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DECIPHERING QUALITY OF WORK LIFE OF WOMEN IN
UNIVERSITIES: ROLE OF CAREER SATISFACTION, INDIVIDUAL
WELL-BEING, AND THE WORK-FAMILY INTERFACE

ROZSZYFROWANIE JAKOŚCI ŻYCIA ZAWODOWEGO KOBIEC
NA UNIWERSYTETACH: ROLA SATYSFAKCJI Z KARIERY,
DOBROSTANU INDYWIDUALNEGO I RELACJI PRACA-RODZINA

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Abstract

Subject and purpose of work: The research aims to empirically test the influence of career satisfaction, the work-family interface, and individuals' well-being on the quality of work-life (QWL) of women faculty at the university level in Himachal Pradesh (India). Extant literature illustrates a lack of investigation regarding QWL among women teachers in higher education.

Materials and methods: This study focuses on women teachers at Private and Public Universities. The population of the study constitutes female professors working in public and private universities. Based on the responses of 246 respondents a Regression analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM) were used to establish the relationship between the quality of work life and independent variables

Results: Career satisfaction, work-life balance, and individual well-being are positively related to QWL.

Conclusions: The research extracts insightful suggestions to the practitioners in the direction of career satisfaction, the work-family interface, well-being, and QWL.

Keywords: University, Quality of Work Life, Career Satisfaction, Individual well-being, Work-Family Interface

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Streszczenie

Przedmiot i cel pracy: Celem badania jest empiryczna ocena wpływu satysfakcji zawodowej, relacji praca-rodzina oraz dobrostanu jednostek na jakość życia zawodowego (QWL) kobiet wykładowców akademickich na poziomie uniwersyteckim w Himachal Pradesh (Indie). Dostępna literatura wskazuje na brak badań dotyczących QWL wśród nauczycielek akademickich w szkolnictwie wyższym.

Materiały i metody: Niniejsze badanie koncentruje się na nauczycielkach akademickich na uniwersytetach prywatnych i publicznych. Populację badaną stanowią profesorki pracujące na uniwersytetach publicznych i prywatnych. Na podstawie odpowiedzi 246 respondentek wykorzystano analizę regresji i modelowanie równań strukturalnych (SEM) w celu ustalenia związku między jakością życia zawodowego a zmiennymi niezależnymi.

Wyniki: Satysfakcja zawodowa, równowaga między życiem zawodowym a prywatnym oraz dobrostan jednostki są dodatnio skorelowane z QWL.

Wnioski: Badanie dostarcza cennych wskazówek dla praktyków w zakresie satysfakcji zawodowej, relacji praca-rodzina, dobrostanu oraz QWL.

Słowa kluczowe: uniwersytet, jakość życia zawodowego, satysfakcja z kariery, dobrostan jednostki, interfejs praca-rodzina

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, the meaning of “life” from the perspective of a Quality of work-life was limited to family and childcare. Over time, responding to the advancements in societal and technological spheres meaning of life and their interaction with work have changed (Bhardwaj et al., 2023). The strength of connectivity in the digital era has been so intense that segregating personal and professional lives has been difficult to imagine. A Study by Oracle covered more than 14,600 employees, managers, HR leaders and C-level executives across 13 countries, including 1,100 professionals from India. About 91% of the respondents to the survey from India said they have been highly impacted due to stress in work life. It was found that the stress level among Indian employees is relatively higher than the global average of 80% (Economic Times, 2018). Therefore, such situations have necessitated conducting an inquiry into the area of Quality Work Life (QWL), which addresses employees’ well-being and career satisfaction (Liliy et al., 2015).

Comparing the journey of men and women, later have come a long way to be bestowed the equal rights to engage in the workforce in all spheres of career. Despite an increase in women’s workforce participation over time, they still don’t have the same opportunities as men do to succeed in their careers (Bhardwaj, 2013). Nevertheless, legislation has improved globally to uplift the status of women; several unseen factors still exist to influence their career trajectory. According to extensive literature, women approach quality of work-life and work-life balance as a personal issue rather than a condition implied by the outdated beliefs ingrained in societal norms (Toffoletti & Starr, 2016). The challenge of QWL of women increases due to the additional care demanded by children, husband, and other family members from women, and it is traced in the literature that in a situation like a pandemic, such conflict rises to the extent leading to turnover intention (Nair et al., 2021).

Though teaching has been accepted in society as the most suitable profession for women, the experience of QWL has been no different for them in higher education. Literature has identified that higher education (University), is one of the areas with the highest prevalence of Burnout (García-González et al, 2020) and poor quality of work life (Kahn et al., 2006, Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). There have been several individual, organisational, and other factors that affect the level of job satisfaction among employees (Kumar et al., 2025). Conscientiousness and self-evaluation by employees, salary, pay & promotions, relationship with co-workers, and the job itself are some individual and organisational-level factors that influence the job satisfaction of employees (Saari & Judge, 2004). Recent research has noted that it is important for organisations to successfully implement the WLB practices, including employee well-being, career satisfaction and work-family interface (Jayasingam et al., 2021). Whereas research in past has explored how employees in diverse contexts and industries balance their professional and personal lives, the higher education context remains from the examination of the phenomena of a QWL.

For women in academics, excellence at work is not merely getting paid equally but also means heading toward career advancements such as taking classes, conferences, research guidance, writing and publications and many more, which has been made more difficult by the sole responsibility of covert care that women give to their families, friends, and coworkers (Gaudet et al., 2022). Lacking the optimum balance between work and life hinders the growth of a career, for example, employment, tenure, and promotions, in academics, which rely on the publication and citations received by the author, seeking more attention and time in research (Allen et al., 2021) and work-life conflict keeps women authors from increasing their contribution to the publication. Cognisant of the necessity of equality, the current study expands on the context of women working in higher education while addressing the shortcomings of previous research.

The dearth of studies on the quality of work-life in the education context opens avenues to the contribution of the current study, which sets the foundation for policy implications to improve the quality of work-life of women. The current study's contribution to the higher education context is greatly enhanced by the disregard for the value of human resources followed in existing literature. The impact of quality of work-life practices among women faculty has been adversely affected in comparison to their male counterparts due to the social structure of gender disparity, which plays a significant role in defining the balance in the work-family interface. The present study has been conducted to examine the QWL of women in considering the three important dimensions, namely, the role of career satisfaction, individual well-being, and work-family interface in universities of Himachal Pradesh. The remaining paper has been structured, comprising the sections including a review of literature, results, discussion, future scope and conclusion.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Quality of work life in Higher Education

A myth centered around the teaching profession in society is that it is considered one job that is most comfortable and free of stress. However, the extant literature is not in agreement with the assumption. Education, especially higher education (University), is one of the areas with the highest prevalence of Burnout (García-González et al, 2020). Reduced quality of work-life among the workforce affects individuals concerned as well as organizations (Sumathi et al., 2025). The evidence lies in the past research conducted in the field of academics that a poor work environment at the workplace leads to negative affectivity, lack of productivity, emotional exhaustion, detachment at the workplace, and negative conversation about the job which subsequently result in burnouts (Kahn et al., 2006, Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). There are several factors responsible for poor work-life among teaching professionals at the organizational level in which time pressure, workloads, student behavior, ambiguity in the role, employment conditions, lack of belongingness, stress, and depression are significant predictors (Binu raj et al., 2024; Ferguson et al., 2012, Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Furthermore, research by Collie et al., (2012) suggests that the climate in which teachers work and their social and emotional well-being significantly contribute to teaching efficacy, the satisfaction they receive from specified jobs, and the stress concerning the work. Organizations are advised to consider the interrelationships at the workplace, emotional support among parties concerned with institutional communities, and autonomy to make the decision.

2.2 Factors of quality of work life

There are several factors considered that influence the quality of work life in which the significance of gender egalitarianism has frequently drawn the attention of scholars (Bhardwaj and Anshima; 2025). Pieces of evidence lie in the past literature that a positive relationship between work-life balance and life satisfaction exists in a high-order gender-egalitarian society (Haar et al., 2014). Leadership in the workplace, positive mentoring and career development programs, relationships with coworkers,

workload balance, the ability to manage work and family obligations, organizational support, and the autonomy-promoting behavior of their supervisors all affect employees' well-being and job satisfaction, which in turn affects the quality of their output (Shanafelt et al., 2015; Mcneese-Smith et al., 1999; De-castro et al., 2014; Gillet et al., 2012). In addition to that fair competition, improving security, the work and life approach, human capacities advancement, social integration, and social significance are all QWL features (Tabassum et al., 2012).

2.3 Career satisfaction and QWL

The management style followed in the modern era is distinct from Taylor's structure of the organization. A human-centered corporate structure gives employees freedom in decision-making, rewards for contributing creative ideas, and recognition for their efforts to translate their skills into corporate benefits. However, it is equally important to consider that labor intensity leads to stress, exhaustion, and work-life conflict. Existing literature shows that increased commitment is positively correlated with job satisfaction (Boxall & Macky, 2014). According to the "Social exchange theory," serving employees first will improve their duties to the business and boost their general job happiness, which will ensure that they put more effort into the organization (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010). Job entitlement, career satisfaction, and the ability to voice complaints and suggestions are some characteristics of QWL. However, long working hours, workload, and job stress negatively affect the satisfaction and quality of work (Chaiear et al., 2015). There exists a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and the Quality of Work Life of employees, therefore by increasing job satisfaction the overall quality of work life increases resulting in reduced stress at work (Geetha et al., 2020). Further, increased QWL results in increased productivity, and reduced turnover (Cho et.al., 2006).

H1: Career satisfaction play a role in affecting QWL

2.4 Work-family interface and QWL

In addition to technological development, societal changes have significantly altered job expectations in the home and the workplace affecting their satisfaction and happiness at workplace (Jaswal et al., 2024). Women's empowerment has modified the demography of workplace gender ratios (Bhardwaj and Anshima, 2025). Two jobholders in the nuclear family arrangement necessitate time flexibility to balance work and family. To boost work satisfaction and subsequently preserve organizational effectiveness, organizations need to act more responsibly toward their staff (Bhardwaj et al., 2023; Sharma et al., 2024). According to extensive research, workers in corporate cultures where managers provide significant support to improve work-life balance had higher levels of affective commitment and job satisfaction (Baral & Bhargava, 2010). Work-life balance is influenced differently by the psychological and practical assistance that employees receive from their families, their employers, and the government. According to existing research, emotional support from coworkers and superiors at work and the husband and family at home both significantly contribute to job satisfaction. However, just providing emotional support won't be enough to achieve the goal; the jobholder also needs to be provided with instrumental support (Abendroth & den Dulk, 2011). Work-life balance issues frequently lead to dissatisfaction and poor performance at work (Chiang et al., 2010). However, a healthy work-life balance would improve QWL, which further boosts organizational effectiveness. (An, Yom & Ruggiero, 2011) performance (Koonmee et al., 2010) and job satisfaction (Mirkamali & Thani, 2011). As a result of the stress that comes with rising personal and professional obligations, finding an equilibrium between a person's work and personal life has become a top priority. As a result, businesses must take this into serious account to keep their employees happy (Hall and Richter, 1988).

H2: Work-family Interface plays a role in influencing the Quality of work life of Women in Universities

2.5 Individual well-being and QWL

The satisfaction of basic needs and opportunities for personal growth are components of individual well-being. (Zulkarnain, 2013). Quality of Work Life is positively related to the employee's well-being (Kumar and Gupta, 2017; Warr et al., 1979; Rathi, N. 2010; Mumu et al., 2021). According to Karasek's proposed job demand-control (D-C) model, having a job with high expectations and little control over the task results in stress at work and has an impact on an employee's well-being. Numerous studies indicate that a combination of higher job demands and employee control over their work reduces workplace stress. However, according to Chiang et al., (2010) work-life balance techniques and job control, or the combination of job content and job context, lessen workplace stress.

According to the self-determination theory, employees' basic needs of autonomy, competitiveness, and relatedness must be met for their well-being. The fulfillment of employees' fundamental needs, organizational support, and the autonomy-promoting behavior of their superiors contribute to their well-being (Gillet et al., 2012). High QWL enriches and stimulates the overall well-being of employees, which upgrades the overall personal and professional lives of individuals resulting in elevated general well-being (Al-Quptop and Harrim, 2011). A company that prioritizes its employees, will have a higher Quality of Work Life leading to psychological well-being (Mumu et al., 2021; Rantanen et.al., 2007). Employees pursuing a positive Quality of Work Life often illustrates a gratified life and is a key antecedent of satisfying life (Higgins and Duxbury, 1992). With a better understanding of the construct of QWL and its dynamic nature, one can strategize to improve employees' Quality of Work Life and ensure employees' overall well-being (Ajala, 2013). Enhancing QWL stimulates employees' integrity, overall welfare, and well-being, further resulting in community, national and international level benefits (Al-Qutop, 2011).

Thus, H3: Individual well-being is positively related to the quality of work life

It is evident from the review of the literature that numerous studies have been conducted in the past to find out factors affecting the quality of work life. However, a particular study investigating the QWL of women teachers in universities is lacking. There is a dearth of a specific study focusing on the role of individual well-being, career satisfaction, and work-family interface in the QWL of women teachers in universities. Therefore, the present study has been conducted to 1) understand the role of Individual well-being on QWL; 2) explore the role of career satisfaction in affecting QWL of women Teachers in universities, and 3) to understand the role of family-work interface in influencing QWL.

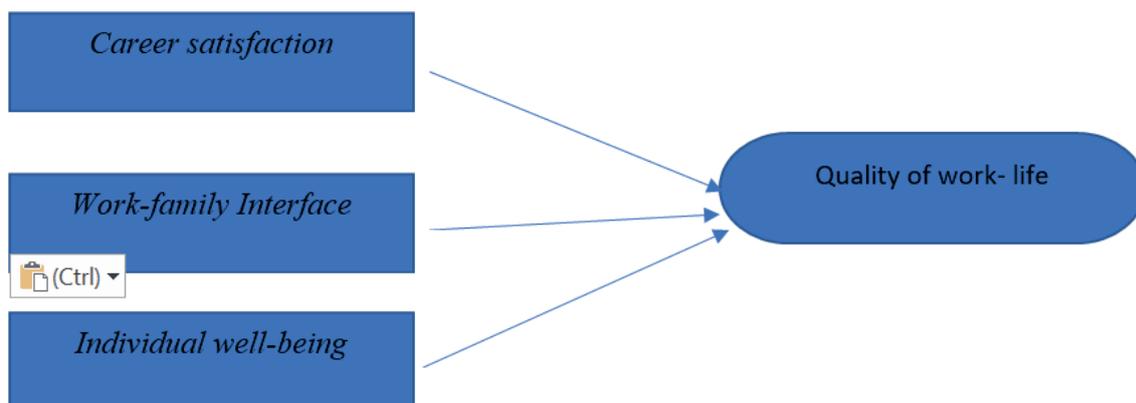


Figure 1: Research Framework

Source: Prepared by the authors.

3. Methodology

The present study aims to establish the role of career satisfaction, individual well-being and work-family interface on female teachers' QWL, as well as the effect of these variables on female teachers' overall QWL in the universities. The present study has been conducted with the women teaching staff of the universities of Himachal Pradesh using purposive sampling. Both public and private universities' women teachers comprise the study's sample. Purposive sampling is better suited than random sampling when choosing study participants from a wide range of the spectrum related to the research issue (Etikan et.al.,2016). Female professors from 21 universities (all of which have been in operation for more than five years) were contacted. Only 275 of the 540 women who were contacted, responded to the participation invitation. Because some of the questionnaires were rejected due to incomplete information, the final sample was limited to 246 people. As a result, 73 respondents from public universities and 173 from private universities were included in our sample. The survey questionnaire was improved and customized to incorporate expert feedback. A pilot poll was also conducted, with responses recorded on a five-point scale ranging from Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly agree (5). To examine the relation between dependent variable i.e Quality of Work Life and independent variables namely career satisfaction, individual wellbeing and home-work interface regression analysis has been performed.

4. Results:

The analysis part has been divided into two parts:

A base line regression is applied to know the significant relation between the independent variables and the dependent variables. After that SEM (Structured Equation modeling) was used to evaluate the magnitude of change made on the dependent variable by the independent variables.

i. Regression Analysis:

Table 1: Regression analysis of Quality of Work Life (QWL) and work-family interface

Model	Coefficient	Standard error	T	Sig.
α	2.06	0.09	22.99	0.00
β	0.42	0.03	14.04	0.00
R^2	0.45			

Source: Prepared by the authors.

The table 1 shows that the standard error (SE) for the Quality of Work Life is 0.03 and R^2 is 0.45 which means that 45% variation is explained by work-family interface in Quality of Work Life (QWL). Thus, it can be inferred that the balance between work and family life plays an important role in predicting quality of life of women employees in universities.

Table 2: Regression Analysis for Individual well-being and Quality of Work Life (QWL)

Model	Coefficient	Standard error	T	Sig.
A	1.64	0.14	11.77	0.00
B	0.46	0.04	11.96	0.00
R^2	0.37			

Source: Prepared by the authors.

In the table 2 the value of R^2 is 0.37 which means that 37% variation in Quality of Work Life (QWL) is explained by general well-being (GWB). Therefore, It can be stated that General well being of women teachers is an important determinant of QWL.

Table 3: Regression Analysis for career satisfaction and Quality of Work Life (QWL)

Model	Coefficient	Standard error	T	Sig.
A	1.98	0.08	26.13	0.00
B	0.40	0.02	17.60	0.00
R ²	0.56			

Source: Prepared by the authors.

The standard error (SE) for job career satisfaction is 0.02 and R² is 0.56 which means that 56% variation is explained by job career satisfaction (JCS) in Quality of Work Life (QWL). Thus, Job Career satisfaction plays an important role in Predicting the QWL.

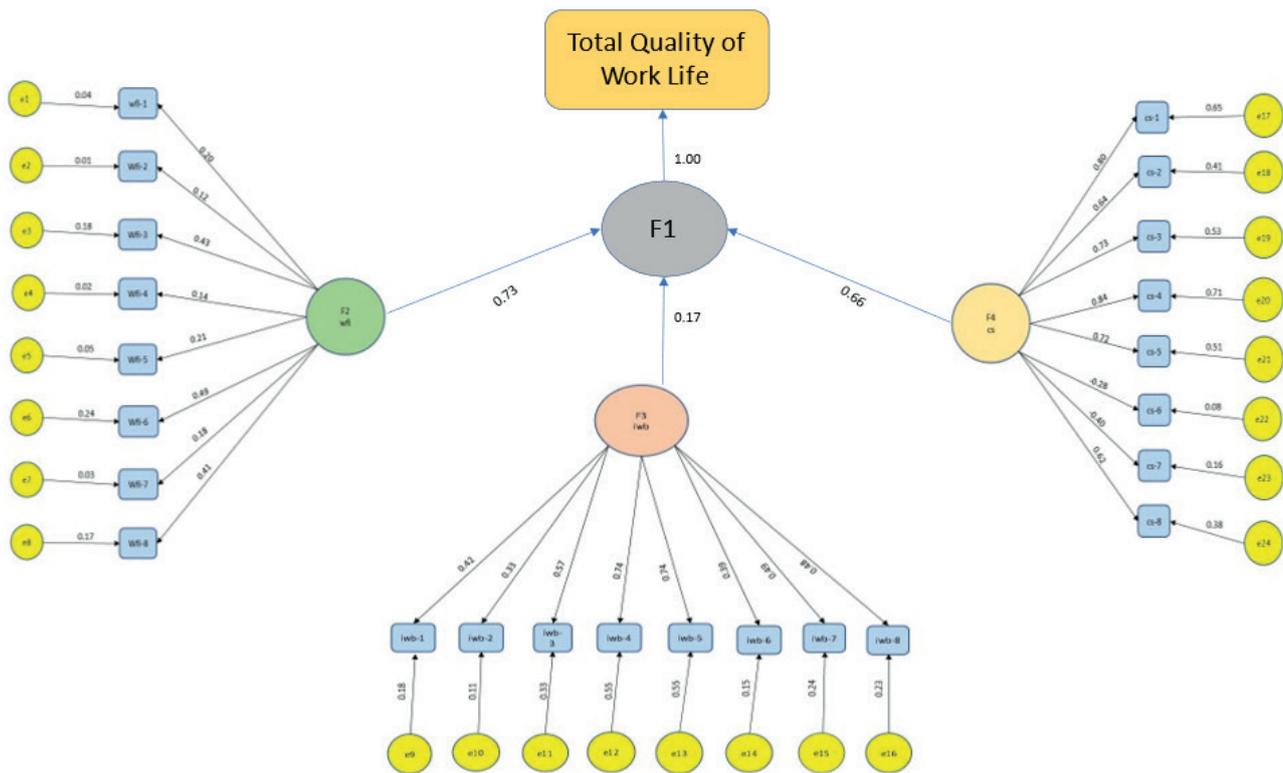


Figure 2: SEM Structured Equation Model of QWL and independent variables

Source: Prepared by the authors.

- F1: Total Quality of Work Life
- F2: wfi: work family interface
- F3: iwb: individual well being
- F4: cs: career satisfaction

As shown in the Figure2 Work family Interface (wfi F2) positively influence the Total Quality of Work Life(F1), factors (wfi-1 to wfi-8) like the organisational support (Gopalan, Pattusamy & Gollakota, 2020) for its employees whether it is travelling hours and working hours (Voydanoff, 2002), managing personal tasks (Schieman & Young, 2010), superior support, accommodation facilities etc. make a huge contribution in balancing the work and family life. e1 to e8 represents the residual error. Further, one unit change in work family interface (F2) brings 0.73 unit change in Total Quality of work Life (F1). (Schouteten & de Witte, 2002) suggested that organization can improve the QWL by improving work-family balance as the coefficient of wfi is positively impacting QWL.

Considerations like (iwb1 to iwb8) individuals enjoying good health, good family and societal status, supportive family and lives a happy life, contribute to the individual employee's overall wellbeing. Individual well-being comprises fulfillment of basic needs and advancement prospects that provides an individual accomplishment (Zulkarnain, 2013). Also, the figure depicts that individual wellbeing (F3) positively affects the Total Quality of Work Life (F1) by a magnitude of 0.17. Residual error here is shown as e1 to e8. In addition, the results show that a shift of one unit in individual wellbeing (F3) results in a shift of 0.17 units in Total Quality of Work-Life (F1). Individual's mental and physiological well-being are impacted by their QWL (Yadav, Khanna & Chenab, 2021)

Job satisfaction, job security, opportunities for career enhancement, adequate utilization of skills etc. are some spheres (cs1 to cs8) that contribute to career satisfaction (cs F4) of an employee (Rastogi, Karatepe & Mehmetoglu, 2019). Availability of such factors boosts the career satisfaction of employees (Karatepe and Vatankhah, 2015). Residual error is again written as e1 to e8 in the figure. We can observe from the magnitude of the coefficient of F3 that it is influencing QWL by an amount of 0.66 which implies that the Total Quality of Work-Life changes by 0.66 points for every one-point change in career satisfaction (cs F4).

5. Interpretation of results

To understand the role of career satisfaction, individual wellbeing and work-family interface regression analysis and structural equation modeling was performed where Quality of Work Life was the dependent variable. It was found that career satisfaction, family-work interface and individual well-being play a role in affecting quality of work life. It was observed that the maximum percentage of variation in Quality of Work Life was explained by the sub-domain career satisfaction with 56%, followed by work-family interface with 45% and the least variation among the three factors was individual well-being with 37%. When the employees find ample career prospects along with a balanced work life and a reasonable well-being overall, they illustrate an excellent quality of work life. Today nevertheless, women equally appreciate their career and desire for a gratifying profession, therefore satisfaction from their career constitutes an integral part of their overall Quality of Work Life. This finding is supported by the research of Rose et. al. (2006) which indicated that career related variables make a significant variance in Quality of Work Life. Followed by work family balance which is another important facet of Quality of Work Life, which nowadays everyone desires for. Satisfied with career and a balanced life, following factor that establishes Quality of Work Life is the overall wellbeing and contentment of an employee.

The top best sub-domain of female teachers' Quality of Work Life was their Individual well-being, regardless of their type of organization, i.e. public or private, as shown in table 5, implying that female teachers working in higher education had excellent physical and psychological wellbeing, as well as great support and respect from their families and society. The work-family interface sub-domain had the lowest overall mean, which could be due to respondents' issues managing their personal and professional life, as well as major obstacles and challenges that created stress at work. Career satisfaction of the female teachers in both public and private universities was average in comparison to other factors measured in the study.

6. Discussion and Scope for Future Research

The objective of the research was to empirically test the influence of career satisfaction, work-life balance, and work-family interface on quality work life. Three hypotheses were framed postulating the positive relationship between career satisfaction and QWL, family interface and QWL, and individual well-being and QWL. Further in the research, hypothesis testing obtained significant results explaining the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The significance of quality work life cannot be misconstrued in the context of organizational and individual enhancement. Therefore, based on the results obtained employers and personnel in managing departments of organizations are advised

to focus on the QWL aspects related to career satisfaction, work-life balance, and well-being of the employees. Implications of the research in the academic field are crucial to enable faculty to contribute in terms of quality of education and research & publication which lays the foundation of any sound economy or power of the nation. The best advice for the advancement of the organization and working individuals based on research can be to align the organizational goals and employees' career plans in such a manner that holistic development can be sufficient. To comprehend the magnitude of an employee's contribution to organizational growth in the true sense it is vital to ensure their well-being in the first place. An unrealistic expectation from the employee is to segregate their personal affairs from the workplace environment in the era of connectivity as an integral part of life. Conflicting demands at work and family directly affect employees' consideration and lack of support from family, supervisors, and colleagues drains their capability of being productive in all positions. Therefore, it is advisable to build a healthy work-family interface to ensure QWL and subsequently holistic development. The research is limited by the cross sectional studies which restrict the understanding of experiences that women gain at different phases of their life. Future scholars can enhance the research by conducting a longitudinal study that gives a clear picture of challenges, facilitation, and abilities that women experience over time. A systemic literature review and bibliometric study plays an important role in advancing the knowledge and theory in a domain (Bhardwaj and Sharma, 2023; Anshima et al., 2025a; Balkrishan et al., 2024; 2025). A study based on literature review can be undertaken in the domain of QWL. The present research was focused on women faculty at the university level only which keeps the scope open for future researchers to replicate the study at the college or school level. The role of AI, cloud computing and sustainable practices can also be linked with QWL of Employees at workplace (Bala et al., 2025. Anshima et al., 2025b; Sharma et al, 2024b).

7. Conclusion

The primary objective of the study has been to elucidate the significance of women's quality of work in higher education overlooked in past studies. Key observation of the research highlights the significance of career satisfaction, work-family interface and individual well-being in determining quality of work-life. The study has strong implications for policymakers to emphasise more on aspects reinforcing job satisfaction, job security, opportunities for career enhancement, and adequate utilisation of skills. Despite the substantial contribution of the study in providing empirical evidence of quality work-life, future scholars can expand the research framework by adding more variables to it. Technological advancement and the advent of AI have been causing several changes around the workplace, including higher education. The education sector, serving as the foundation of nobility, ethics and values in society, has been prone to blurring the boundary between purity and perfection from the inception of ChatGPT-like tools commonly used in education. Future research calls for studies integrating the dominant factors related to advanced technology, for example, AI tools, that might potentially override the organisational identification capable of adversely affecting the QWL of all employees at work.

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