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Analysing the impact of Work life Balance on Attrition Rate of Academicians in Higher Education

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Abstract

This study investigates the connection between Academicains attrition in higher education and work-life balance (WLB). Using a quantitative approach and a sample of 368 academicians from Western Uttar Pradesh, the study analyzes data obtained through a structured questionnaire using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings show a robust and statistically significant positive connection between lower faculty attrition and better work-life balance (path coefficient = 0.687, $p < 0.05$). Important WLB elements that were found to have a significant impact on attrition included workload, flexibility, and role conflict. The results highlight how crucial institutional policies and assistance are for improving work-life balance and encouraging teacher retention. This study adds to the small amount of empirical research that directly connects academics' attrition and WLB, and it makes recommendations for effective academic leadership interventions.

Keywords: - Work Life balance, Attrition, Higher Education

Introduction

In the context of employee well-being, work-life balance (WLB) has gained a lot of attention, especially in fields like higher education that need a high degree of emotional and intellectual engagement. In academia, the balance between professional responsibilities and personal life is increasingly acknowledged as an influential factor in job satisfaction, retention, and ultimately, employee churn. The special blend of teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities can cause a great deal of stress for academic workers. If this stress is not adequately managed, it can result in burnout, disengagement, and high turnover rates. *(Meara et al. 2014).*

In addition to managing time between work and personal life, WLB also takes into account the emotional and psychological resources needed to balance the demands of both areas. Job unhappiness and higher turnover intentions are greatly influenced by the imbalance between work and personal life, according to scholars like Greenhaus and Allen (2011). Furthermore, Dr. Sherrie A. S. (2014) explores the connections between personal and professional life in

the academic setting as well as the demands made on faculty members that influence their retention rates.

Parker and Axtell (2017) also emphasize how institutional support and organizational culture affect academic staff members' capacity to strike a good work-life balance. According to their findings, academic institutions have a higher chance of long-term faculty retention if they actively cultivate an atmosphere that supports workload management, flexibility, and mental health services.

Nevertheless, in the context of higher education, there is little research that directly links work-life balance to faculty attrition, despite the expanding amount of literature. By investigating the relationship between work-life balance and academic staff retention at universities and other higher education institutions, this study aims to close this gap. The study intends to gain a better understanding of how organizational policies, workload expectations, and institutional support affect academic professionals' decisions to stay in or quit their employment by combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

In conclusion, this study will look at the complex connection between academic staff attrition rates in higher education and work-life balance. This study aims to advance knowledge of how to create an atmosphere that supports the long-term retention of talented faculty members by taking into account the seminal work of earlier researchers and examining the current situation.

Review of Literature

Work-Life Balance in Higher Education

The ability to reconcile the conflicting demands of work and personal life without experiencing stress, burnout, or job discontent is known as work-life balance. Academics frequently struggle to maintain a healthy WLB because of their many responsibilities as mentors, researchers, professors, and administrative staff. According to recent research by Kember et al. (2020), faculty members find it challenging to maintain a healthy work-life balance because of the complexity of academic jobs in higher education. These positions frequently involve service, research, and teaching responsibilities, all of which demand a large investment of time and energy and leave little time for personal wellbeing.

This opinion is further supported by a study by Kenny et al. (2022), which found that academic staff members typically experience higher levels of work-related stress and emotional tiredness than staff members in other sectors. This is mainly because of the high demands that both teaching and research expectations make on them. These results are in line with previous study by Brough & O'Driscoll (2021), who claim that a major factor in academic WLB problems is the pressure to balance research production with teaching duties.

Ahmad Saufi et al. (2023) investigated the connection between academic staff turnover intentions and person-environment fit. According to their findings, WLB is improved and the likelihood of leaving is decreased when personal values and company culture are strongly aligned.

According to a phenomenological study by Ramachandaran et al. (2024) in Malaysian higher education institutions, the main obstacles to reaching WLB include heavy workloads, mental

health conditions, and time management challenges. These difficulties play a major role in job discontent and the idea of quitting academic jobs.

Mohideen and Katta (2024) looked into how academicians in Tamil Nadu felt stress, organizational culture, and WLB interacted. According to their findings, stress levels can be decreased by encouraging corporate cultures that place a high priority on work-life balance. This improves job satisfaction and lowers the likelihood of employees leaving their jobs.

Work-Life Imbalance and Its Impact

Job satisfaction and retention in higher education may suffer significantly from an unbalanced work-life balance. According to Watson and Gauthier (2021), a major factor in faculty members' decisions to quit their schools is work-life conflict (WLC), which occurs when work demands conflict with personal obligations and vice versa. They contend that the main causes of academic turnover are job discontent and burnout, which are closely linked to a poor work-life balance.

The mediating function of work satisfaction between WLB and educators' intentions to leave was investigated by Syuzairi et al. in 2023. The importance of promoting job happiness to retain academic staff was highlighted by the study's conclusion that WLB has a good impact on job satisfaction, which in turn has a negative impact on turnover intentions.

According to recent research by Hassan et al. (2023), academicians who face significant work-life conflict are more likely to express plans to resign from their positions. According to their analysis, major stresses that compromise faculty well-being and increase turnover intentions include lengthy workdays, high standards for research output, and the growing administrative load. According to the study, colleges must acknowledge the accumulated stress that faculty members endure and implement supporting institutional measures to alleviate these issues. One of the main factors affecting professor turnover is burnout. According to Zhang et al. (2022), job satisfaction, which mediates the relationship between burnout and turnover intention, is adversely affected by burnout. Additionally, this link was found to be moderated by proactive personality, indicating that individual characteristics may affect how burnout affects turnover.

The effects of WLB and professional growth on the intents of young academic staff members to leave private universities were examined by ChongFei and Samikon (2024). It's interesting to note that WLB had a favorable impact on turnover intentions while professional development had a negative one, indicating that attrition may still occur even in cases where work-life balance is maintained.

Work-life balance and faculty turnover intentions are significantly correlated, according to numerous research. For example, Wei and Ye (2022) discovered that low WLB among Chinese college instructors resulted in more emotional weariness, which had a negative impact on their wellbeing and raised their intents to leave. Similar to this, Kumbhar (2024) found that in Maharashtra, India, issues including long workdays and rigid scheduling had a detrimental effect on teachers' job satisfaction and increased their intention to quit.

Objectives of the study

- To examine the relationship between work-life balance (WLB) and faculty attrition rates in higher education institutions.
- To identify the key factors contributing to work-life balance among academicians.

Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant relationship between work-life balance and faculty attrition in Higher Education.

Conceptual Framework

Variable type

Independent variable- Work life balance

Dependent variable- Attrition

Research Methodology

Data is quantitative in nature using non probability sampling. For the primary data questionnaire is used and secondary data was taken from journal, article, website. The population taken for the study of academicians of higher education of western UP and sample size of 368 was taken for the study. Study uses 5 point Likert scale. For the analysis study uses PLS-SEM—Structural Equation Model (SEM) .

Data analysis

Measurement model assessment is done through SMART PLS and the following are analysed- Factor loading, AVE, Discriminant validity, and Cross loadings.

Factor loadings

Table 1 Factor Loading

	Attrition	WLB
ATTT1	0.804	
ATTT2	0.821	
ATTT3	0.824	
WLB 4		0.757
WLB2		0.804
WLB3		0.840

Note: ATT (Attrition), WLB (Work Life Balance)

Source: Author compilation through SmartPLS4

Next step after factor loading is the reliability and validity of construct is checked which is shown in the table below and is measured through AVE, chronbach's alpha, rho_a and rho _c. The threshold values for AVE is .70 and the calculated AVE value of both Attrition and WLB are above .50 also value of chronbach alpha is also above threshold value .7 and table shows that value of rho_a lies in between chronbach alpha and rho_c.

Table 2 Reliability and validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
ATTRITION	.907	.907	.942	.834
WLB	.885	.889	.917	.678

Source: Author compilation through SmartPLS4

To check Discrimination of construct among themselves Fornell and larcker criteria is done . The table below shows the same.

Table 3 Discriminant validity

	Attrition	WLB
Attrition	0.928	
WLB	0.689	0.809

Source: Author compilation through SmartPLS4

Cross loadings indicate high correlation of ATT1, ATT2, ATT3 with Work life balance and low correlation with Attrition. Similarly WLB 2 , WLB 3 ,WLB 4 show high correlation with Attrition and less with WLB.

Table 4 Cross Loading Higher Order Construct

	Attrition	WLB
ATTT1	0.907	0.659
ATTT2	0.922	0.597
ATTT3	0.926	0.642
WLB 4	0.533	0.759
WLB2	0.438	0.806
WLB3	0.48	0.842

Source: Author compilation through SmartPLS4

Note: ATT(attrition) , WLB (work life balance)

To check Collinearity issue VIF of inner model is calculated and shown in the table below. All the value lie within the threshold limit of 5 so it is acceptable.

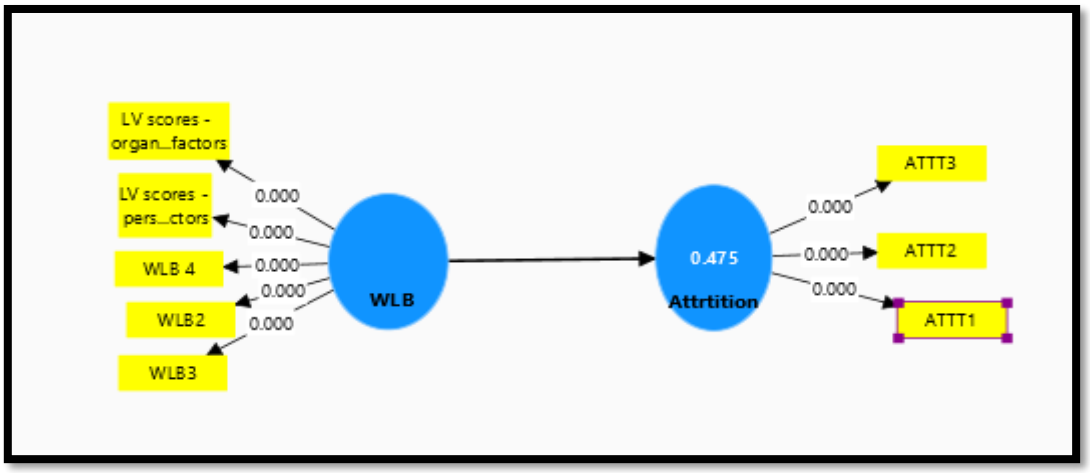
Table 5 VIF

ATTT1	2.689
ATTT2	3.216
ATTT3	3.121
LV scores - organisational factors	3.284
LV scores - personal factors	4.233

WLB 4	3.563
WLB2	2.872
WLB3	3.191

Source : Author compilation through SmartPLS4

The final step is to go for bootstrapping which is a technique to test hypothesis. The figure below shows the bootstrapping result.



Source : Author compilation through SmartPLS4

Hypothesis testing through Bootstrapping

Path coefficient is drawn from the bootstrapping step which is shown in table below.

	Original sample (O)	**Sample mean (M)**	**Standard deviation (STDEV)**	**T statistics (|O/STDEV|)**	**P values**
Work Life balance -> Attrition	0.687	0.687	0.019	34.917	0.00

Source : Author compilation through SmartPLS4

- **Path coefficient (0.689)**: Indicates a **strong positive relationship**. As work-life balance improves (higher WLB), faculty attrition also changes significantly (likely decreases).
- **T-Statistic (34.917)**: Far above the critical value (usually > 1.96 for 95% confidence), which confirms the result is statistically significant.
- **P-value (0.000)**: Strongly supports significance ($p < 0.05$).

So, the hypothesis **H1 is supported**. There **is a statistically significant and strong relationship** between work-life balance and faculty attrition.

Findings of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate how teacher attrition in higher education institutions is affected by work-life balance (WLB). The statistical modeling approach and data analysis produced a number of important conclusions.:

1. **Significant Relationship Between Work-Life Balance and Attrition:** A strong and statistically significant correlation between work-life balance and faculty attrition was shown by the path coefficient from the bootstrapping findings (p-value = 0, T-statistic = 34.917). This implies that faculty turnover rates are projected to decrease as work-life balance improves, underscoring the significance of preserving a positive work-life balance in keeping academic staff.
2. **Factor Loadings:** Both the work-life balance and attrition constructs' factor loadings were found to be above the threshold values, suggesting the validity and reliability of the variables utilized to measure them. For example, the factor loadings for work-life balance ranged from 0.757 to 0.840, and those for attrition ranged from 0.804 to 0.824. These findings support the variables' potency and applicability within the study's framework.
3. **Construct Validity and Reliability:** Both constructs' reliability and validity measures (such as Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted) were above the acceptable threshold, showing the measurement model's durability. In particular, the AVE values for work-life balance (0.678) and attrition (0.834) are higher than the minimal necessary value of 0.50, indicating that the constructs have significant convergent validity.
4. **Discriminant Validity:** When the square root of the AVE values for each construct was more than the correlations between the two constructs, the results of the Fornell-Larcker criterion demonstrated that the attrition and work-life balance constructs are sufficiently distinct. Discriminant validity was demonstrated, for example, by the correlation between attrition and work-life balance of 0.678, which is less than the square root of AVE for each construct (attrition = 0.928, WLB = 0.809).
5. **Collinearity Issues:** All of the inner model's Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values fell below the allowed range (less than 5), indicating that there aren't any serious multicollinearity problems between the constructs and ensuring the stability and reliability of the estimates.
6. **Cross-Loadings:** Items evaluating attrition, specifically WLB2, WLB3, and WLB4, showed strong associations with work-life balance, according to the cross-loading results. Attrition-related items (ATTT1, ATTT2, and ATTT3) and the work-life balance construct, however, showed a weak connection, confirming that the variables are different but yet connected.

Discussion

The results of the study clearly show that work-life balance has a major impact on faculty attrition in higher education. The statistical analysis confirmed the hypothesised association with a significant p-value and a high path coefficient (0.687). Faculty who had a better work-life balance were less likely to quit, which lends credence to the idea that role conflicts, workload management, and flexibility provided by the institution can lower turnover.

Notably, the constructs for WLB and attrition were confirmed to be valid and reliable by the factor analysis and reliability evaluations. Strong Cronbach's alpha scores (WLB: 0.885, Attrition: 0.907), high factor loadings (above 0.75), and acceptable AVE values attested to the measures' consistency. Additionally, discriminant validity was verified, suggesting that attrition and WLB are two different but connected concepts.

Through the use of cross-loadings, the study found considerable overlaps between some WLB and attrition items, suggesting that, despite their differences, experiences of imbalance have a major impact on faculty members' perceptions of their job roles and future career choices. The results' robustness is increased by the absence of multicollinearity, which is demonstrated by acceptable VIF values.

The results align with the latest research. For instance, the WLB-turnover relationship is mediated by job satisfaction, according to Syuzairi et al. (2023) and ChongFei & Samikon (2024). Moreover, a significant concern in several cited research was teacher burnout, which was fueled by administrative demands and teaching overload. It's interesting to note that in some situations, the study by ChongFei and Samikon also found a surprisingly positive correlation between WLB and turnover intention, indicating that unfulfilled desires for professional progression may still drive academics to leave even when balance is reached.

This work advances our empirical knowledge of the relationship between WLB and academic attrition, especially in the Indian context. The results support practical institutional measures to increase retention, like encouraging flexible scheduling, lowering administrative costs, and enhancing mental health services. In order to create inclusive and responsive policies, institutions must also take into account the diverse personal and professional demands of its teachers.

Conclusion

This study offers strong evidence that faculty attrition rates in higher education are significantly influenced by work-life balance. The importance of supportive work environments, policies, and practices in fostering teacher retention is highlighted by the fact that faculty members who enjoy a better work-life balance are less likely to quit their jobs.

The results also highlight how important it is for educational institutions to acknowledge the stress that academic staff members experience from their many responsibilities (teaching, research, and administration) and to provide sufficient institutional support to assist them cope with these expectations.

The study's conclusion is supported by the examination of the constructs' validity and reliability as well as the absence of multicollinearity problems. Additionally, the significance of work-life balance in addressing faculty attrition is reinforced by the strong statistical evidence (p-value = 0).

Future Directions

Although this study offers insightful information, more research in a number of areas could deepen our understanding of teacher attrition and work-life balance in higher education:

1. **Institutional Factors**: More research might examine the precise institutional rules and cultural components that support academic employees in striking a better work-life balance. Examining the function of remote work options, workload management techniques, flexible work schedules, and mental health resources may be part of this.
2. **Longitudinal Studies:** Over time, longitudinal study may offer a more profound comprehension of the relationship between attrition and work-life balance. The long-

term effects of work-life policies may be better understood by monitoring shifts in work-life balance and retention rates during an academic caree**r.**

3. **Cultural and Regional Variations:** Future research should also examine how cultural variations in other nations or areas affect faculty attrition and work-life balance. Institutions in many contexts may be able to create more successful policies if they have a better understanding of how cultural attitudes toward work and life impact the experiences of academic staff.
4. **Impact of Work-Life Balance on Teaching Quality and Research Productivity:** Future studies should look at whether enhancing work-life balance improves academic performance in terms of research productivity and teaching quality in addition to lowering attrition. This might offer a more comprehensive justification for why organizations ought to give work-life balance programs top priority.

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that a key element in lowering teacher attrition in higher education is work-life balance. Talented academic employees are more likely to be retained by organizations that provide a flexible and encouraging work environment, which eventually helps the institution's overall stability and success. With an emphasis on different academic populations and long-term effects, future research should seek to further examine the institutional and individual elements that contribute to work-life balance and retention.

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