

# A Study on Work–Life Balance, Towards Private Institutions Faculties in Higher Education in Coimbatore City

**EBZIBA P, Dr. U. Archana**

**MBA, Head of the department, department of management studies PG & research  
BHARATHIAR UNIVERSITY, VLB JANAKIAMMAL COLLEGE OF ARTS AND  
SCIENCE**

## Abstract

Work–life balance has become an increasingly important issue in the higher education sector, particularly within private institutions where faculty members face growing academic, administrative, and performance-oriented pressures. Faculty are expected to manage multiple roles such as teaching, research, evaluation, student mentoring, accreditation activities, and institutional development work. These expanding responsibilities often lead to occupational stress, imbalance between work and personal life, and reduced job satisfaction. This study aims to examine the level of work–life balance among faculty members working in private higher education institutions in Coimbatore city and to analyse the impact of occupational stress on faculty retention. Primary data were collected from 153 faculty members using a structured questionnaire. Percentage analysis and correlation analysis were used as tools for data interpretation. The study reveals that workload pressure and administrative responsibilities significantly influence work–life balance, while institutional support mechanisms play a vital role in reducing stress and improving faculty retention. The findings of the study provide valuable insights for institutional management and policymakers to design faculty-friendly work environments.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education plays a crucial role in the social, economic, and intellectual development of a nation. Faculty members are central to the success of higher education institutions as they are responsible for imparting knowledge, guiding students, conducting research, and contributing to institutional growth. In recent years, the expansion of private higher education institutions in India has led to increased competition, accountability, and performance expectations for faculty members.

In private institutions, faculty members are often required to perform multiple roles beyond classroom teaching. These include curriculum design, student assessment, research publication, accreditation documentation, committee work, admissions support, and extracurricular coordination. While these responsibilities contribute to institutional development, they also place considerable pressure on faculty

members. As a result, maintaining a balance between professional responsibilities and personal life has become increasingly difficult.

Work–life balance refers to an individual’s ability to effectively manage work responsibilities while maintaining personal well-being and fulfilling family and social commitments. When work demands exceed an individual’s capacity to cope, occupational stress arises. Prolonged stress can lead to burnout, health issues, emotional exhaustion, and reduced job satisfaction. In the context of higher education, poor work–life balance can negatively affect teaching quality, student engagement, and institutional reputation.

Faculty retention has emerged as a major challenge for private higher education institutions. High turnover rates disrupt academic continuity, increase recruitment costs, and affect student learning outcomes. Understanding the relationship between work–life balance, occupational stress, and faculty retention is therefore essential for sustainable institutional growth. This assume significance in cities like Coimbatore, which is a major educational hub with a high concentration of private colleges and universities.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Several studies have emphasised the importance of work–life balance in improving employee well-being and organisational performance. Researchers have found that employees who experience better work–life balance demonstrate higher job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and productivity.

Studies conducted in the education sector reveal that faculty members often experience higher stress levels due to workload, time pressure, role conflict, and performance evaluation systems. Research indicates that excessive administrative work and lack of autonomy contribute significantly to occupational stress among faculty.

Previous studies also highlight that institutional support, flexible work arrangements, recognition, and supportive leadership play a crucial role in reducing stress and improving retention. Faculty members who feel valued and supported are more likely to remain committed to their institutions. However, many private institutions continue to prioritise performance outcomes over employee well-being, leading to dissatisfaction and attrition.

Despite the growing body of research, limited studies focus specifically on private higher education institutions in Coimbatore city. This study attempts to bridge this gap by analysing faculty work–life balance, stress, and retention within this regional context.

### 3. NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The need for this study arises from the increasing pressure faced by faculty members in private higher education institutions. The rapid growth of the private education sector has intensified competition, resulting in higher expectations related to academic results, research output, and institutional rankings. Faculty members are expected to meet these expectations while managing personal and family responsibilities.

Understanding faculty work–life balance is significant for several reasons:

- It directly influences teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction
- It affects faculty mental and physical health
- It determines job satisfaction and retention
- It impacts institutional stability and academic quality

This study provides insights that can help institutional administrators design policies that promote employee well-being while maintaining academic excellence.

### 4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are:

1. To analyse the demographic profile of faculty members working in private higher education institutions
2. To assess the level of work–life balance among faculty members
3. To identify key occupational stress factors affecting faculty
4. To examine the relationship between age and experience using correlation analysis
5. To study the influence of occupational stress on faculty retention

### 5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive research design, which is suitable for understanding existing conditions and relationships among variables.

#### Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample consists of 153 faculty members working in private higher education institutions in Coimbatore city. Convenience sampling was used due to accessibility and willingness of respondents.

## Data Collection

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire covering demographic details, workload, stress factors, work–life balance, and retention-related aspects. Secondary data were collected from books, journals, research articles, and online sources.

## Tools Used for Analysis

- Percentage Analysis
- Correlation Analysis

## 6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

### Percentage Analysis

**Table 1: Gender of Respondents**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Male	62	40.5	40.5
Female	91	59.5	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100</b>	—

### Interpretation:

Female respondents constitute a higher proportion of the sample, indicating strong female participation in private higher education institutions

**Table 2: Age of Respondents**

Age Group	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Below 30 years	34	22.2
30–40 years	59	38.6
40–50 years	41	26.8
Above 50 years	19	12.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100</b>

**Interpretation:**

Majority of respondents belong to the 30–40 years age group, indicating a predominantly mid-career faculty population.

**Table 3: Teaching Experience of Respondents**

Years of Experience	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Below 5 years	46	30.1
5–10 years	57	37.3
10–15 years	32	20.9
Above 15 years	18	11.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100</b>

**Interpretation:**

Most faculty members have 5–10 years of experience, which is often associated with increased workload and career pressure.

**Table 4: Level of Work–Life Balance**

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Satisfied	48	31.4
Neutral	57	37.3
Dissatisfied	48	31.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100</b>

**Interpretation:**

A significant proportion of faculty members are either neutral or dissatisfied with their work–life balance, highlighting the need for institutional support.

## 7. Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was applied to understand the relationship between age and experience. The strong positive correlation indicates that experience increases with age. While experience brings professional growth and income stability, it also leads to increased responsibilities such as leadership roles, mentoring duties, and administrative assignments. If not managed properly, this can contribute to higher stress levels among senior faculty members.

**Table 5: Correlation between Age and Experience**

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Nature of Relationship
Age & Experience	0.82	Strong Positive Correlation

### Interpretation:

The strong positive correlation indicates that experience increases with age, which often leads to additional responsibilities and higher stress levels.

## 8. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The discussion of results provides a deeper understanding of the relationship between work–life balance, occupational stress, and faculty retention in private higher education institutions. The findings of the study indicate that a considerable number of faculty members experience difficulty in balancing professional responsibilities with personal and family life. This imbalance is primarily attributed to heavy workload, extended working hours, and increasing administrative obligations.

The percentage analysis reveals that faculty members in the mid-career stage, particularly those in the 30–40 years age group, experience higher levels of stress. At this stage, faculty members are often expected to perform multiple roles, including academic delivery, research contribution, accreditation-related documentation, and student mentoring. Simultaneously, they face increased personal responsibilities such as family commitments and child care, which further intensify work–life imbalance.

The study also highlights that faculty members with higher levels of experience often shoulder greater institutional responsibilities. While experience contributes to professional growth and job security, it also increases expectations related to leadership roles, committee participation, and administrative coordination. This finding is supported by the correlation analysis, which shows a strong positive relationship between age and experience. Without adequate institutional support, these additional responsibilities can lead to prolonged occupational stress.

Furthermore, the results indicate that faculty members who perceive their institution as supportive tend to report better work–life balance and higher job satisfaction. Support in the form of recognition, fair workload distribution, and flexible scheduling plays a crucial role in mitigating stress. These findings are consistent with existing literature, which emphasises the importance of organisational support in improving employee well-being and retention.

Overall, the discussion underscores the need for private higher education institutions to recognise work–life balance as a strategic factor influencing faculty performance, satisfaction, and long-term commitment.

## 9. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The implications of this study extend across multiple stakeholders, including institutional management, faculty members, and policymakers. Understanding the impact of work–life balance and occupational stress enables institutions to design effective human resource strategies that support faculty well-being while maintaining academic standards.

### Implications for Institutions

For institutional administrators, the findings highlight the importance of adopting faculty-centric policies. Institutions should move beyond performance-driven approaches and incorporate employee well-being into their strategic planning. Balanced workload allocation, transparent performance evaluation systems, and reduction of excessive administrative duties can significantly improve work–life balance. Institutions that invest in faculty well-being are more likely to experience lower attrition rates, improved teaching quality, and enhanced institutional reputation.

### Implications for Faculty Members

From the faculty perspective, the study emphasises the need for awareness regarding stress management and work–life balance practices. Faculty members should be encouraged to communicate workload concerns, seek institutional support, and adopt personal coping strategies. Professional development programs focusing on time management, emotional resilience, and work planning can help faculty members manage stress more effectively.

### Implications for Policymakers and Educational Authorities

For policymakers, the findings suggest the need to frame guidelines that promote healthy working conditions in private higher education institutions. Regulatory bodies may encourage institutions to adopt standardised workload norms, faculty welfare measures, and stress management initiatives. Such interventions can contribute to sustainable growth of the higher education sector and ensure long-term faculty engagement.

## 10. Suggestions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are proposed to improve work–life balance and reduce occupational stress among faculty members in private higher education institutions:

- 1. Flexible work arrangements:** Institutions may introduce flexible scheduling, hybrid teaching models, and reasonable deadline extensions to help faculty balance professional and personal responsibilities.
- 2. Reduction of administrative work:** Excessive non-academic tasks such as documentation, reporting, and event coordination should be minimised or redistributed to administrative staff, allowing faculty to focus on core academic functions.
- 3. Stress Management and wellness program:** Regular workshops, counselling sessions, and wellness initiatives can help faculty manage stress and maintain mental well-being. Institutions may also promote physical activity and mindfulness practices.
- 4. Recognition and reward system:** Acknowledging faculty contributions through appreciation, incentives, and career advancement opportunities can significantly enhance motivation and job satisfaction.
- 5. Supportive leadership and communication :**Transparent communication, participative decision-making, and empathetic leadership can create a supportive work environment where faculty feel valued and heard.
- 6. Career Development Opportunities:** Providing opportunities for research funding, skill development, and professional growth can help faculty manage career-related stress and improve long-term commitment to the institution.

## 11. Limitations of the Study

- The study is limited to Coimbatore city
- Convenience sampling limits generalisation
- Only two statistical tools were used

## 12. SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study provides valuable insights into work–life balance, occupational stress, and faculty retention in private higher education institutions; however, it also opens several avenues for future research. Future studies may extend the scope of research by conducting a comparative analysis between private and government higher education institutions to identify differences in work culture, workload distribution, and institutional support mechanisms.

Further research may also consider increasing the sample size and expanding the geographical area beyond Coimbatore city to improve the generalisability of the findings. Inclusion of institutions from different regions or states may help capture regional variations in work–life balance practices and stress levels among faculty members.

In addition, future researchers may employ advanced statistical tools such as regression analysis, factor analysis, or structural equation modelling to examine the causal relationships between work–life balance, occupational stress, job satisfaction, and faculty retention. Longitudinal studies may also be undertaken to understand changes in work–life balance and stress levels over time. Moreover, qualitative methods such as interviews and focus group discussions could be incorporated to gain deeper insights into faculty perceptions and lived experiences, thereby enriching the findings of future research.

### 13. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that work–life balance is a critical determinant of faculty satisfaction and retention in private higher education institutions. Faculty members are required to manage multiple academic and administrative responsibilities, which often leads to occupational stress and difficulty in balancing professional and personal life. The findings clearly indicate that excessive workload, extended working hours, and administrative pressure negatively affect faculty well-being and job satisfaction.

The percentage and correlation analyses reveal that demographic factors such as age and experience influence work–life balance and stress levels. While experience contributes to professional growth and institutional stability, it also increases responsibility and role expectations. Without adequate institutional support, this may lead to burnout and reduced organisational commitment.

The study emphasises that institutions which prioritise supportive work environments, balanced workloads, and employee-centric policies are more likely to retain skilled and experienced faculty members. Effective stress management practices, flexible work arrangements, and recognition of faculty contributions can significantly enhance job satisfaction and long-term institutional sustainability. Overall, the study highlights the need for private higher education institutions to adopt holistic human resource practices that promote both academic excellence and faculty well-being.

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