

# A Study on Work Life Balance of Teachers in Engineering Colleges in Kerala

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## ABSTRACT

Work life balance is not a new concept. The satisfaction in a job or work would be depending on many factors like remuneration, work conditions, growth prospects, support for employees and several other factors. One of the most important such factors as found from the result of much research conducted in this domain is, Work Life Balance (WLB). This factor can be described as a measure of the balance that exists between the job and the personal life of an employee. Work life balance for teachers has become one of the greatest challenges in today's world. Teachers need to spend extra hours' everyday to be effective and productive in their profession so that they could reach higher levels and face the challenging atmosphere. Work life balance helps the faculty to be more productive in their work along with their personal commitments and family interest. It is necessary that the institution needs to eliminate impractical discrimination and provide equal opportunities for both men and women. Good work life balance reduces stress and leads to productive outcomes. Thus the teaching faculty is able to give their best with high motivation and morale. Reviews also indicate that the perception of work life balance is observed to be different across genders. Work based support to teachers is positively associated to job satisfaction, organizational commitment and career accomplishment. These reviews highlight that there are work life balance issues that need to be addressed. Prior research points out that a women teacher struggles hard to strike the balance between being a caring homemaker and a responsible teacher. Hence there is a pertinent need to analyze, compare and contrast and study the issues and factors associated with work life balance of women faculty in educational institutions; compare and contrast the work life balance across educational institutions in the category of Government, Aided and self financing mode. It is important to bring to light any inadequacy of the initiatives taken by the authorities and colleges to achieve a healthy work life balance for women teachers in the chosen Engineering discipline.

This study has been carried out among the faculty of engineering colleges in Kerala, covering three districts namely: Trivandrum, Cochin and Calicut. The study includes sample of 318 engineering faculty belonging to the Junior Level, Middle Level and Senior Level. The survey included more women respondents about 75%. The study assesses the current status of perceived work life balance among engineering college teachers in Kerala particularly with respect to a) work-family spill over b) work-family conflict and c) Work-family facilitation. Secondly the work environment with respect to supportive HR policies, supervisor support, organizational and management support, teamwork, trust, openness in communication as exists in engineering institutions were also studied. And an attempt has also been made to assess the relationship between work environment in the selected engineering colleges and WLB among teachers. The study looks into the awareness of employees about the Work Life Balance policies of the institution, to determine its effectiveness in implementation, to determine if there is proper balance between Work and personal lives of employees and to suggest strategies for improvement. Out of the 318 engineering college teachers, 136 were from private colleges, 125 were from government colleges and 57 from aided colleges. The average age of the members of the final sample was 35 years and had a total work experience for an average of 11 years. Tools like Mean, t-test, ANOVA, correlation analysis, regression analysis were used to make relevant analysis between work life balance and its impact on Gender equity and women empowerment.

The study revealed that level of work life balance varies in Government, private and aided Engineering colleges. Mean values and ANOVA reveals that Work family spill over, work family conflict and work family facilitation – all the three aspects were perceived as Moderate by the teachers working in engineering colleges across the Government, Aided and Self financing colleges. However as indicated by the t test results the same was found at the same level without any significant variation between the male and female faculty across the three types of colleges. So far as the perception of Junior Level, Middle Level and senior faculty are concerned ANOVA revealed that all the three aspects were perceived as at their moderate level without much variation. It was found that organizational climate in the selected colleges about supportive HR policies, supervisor support, teamwork, management support, team work and trust was moderately favourable in government, aided and private engineering colleges. It has been proven that organizations supportive of employees can reduce work family conflict. The best practices for WLB includes Flexi time, Work commuting, Five days work per week, Planned vacations, leave facilities including maternity leave, employee welfare schemes and talent development initiatives. Some innovative ideas need to evolved by the policy makers and management of Engineering colleges in this context for reducing work life spill over and conflict. It was found that teachers experienced moderate level of WLB leaving substantial scope for the management to improve the WLB of the teachers.

**KEYWORDS:** Work Life Balance, Engineering faculty, Work Spill Over, Work family Conflict, Work family facilitation, Organizational Climate

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Work Life balance is about employees having measure of control over when, where and how employees work. A balanced life is one where employees are able to spread their energy, time and efforts in the emotional, intellectual, imaginative, spiritual & physical facets of life. It has been proved beyond doubt that an organization capable of addressing work life balance needs, in addition to providing great career opportunities, is successful in providing job satisfaction to the employees. Good work life balance is most essential for a teaching faculty to be more efficient and effective, thereby attaining job satisfaction which in turn ensures successful moulding of good future citizens of the nation. Work life balance for teaching faculty has become a dire challenge and it is likely to be gaping in the case of women teachers who need to strike the balance between workload and household chores. Imbalance leads to frustration and results in work-family conflicts, strained relationships and poor performance at the work place. In the bargain both career and personal life are both neglected and the woman is subjected to enormous stress. This leads to physical stress and causes ill health which can be short term setbacks like headache, gastritis or body ache; or leads to serious long term illness like cardiac problems, high blood pressure, diabetes or other psychiatric problems. She not only becomes a bad teacher but also a poor homemaker. This failure leads to depression and the woman loses herself image both at work place and at home. Studies reveal women are equally sensitive about their work and family; unlike men who look forward to accomplishments at work even at the cost of ignoring family demands.

**Background of the study:** Work life balance is not a new concept. The changing economic conditions and social demands have changed the nature of work throughout the world. With improved education and employment opportunities today, most homes are ones in which both parents work because of the necessity and the desire to augment income. Thus there is an inevitable need for a work life balance strategy to reduce stress levels, raise job satisfaction thereby increasing productivity and reducing health care costs for the employer. Some surveys and research work on the concept of work life balance throws evidence on the fact that Indian organizations are trying to enable work life balance through initiatives like flex times, part time work and provision of child care facilities. However it is not easy to find many references to work life balance policies and issues in India. The study has emphasized on the comparison between the levels of work life balance in Government, private and aided engineering colleges. The construct considered include: Work family spill over, work family conflict, work family facilitation and Organizational climate.

**Review of literature:** Work Life Balance, in its broadest sense is defined as a satisfactory level of involvement or fit between the multiple roles in a person's life. (Hudson, 2005) There is no one accepted definition of what constitutes a work life balance practice, the term usually refers to one of the following: organizational support for dependent care, flexible work options, and family or personal leave. (Estes & Michael, 2005). The literature suggests that lack of balance between work and non work activities is related to diminished psychological and physical well being. (Sparks, 1997; Felstead, 2002) Work life balance is a choice an individual has to make. However it is an organization that needs to take an initiative to help the employees. There is a strong link between work life balance policies and reduced absenteeism, increased productivity and job satisfaction (Sandeep, 2002). Hyman (2003) observed that organizational pressures, combined with lack of work centrality, result in work intruding into non work areas of employee lives. Several reviews have highlighted other issues such as age, gender, life cycle stage, ethnicity, citizenship and child care arrangements which also merit attention. (Wallace and Cousins, 2004) Both men and women prefer working in organizations that support work life balance. Men appeared to benefit more than women. (Burke, 2002).

Work life balance for teaching engineering has become one of the greatest challenges in today's world. Teachers need to spend extra hours' everyday to be effective and productive in their profession so that they could reach higher levels and face the challenging atmosphere. The increase in work ethics and consumerist culture has grown to greater extent that the value of parenting and home making has deteriorated. Good work life balance reduces stress and leads to productive outcomes. Thus the teaching faculty is able to give their best with high motivation and morale. Work based support to women is positively associated to job satisfaction, organizational commitment and career accomplishment. (Marcinkus, 2007) Home working could be stressful and demanding, if young children need to be managed. (Valcour and Hunter, 2005) These reviews highlight that there are work life balance issues that need to be addressed. The work life balance is fairly similar in other countries (Humphreys, 2000).

**Theoretical framework:** Dependent variables in this study are work life balance, work family conflict, work family facilitation, work family spill over and organizational climate. Independent variables are including aspects like work load allocations, age, gender, fringe benefits, parental leave, emergency leave, paid annual leave and other entitlements available to faculty of colleges in the discipline of Engineering. Faculty need to perform significance functions like Coaching, Mentoring, Tutorial classes, Short Term Training Programmes and conferences;

Coordination and participation and research and publications that vary across disciplines offered by the colleges. So the objective of the study is to examine the influence of independent variables into the dependent variables.

**Research problem:** The shift in working patterns, the necessity to learn and relearn and be tech savvy, longer working hours, more erratic work schedules, need to develop and impart soft skills and life skills, the increasing prevalence of two career families, the demands of constant accessibility and global collaboration; has made long lasting impact on the work life balance of teachers. A healthy work environment is very essential for a teaching engineering to be productive and successful. Work life imbalance leads to poor performance, poor concentration, reduced efficacy levels and work family conflict; which could be detrimental to the health of the individual in the long run. Prior research points out that a women teacher struggles hard to strike the balance between being a caring homemaker and a responsible teacher. Hence there is a pertinent need to analyze, compare and contrast and study the issues and factors associated with work life balance of women faculty in of the teachers working in Engineering colleges belonging to Junior level, middle level and senior level category compare and contrast the work life balance across educational institutions and bring to light any inadequacy of the initiatives taken by the authorities and colleges to achieve a healthy work life balance for women teachers in the chosen discipline.

#### Research objectives:

- i. To determine the factors affecting Work life balance of women faculty of engineering colleges.
- ii. To determine the perceptions of male and female teachers in engineering colleges with respect to the three dimensions: work family conflict, work family spill over and organizational climate.
- iii. To identify if there is a difference in perceptions of women teachers belonging to Government, Aided and private engineering colleges in Kerala about the current status of their work life balance with respect to the three dimensions: work family conflict, work family spill over and organizational climate.
- iv. To identify if there is a difference in the perceptions of women teachers across the junior, middle and senior level about the current status of their work life balance with respect to the three dimensions: work family conflict, work family spill over and organizational climate.
- v. Organizational climate as exists in the Government, Aided and Self financing engineering colleges in Kerala are favourable to teachers.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study assesses the current status of perceived work life balance among teachers in Kerala particularly with respect to a) work-family spill over b) work-family conflict and c) Work-family facilitation. Secondly the work environment with respect to supportive HR policies, supervisor support, organizational and management support, teamwork, trust, openness in communication as exists in engineering institutions were also studied. And an attempt has also been made to assess the relationship between work environment in the selected engineering colleges and WLB among teachers.

Hypotheses: The following hypotheses regarding work life balance have been tested in the study:

The Hypotheses

- **H1-** Work Life Balance exist in favour of women teachers in engineering colleges.
- **H2:** There is no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female teachers in engineering colleges with respect to the three dimensions.
- **H3:** There is no significant difference between perceptions of women teachers belonging to Government, Aided and private engineering colleges about the current status of their work life balance with respect to the three dimensions.
- **H4:** There is no significant difference between the perceptions of women teachers across the junior, middle and senior level about the current status of their work life balance with respect to the three dimensions.
- **H5:** Organizational climate as exists in the Government, Aided and Self financing engineering colleges in Kerala are favourable to teachers.
- **H6:** There exists a positive relationship between OC and WLB among engineering college teachers.

**Sampling Design:** The study was carried out with a sample survey of 318 teachers working in engineering colleges belonging to Government, Aided and private category. The selection of colleges was based on systematic random sampling. Out of the 318 teachers, 136 were from Government colleges, 125 were from private colleges and 57 from aided colleges. The sample includes teachers from different age groups, educational and engineering qualification. The average age of the members of the final sample was 35 years and had a total work experience for an average of 11 years. Seventy five percent of the respondents were females and twenty five percent males were included for the purpose of comparative study.

Measures: Work life balance was measured using a 9 item 5 point Likert scale. Out of the nine items, three items measuring work life spill over were adapted from the scale developed by Maume and Houston (2001), three items related to work family facilitation were developed by the researcher. To measure OC, a nine item five point Likert type scale, an adapted version of the questionnaire developed by Rao and Abraham (1986) has been used. The

reliability was tested and Cronbach's alpha score was 0.90. The response included the range strongly disagree to strongly agree, rated 1 to 5 respectively. Overall reliability coefficient for the entire 9 point scale was found to be 0.75 which indicated the reliability of the measure adopted for the present study as it is above Nunnally and Bernstein's (1994) standard threshold. The reliability coefficients (Cronbach alpha score) were found as: 0.71, 0.70 and 0.75 for the three sub scales respectively.

Statistical Tools used: Tools like Mean, t-test, ANOVA, correlation analysis, regression analysis were used to make relevant analysis between work life balance and its impact on Gender equity and women empowerment.

Data Analysis: The study revealed that level of work life balance varies in Government, private and aided engineering colleges. Mean values and ANOVA (Table 1 and 2) reveals that Work family spill over, work family conflict and work family facilitation – all the three aspects were perceived as Moderate by the teachers working in Engineering colleges across the Government, Aided and Self financing colleges. However as indicated by the t test results (Table 1), the same was found at the same level without any significance variation between the male and female faculty across the three types of colleges. So far as the perception of Junior level, Middle level and senior level faculty are concerned ANOVA revealed that all the three aspects were perceived as at their moderate level without much variation. (Table.2) Although at overall moderate level across the three modes of engineering colleges, work family spill over was found higher in self financing colleges and lowest in government colleges. At the same time, the study found comparatively lower level of work family conflict in Government colleges and high level of work family facilitation in self financing colleges. The t-test results prove that the same was found at the same level without significance variation between male and female teachers. Correlation analysis using Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation between work family spill over and work family conflict ( $r=0.453$ ) indicated that both are positively correlated.

The results supported the following hypotheses:

H1 Work life balance exist in favour of teachers of engineering colleges

H2 There is no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female faculty with regard to the present status of work life balance

H3 There is no significant difference between the perceptions of faculty belonging to the disciplines of Junior level, middle level and senior level about WLB.

H4: There is no significant difference between the perception of faculty in Government, Aided and Management colleges about WLB for the three dimensions were found to be not true.

It was found that organizational climate in the selected colleges about supportive HR policies, supervisor support, teamwork, management support, team work and trust was moderately favourable in government, aided and private engineering colleges. In this context, no significance variation among the perception of faculty in Junior level, middle level and senior level faculty as well as between male and female teachers were found. (Table 3) These support the hypothesis H5: Organizational climate as exists in the Government, Aided and Self financing engineering colleges in Kerala are favourable to teachers. Correlation revealed that perception of gender equity and the WLB are positively correlated; although a low degree of correlation ( $r= 0.274$ ) exists between the two variables. Correlation analysis revealed that the OC and WLB are positively correlated. Regression analysis revealed that perceived organizational climate was found to have positive impact on WLB among engineering college teachers. F value ( $F= 6.357$ ) was found significance at .01 level indicating OC explains significance amount of variation in WLB. R2 value (.109) indicates that 10% variation in WLB is accounted for by Organizational climate. Therefore H6: There exists a positive relationship between OC and WLB among engineering college teachers; is accepted.

**Table.1. Assessment of Perceived WLB among Engineering College Teachers and Comparison between Perceived WLB of Male and Female Faculty**

WLB Aspects	Perceived WLB among three categories						Perceived WLB for three disciplines					
	Government		Aided		Self Finance		Medical		Engineering		Management	
	F	P(Sig)(N=125)	(N= 57)	(N=136)	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Work Family Spill Over	2.53	0.897	2.85 7.48	0.869 0.001	2.99	0.697	2.80	0.822	2.82 1.12	0.847 0.327	2.67	0.898
Work Family Conflict	3.11	1.08	3.31	0.816 0.035	3.48 3.38	0.907	3.54	0.796	3.33 1.19	0.933 0.304	3.29	0.918
Work Family Facilitation	3.26	0.514	3.33 7.30	0.549 0.001	3.59	0.584	3.53	0.462	3.31 2.65	0.503 0.072	3.33	0.597
Overall WLB	3.23	0.615	3.04	0.609 0.026	3.22 3.68	0.594	3.30	0.565	3.16 1.66	0.596 0.190	3.10	0.626

Table.2.Assessment of Perceived WLB

WLB Aspects	Mean Value N=318	SD	Level of WLB	T Test Results					
				Males perception		Females Perception		t value	Sig.
				Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Work Family Spill Over	2.74	0.871	Moderate	2.77	0.880	2.66	0.341	0.843	0.953
Work Family Conflict	3.34	0.910	Moderate	3.34	0.920	3.33	0.914	0.888	0.108
Work Family Facilitation	3.35	0.551	Moderate	3.34	0.553	3.36	0.761	0.549	0.305
Overall WLB	3.15	0.609	Moderate	3.15	0.620	3.12	0.678	0.579	0.416

Note: Significance at .05 level of Significance (Table Value of F= 2.6049)

Table.3.Assessment of Perceived Organizational Climate in the Selected Engineering Colleges Results of t Test and ANOVA

	No. (N)	Mean Value	SD	t Value	F Value	P Sig.
Overall Perceived Organizational Climate (POC)	318	3.85	0.629	-	-	-
Assessment of Perceived Organizational Climate in the Three Sectors (ANOVA)						
POC in Self Financing Colleges	136	3.84	0.578	-	0.024	0.976
POC in Government Colleges	125	3.85	0.619			
POC In Aided colleges	57	3.86	0.764			
Assessment of Organizational climate as perceived by teachers in the 3 different work experience category (ANOVA)						
POC of Junior Faculty	39	4.00	0.555	-	1.261	0.285
POC of Middle Level Faculty	162	3.82	0.646			
POC of Senior Level Faculty	117	3.84	0.625			
Assessment of Organizational climate as perceived by male and female teachers ( t test results)						
POC by Female Teachers	237	3.86	0.654	0.488	-	0.626
POC by male Teachers	81	3.82	0.548			

\*Significance at 0.05 Level of Significance (Table Value of F = 2.6049, Table Value t = 1.96)

Table.4.Impact of Organizational Climate on Work Life Balance among Engineering College Teachers

Coefficients (a)					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t Sig.	
	B	Std. Error			
1(Constant) OC		0.207		10.362	0.000
		0.463	1.664	3.480	0.001

a. Dependent Variable: Work Life Balance

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R square	Std Error of the Estimate	
1	0.331a	0.109	0.092	0.580	
a. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Climate					
ANOVA (b)					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	12.851	6	2.142		
Residual	104.790	311	0.337		
Total	117.640	317			

a. Predictors: (Constant), OC

b. Dependent Variable: WLB

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study intended to measure the level of work life balance of teachers in engineering colleges in Kerala. It was found that teachers experienced moderate level of WLB leaving substantial scope for the management to improve the WLB of the teachers. So far as the perception of junior level, Middle level and senior level faculty are concerned ANOVA revealed that all the three aspects were perceived as at their moderate level without much variation. Although at overall moderate level across the three modes of engineering colleges, work family spill over was found higher in self financing colleges and lowest in government colleges. At the same time, the study found comparatively lower level of work family conflict in Government colleges and high level of work family facilitation in self financing colleges. The t-test results prove that the same was found at the same level without significance variation between male and female teachers. Correlation analysis proved work family spill over and work family conflict are positively correlated. It was found that organizational climate in the selected colleges about supportive HR policies, supervisor support, teamwork, management support, team work and trust was moderately favourable in government, aided and private engineering colleges. In this context, no significance variation among the perception of faculty in Junior level, Middle level and Senior level faculty; as well as between male and female teachers were found. Organizational climate was found to have positive impact on WLB among engineering college teachers. It has been proven that organizations supportive of employees can reduce work family conflict. The best practices for WLB includes Flexi time, Work commuting, Five days work per week, Planned vacations, leave facilities including maternity leave, employee welfare schemes and talent development initiatives. Some innovative ideas need to evolve in this context for reducing work life imbalance.

### 4. CONCLUSION

Work life balance for teaching engineering has become one of the greatest challenges in today's world. Teachers need to spend extra hours' everyday to be effective and productive in their profession so that they could progress in their career. The increase in work ethics and consumerist culture has grown to greater extent that the value of parenting and home making has deteriorated. Work based support to women is positively associated to job satisfaction, organizational commitment and career accomplishment. These reviews highlight that there are work life balance issues that need to be addressed. It is a pertinent aspect for promoting Gender Equity and Women Empowerment.

The present study assesses the current status of perceived work life balance among engineering college teachers in Kerala particularly with respect to work-family spill over, work-family conflict and Work-family facilitation. Secondly the work environment with respect to supportive HR policies, supervisor support, organizational and management support, teamwork, trust, openness in communication as exists in engineering institutions were also studied. And an attempt has also been made to assess the relationship between work environment that facilitates gender equity in the selected engineering colleges and WLB among teachers. The perception of Junior level, Middle level and senior level faculty are concerned ANOVA revealed that all the three aspects were perceived as at their moderate level without much variation. Although at overall moderate level across the three modes of engineering colleges, work family spill over was found higher in self financing colleges and lowest in government colleges. At the same time, the study found comparatively lower level of work family conflict in Government colleges and high level of work family facilitation in self financing colleges. The t-test results prove that the same was found at the same level without significance variation between male and female teachers. Correlation analysis proved work family spill over and work family conflict are positively correlated. It was found that organizational climate in the selected colleges about supportive HR policies, supervisor support, teamwork, management support, team work and trust was moderately favourable in government, aided and private engineering

colleges. In this context, no significance variation among the perception of Junior level, Middle level and senior level faculty as well as between male and female teachers were found. Organizational climate was found to have positive impact on WLB among engineering college teachers.

It has been proven that organizations supportive of employees can reduce work family conflict. The best practices for WLB includes Flexi time, Work commuting, Five days work per week, Planned vacations, leave facilities including maternity leave, employee welfare schemes and talent development initiatives. Some innovative ideas need to evolve in creating a positive impact of the work family facilitation or work family enrichment and family friendly practices in engineering colleges. Due to the influence of factors like inadequate transport and less efficient telecommunication facilities in rural areas, WLB of teachers working in urban and rural areas of Kerala may not be the same as has been perceived at moderate level.

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