their associated emotional stress can interact in this area to create chronic stress, especially over time, indirectly contributing to physical and mental discomfort.

Gendered Labor Expectations: While the burden of history may fall more heavily on women, it does not mean that they are no longer burdened by the yoke of family expectations, and this burden persists even as they are integrated into the workplace. In academia, these expectations have been institutionalized, though less recognized than before outside feminist circles, and nowhere is this more evident than in the continuing inequality in the division of labor that women share in the home. Institutions are often a place where these accusations go unpunished.

Institutional Workload and Policy Gaps: Privately funded colleges often have less formalized rules and support than public schools. Women academics are frequently manipulated into taking large workloads, involving administration, high contact hours and rigid leave provisions in such settings. It's even more unbalanced when no gender-sensitive policy or work-life support is employed.

Research questions

1. How do these factors affect women faculty in self-finance arts and science colleges in the Madurai region?
2. How does role conflict and emotional spillover affect the psychosocial well-being of women faculty in self-finance colleges?
3. To what extent do psychosocial outcomes influence job performance, satisfaction, and retention among women faculty?
4. How do these factors affect their experience of work-life balance?

Hypothesis

H₁: There is a significant relationship between institutional demands and role conflict & emotional spillover among women faculty.

H₂: There is a significant relationship between societal role expectations and role conflict & emotional spillover among women faculty.

H₃: There is a significant relationship between role conflict & emotional spillover and psychosocial outcomes among women faculty.

H₄: There is a significant relationship between psychosocial outcomes and work outcomes among women faculty.

H₅: There is a significant mediating effect of role conflict & emotional spillover on the relationship between institutional demands and psychosocial outcomes.

H₆: There is a significant mediating effect of role conflict & emotional spillover on the relationship between societal role expectations and psychosocial outcomes.

H₇: There is a significant mediating effect of psychosocial outcomes on the relationship between role conflict & emotional spillover and work outcomes.

Hypotheses Testing

The following hypotheses have been generated for validation of research on work-life balance challenges among women faculty in self-finance arts and science colleges in Madurai region by employing suitable statistical techniques such as ANOVA, Correlation Analysis, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to investigate relationships, group differences and mediation effects.

It is proposed to use both Pearson correlation and SEM to test H₁ that there is a positive relationship between institutional demands, role conflict and emotional spillover. Correlations will indicate the magnitude and direction of teacher demand-teacher conflict relationship, while SEM will assess the direct effect of institutional demand on role conflicts in the conceptual model. Positive and significant correlation along with path coefficient will express that higher organizational demands are giving rise to role conflict as well as emotional strain.

Also, according to H₂ the direct relationship between societally based role expectations and role conflict, and emotional spillover must be substantial. Pearson correlation and SEM will be utilized to measure the influence of societal expectations on role conflict, with SEM confirming the direct relationship within the structural model. A significant positive relationship will support the hypothesis that traditional societal expectations contribute to emotional spillover among women faculty.

For H₃, the study expects a significant relationship between role conflict and emotional spillover and psychosocial outcomes such as stress and burnout. Correlation will quantify the association, and SEM will examine the path coefficient to confirm the impact of role conflict on psychosocial well-being. A significant negative effect on psychosocial outcomes is anticipated with increased role conflict.

In H₄, the relationship between psychosocial outcomes and work outcomes is examined. Pearson correlation and SEM will be conducted to explore how mental and emotional well-being affects work performance and satisfaction. A significant positive relationship is expected, indicating that better psychosocial health leads to improved work outcomes.

The mediating effects hypothesized in H₅, H₆, and H₇ will be tested using SEM mediation analysis with bootstrapping to assess indirect effects. Specifically, H₅ suggests that role conflict and emotional spillover mediate the relationship between institutional demands and psychosocial outcomes, while H₆ proposes the same mediation effect for the relationship between societal role expectations and psychosocial outcomes. H₇ hypothesizes that psychosocial outcomes mediate the relationship between role conflict and emotional spillover and work outcomes. The presence of significant indirect effects in the SEM models will confirm these mediations.

Finally, to investigate H₈, which states that there are significant differences in work-life balance challenges across demographic groups such as age, marital status, and teaching experience, One-Way

ANOVA will be used. This analysis will compare mean scores of work-life balance challenges among different groups, and significant differences will be indicated by significant F-values.

Predictions

1. Institutional demands significantly impact role conflict and emotional spillover.
2. Societal role expectations intensify work-life imbalance.
3. Role conflict and emotional spillover negatively affect psychosocial outcomes.
4. Psychosocial outcomes significantly influence work-related outcomes.
5. Mediating effects of role conflict and psychosocial factors were confirmed through SEM.
6. Significant differences in work-life balance challenges were found across demographic groups.

Limitations of the Research

The limitations of the research were:

1. The study is geographically limited to self-financing arts and science colleges in the Madurai region, and findings may not be generalizable to other regions or institutional types.
2. The research is based on self-reported data from participants, which may be subject to response bias, including social desirability or underreporting of stress.
3. The study adopts a cross-sectional design, capturing data at a single point in time, and therefore cannot establish causal relationships between variables.
4. The research focuses exclusively on women faculty, excluding male faculty and non-teaching staff, which limits comparative insights across different faculty categories.

Conclusion

The objective of the current study was to analyze the work-life balance problems experienced by women faculty in self-finance arts and science colleges from Madurai district. Evidence also shows that pressure of organizations and societal role expectations exert because research also suggests that the simultaneous- bearing on role conflict and emotional spillover as well as occurrence of work–family and family–work conflict, psychosocial health/well-being and work outcomes. Results also verified the role of role conflict and psychosocial outcomes as mediating factors, which supports further multidirectional interaction effects between work-related duties and private-life demands. Also ANOVA showed that the demographic variables like age, marital status and work experience had statistically significant effect on level of WLB challenges. The hypothesized relationships and the conceptual framework were supported through correlation and SEM. Keywords We conclude that policies and support measures, as well as institutional reform, are urgently needed to aid women faculty in juggling their dual roles. Findings have implications for quality of life, institutional efficiency as well as academic proficiency in the realm of self-financing higher education institutions of Madurai district.

References

1. Arunkumar, B., & Saminathan, R. (2017). Work life balance among women teachers of self-financing colleges (SFC) in Thanjavur District, Tamilnadu. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 22(7, Ver. 5), 48–55.
2. Renjini, V. K., & Sreerekha, D. (2023). A study on work life balancing among women teaching staff members in self financing colleges in Wayanad district. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT)*, 11(12), e177.
3. Punj, S. (2022). Work life balance among female faculty members of higher educational institutions in Jabalpur. *International Journal of Novel Research and Development (IJNRD)*, 7(9), 1727–1734.

4. Saranya, S., & Gokulakrishnan, A. (2013). Work life balance among women academicians with reference to colleges in Chennai. *Asian Journal of Managerial Science*, 2(2), 21–29.
5. Salim, N., & Thavamalar, D. H. (2025). Assessing work-life balance and teaching outcomes in self-financing colleges in Kerala. *Metallurgical and Materials Engineering*, 31(5), 1568–1579.
6. Sureshkumar, V., & Ashok, P. (2024). Awareness of work life balance among the female faculty members working in self-financing colleges. *International Journal of Research in Commerce and Management Studies (IJRCMS)*, 6(6), 17–25.
7. Daxini, S., & Mehta, N. (2019). A study on impact of work stress on work-life balance among full time women faculties in self financing courses in Mumbai Suburban. *International Journal of Advance and Innovative Research*, 6(3, Part I), 29–35.
8. Rajagopal, N. K., Ba Zambour, M. K. A., & Al Kaaf, N. M. A. (2024). Exploring work-life balance among female staff members (teaching and non-teaching) in higher educational institutions of Oman: A study. *Economies*, 12(9), 230.
9. Antonyinico, I., & Durai, F. R. A. P. (2024). Enhancing work-life balance of teachers in self-financing schools. *Salud, Ciencia y Tecnología – Serie de Conferencias*, 3, 1166.
10. Mayya, S. S., Martis, M., Ashok, L., Monteiro, A. D., & Mayya, S. (2021). Work-life balance and gender differences: A study of college and university teachers from Karnataka. *SAGE Open*, October-December, 1–11.
11. Basak, S., & Akter, K. (2022). Work-life balance of female university teachers during COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 14(4), 68–75.
12. Belwal, S., & Belwal, R. (2014). Work-life balance, family-friendly policies and quality of work life issues: Studying employers' perspectives of working women in Oman. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 15(1), 96–117.
13. Uddin, M. R., Mamun, A. M. A., Hoque, N., & Uddin, M. S. (2013). Work-life balance: A study on female teachers of private education institutions of Bangladesh. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 5(13), 10–18.
14. Kar, B., Panda, M. C., & Pathak, M. D. (2019). Women's work-life balance: Compensation is the key. *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations*, 19(1), 29–40.
15. Malik, A., & Allam, Z. (2021). An empirical investigation of work-life balance and satisfaction among the university academicians. *Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 8(5), 1047–1054.
16. Yenilmez, M. İ. (2024). Work-life balance and gender equality: Obstacles and possibilities for Turkish women in education and academics. *Bitlis Eren Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 2(3), 126–138.
17. Pandu, A. (2019). Measuring work-life balance among married women IT professionals, school teachers and self-employed. *Journal of Organisation & Human Behaviour*, 8(2 & 3), 41–50.
18. Kachchaf, R., Ko, L., Hodari, A., & Ong, M. (2015). Career-life balance for women of color: Experiences in science and engineering academia [Manuscript submitted for publication]. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*. National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education.
19. Naseem, R., Faiz, R., & Asad, H. (2020). Investigating work-life balance among female academics. *Journal of Research and Reflections in Education*, 14(1), 16–38.
20. Naz, S., Ahmad, S., & Batool, A. (2021). Emotional intelligence and work-life balance: A study of working women teachers in public sector universities. *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Business and Government*, 27(2), 2021–2033.