



QUALITY OF WORK LIFE (QWL) AMONG WORKING WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN SIVAGANGA DISTRICT

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Abstract

Employee well-being, organization efficiency and strength, and the ability of an institution to last over time have been identified as being greatly influenced by a person's Quality of Work Life (QWL). In higher education, women employees are particularly susceptible to encountering greater difficulties because of the demanding dual roles they typically hold, the expectations of their society and culture, and the restrictions that many institutions place on them. This research examines the level of QWL experienced by both teaching staff and non-teaching staff in the Sivaganga district of Tamil Nadu, India. A descriptive research design and structured questionnaire based on Walton's QWL model were utilized to collect data from a sample of 200 women employees, which were chosen using stratified random sampling. Findings indicate that the QWL experienced by women employees is moderately low with significant concern regarding achieving a workable balance between their personal life and work life, career advancement and the amount of work they are expected to perform. Teaching staff report having a higher QWL than non-teaching staff. The researcher also recommends that institutions make the following reforms: promote flexible working option; develop structures that support women employees in their jobs and at home; increase the availability of welfare services and programs; and provide women employees with professional development opportunities.

Keywords: *Quality of Work Life (QWL), Working women, Higher education institutions, Sivaganga district, Work-life balance, Organizational support.*

Introduction

Sivaganga district in Tamil Nadu provides a unique context for examining QWL among women in higher education. The district hosts a mix of government, aided, and self-financing colleges, employing women in diverse roles ranging from faculty members to administrative staff. The socio-cultural environment of the region, characterized by traditional family structures and evolving gender norms, further shapes the experiences of working women. Yet, systematic studies focusing on QWL in this district remain limited, creating a significant research gap. Understanding the level of QWL among women staff in Sivaganga's HEIs will provide valuable insights into the interplay between institutional policies, workplace practices, and socio-cultural expectations.

This study seeks to explore the quality of work life among working women staff members in higher education institutions of Sivaganga district. It aims to identify the major factors influencing QWL, compare experiences between teaching and non-teaching staff, and examine the relationship between QWL and outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention. By addressing these objectives, the research contributes to The concept of Quality of Work Life (QWL) is an important concept to research and evaluate in regard to the degree to which employees are satisfied, feel good about their work, and have equilibrium between their work life and home life. QWL consists of several areas including the work environment, pay, opportunity for career development, support from

the institution, relationships with co-workers, and the ability to manage stress. Working women have a particularly high stake in QWL because they have to maintain two roles (career and family) while trying to establish themselves in the workplace. The perception of the quality of a workplace and the general well being of working women is determined in large part by their ability to balance career requirements with family responsibilities.

Higher education institutions HEIs play a significant role in the human capital development. Women represent an important proportion of the HEI workforce (teaching and non-teaching) in India, but even with increasing numbers of women employed in HEIs, many women in HEIs continue to experience barriers such as heavy workloads, few opportunities for promotion, gender discrimination, or lack of adequate institutional support, that negatively impact their quality of work life (QWL), resulting in heightened stress, reduced job satisfaction, and ultimately intention to leave. Therefore, it is essential to undertake an examination of the QWL of women employed in HEIs, because their QWL has implications not only for the staff's well-being, but also for the institution's ability to operate efficiently/effectively in the pursuit of academic excellence. Based on an examination of the QWL of women working in HEIs, as well as academic literature and practice-based policy recommendations, pathways to enhance workplace well-being, gender equity, and institutional enhancement throughout higher education institutions have been developed.

Review of Literature

Quality of Work Life (QWL) among higher education professionals: Studies conducted at Indian Higher Education Institutions indicate that female employees (both faculty and staff) experience high levels of stress from their workloads, according to faculty, and from pressures placed on them by students. Female non-teaching workers have reported experiencing restrictions on workplace mobility as well as a lack of appropriate workplace welfare provisions. In addition, female faculty/staff at HEIs report significant difficulties in achieving work life balance as a result of their dual domestic responsibilities.

Quality of Work Life (QWL) among female employees: Eight dimensional framework of QWL proposed by Walton (1975): Adequate Pay, Safe Working Environment, Opportunities for Growth, Constitutionalism, Social Integration, Work-Life Balance, Social Relevance and Total Life Space.

Given that psychological well-being, need fulfillment and work life balance also reflect an expansion of this QWL conceptual model as outlined by Sirgy et al (2001) in their research on WLB, material expressed in prior studies of Indian HE faculty demonstrates female employees encounter barriers/limitations due to their need to fulfill both familial and occupational obligations and therefore, as described by Sinha (2014) and Thomas and Ganesh (2019), have identified career satisfaction and job autonomy as key indicators of QWL. However, female faculty/staff encounter barriers to job satisfaction through excessive workloads and limited institutional support. The nature of non-teaching staff work is identified as repetitive and austere therefore; QWL will be consistently rated lower among non-teaching staff.

Research Gap

1. Limited empirical studies exist on QWL among women staff in district-level HEIs, particularly in Tamil Nadu.
2. Most prior research focuses on faculty members, with non-teaching staff underrepresented.
3. Few studies integrate Walton's QWL model with advanced statistical techniques (SEM, regression) to examine relationships with job satisfaction, stress, and turnover intention.

4. The socio-cultural context of Sivaganga district, with its traditional family structures and evolving gender norms, remains underexplored in QWL literature.

Research Methodology

1. **Design:** Descriptive and analytical.
2. **Sample:** 200 women staff (teaching and non-teaching) from government, aided, and self-financing colleges.
3. **Tool:** Structured questionnaire (Likert scale, 1–5) based on Walton's QWL model.
4. **Analysis:** Descriptive statistics, correlation, regression.

Objectives of the study

1. To assess the Quality of Work Life among working women staff members in higher education institutions of Sivaganga district.
2. To examine the relationship between QWL and outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job stress, and turnover intention.

To Assessing the quality of workplace life experienced by women employees, both teaching and non-teaching, in colleges throughout the Sivaganga district.

1. Determining the level of safety and resources available in the overall work environment and institutional climate for female employees.
2. Determining salary parity and overall adequacy of salary structure for female employees with comparable male employees.
3. Determining the opportunities for advancement and professional development for female employees, including promotion, training, and continuing education.
4. Determining the availability and accessibility of organizational supports (i.e., welfare facilities, grievance procedures, and gender-sensitive policies) for the female employees.
5. Assessing the female employees' abilities to balance their dual responsibilities for work and family life.
6. Determining the level of collegiality and cooperation among employees and a harmonious workplace for female employees.
7. Determining the degree of workload, role conflict, and psychological strain among the female employees.
8. Measuring the degree of satisfaction and commitment to their institutions by the female employees.

Through the use of descriptive statistics; correlation, regression, and SEM analyses, the study not only attempts to document the current status of the quality of workplace life for all the female employees within the sample, it also attempts to identify any differences between the two employee groups as it relates to the overall quality of workplace life. The results of this assessment will provide a complete picture of how institutional practices; socio-cultural expectations; and workplace structures impact the well-being and productivity of female employees. Ultimately, the data and information collected at this objective will provide the foundation for policy recommendations to support and improve the quality of workplace life for female employees (teaching and non-teaching) and assist in ensuring institutional sustainability.

Table 1: Mean Scores of Major Constructs (N = 200)

Construct	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Quality of Work Life (QWL)	3.82	0.64	Moderate to High
Work–Life Balance (WLB)	3.76	0.71	Moderate
Work Environment (WE)	3.68	0.69	Moderate
Compensation (CO)	3.42	0.73	Moderate Low
Career Growth (CG)	3.70	0.68	Moderate
Organizational Support (OS)	3.88	0.66	High
Interpersonal Relations (IR)	3.55	0.72	Moderate
Job Stress (JS)	3.10	0.75	Moderate High Stress
Job Satisfaction (SAT)	3.84	0.70	High
Organizational Commitment (OC)	3.72	0.68	Moderate High
Turnover Intention (TI)	2.98	0.77	Moderate

Interpretation: Overall, the women staff members from each of the institutions reported having moderate or high quality of work-life. The greatest degree of organizational support was found, which indicates that there are some institutional structures to help support them. However, the lowest scores were for compensation, indicating that all or almost all respondents were dissatisfied with their pay. Job stress was reported at moderately high levels meaning that many women staff were experiencing issues related to their workload and job role conflict.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix (Pearson’s r)

Variable	QWL	WLB	OS	JS	SAT	OC	TI
QWL	1	.62	.64	-.48	.66	.59	-.42
WLB	.62	1	.50	-.46	.52	.47	-.38
OS	.64	.50	1	-.39	.59	.55	-.36
JS	-.48	-.46	-.39	1	-.45	-.41	.49
SAT	.66	.52	.59	-.45	1	.63	-.40
OC	.59	.47	.55	-.41	.63	1	-.38
TI	-.42	-.38	-.36	.49	-.40	-.38	1

Interpretation:Quality of Work Life(QWL) is positively related to the following business factors: work-life balance; organizational support; and job satisfaction. Job stress is negatively related to QWL and positively related to turnover intention. This supports the concept that job stress is detrimental to QWL and that it increases one’s likelihood of leaving their employer.

Table 3: Regression Analysis (Predicting QWL)

Predictor	Beta	t	Sig.	Effect Strength
Work–Life Balance	.31	5.60	.000	Strong Positive
Organizational Support	.33	4.42	.000	Strongest Positive
Career Growth	.24	3.66	.000	Moderate Positive
Work Environment	.20	3.17	.002	Moderate Positive
Compensation	.12	2.20	.029	Small Positive
Interpersonal Relations	.10	1.88	.062	Not Significant
Job Stress	-.22	-4.25	.000	Negative

Interpretation: The strongest predictor of QWL is organizational support, followed closely by work-life balance and career development. There is a significant negative relationship between job stress and QWL. Interpersonal relationships are positively correlated with QWL; however, there was no statistical significance found between the two factors.

Table 4: Regression Analysis (Predicting Turnover Intention)

Predictor	Beta	t	Sig.	Effect Strength
Job Stress	.39	6.83	.000	Strong Positive
Quality of Work Life	-.28	-4.14	.000	Moderate Negative
Job Satisfaction	-.20	-2.75	.007	Moderate Negative
Organizational Commitment	-.17	-2.57	.011	Small Negative

Interpretation: The most significant factor influencing employees' desires to leave their jobs is job stress. Additionally, higher-quality work-life balance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment lower employee turnover intentions. Thus, the need for stress management and other support policies are vital.

Discussion

Based on the data obtained from this research, organizational support, work-life balance, and opportunities for career advancement are the primary factors contributing to the quality of work life experienced by women employees working within higher education institutions (HEIs) in Sivaganga. Job stress has a negative effect on quality of work life and also results in an increased intention to leave one's position. Women who work as faculty members reported a slightly greater quality of work life when compared to their non-faculty counterparts due, in part, to differences in opportunities for career advancement and levels of support received from their respective institutions. These findings support Walton's model of quality of work life and are consistent with previous research conducted in India that emphasizes the value of supportive work environments for women employees.

Future Implications

1. Policy reforms: Institutions should provide flexible work practices, access to childcare, and transparency in the promotions process.
2. Stress management: Implementing a structured programme to alleviate workload pressures or reduce role conflicts could increase employees' quality of work life.
3. Professional development: Providing women employees with training, research grants, and mentorship in their careers will create more opportunities for career advancement.
4. Comparative studies: Further research is needed to investigate and compare quality of work life across multiple locations, including across various geographies (e.g., districts and states) or between HEIs. This will allow for a more comprehensive understanding of quality of work life for women.
5. Longitudinal analysis: Assessing employee quality of work life over time will further assist in understanding the impact of reforms, socio-cultural changes, and institutional policies.

Findings

1. The women workers in the higher education institutions in Sivaganga have reported moderate to high levels of quality of work life (QWL), with the strongest predictor being organizational support or the assistance provided by an organization to its employees.

2. The dimension of compensation is the weakest area in terms of QWL; therefore, women workers expressed some dissatisfaction with pay structures for their jobs.
3. Job stress is moderately increased and this increases the negative impact of job stress on (QWL), job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, in addition to increasing turnover intentions.
4. The members of the teaching staff reported somewhat higher QWL levels than those of the non-teaching staff, mainly because they have better opportunities for career advancement and support from the institutions in which they work.
5. The regression analysis supports that organizational support, work–life balance, and career growth opportunity are the three most important predictors for determining an individual's QWL.

Suggestions

1. Enact flexible work hours and family-friendly regulations.
2. Create childcare resources and welfare services for scholars.
3. Increase grievance redressal and gender-equitable mechanisms.
4. Provide career advancement opportunities to employees through training and research grants.
5. Guarantee equitable promotion and fair salaries.
6. Offer stress management programs and workloads that can be balanced.

Conclusion

The findings of this research indicate that while female employees of higher education institutions in the Sivaganga district are represented as having moderate quality of work-life (QWL), obstacles remain for them in the area of compensation, workloads, and career advancement. Furthermore, it has been shown that without the support of organizations and family-friendly policies, enhancing QWL would be difficult. Additionally, without addressing job-related stressors, turnover rates may be higher than expected and thus lower the sustainability of the organizations involved. For this reason, it is clear that gender-sensitive reforms and supportive workplace practices should be established within HEIs.

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