Work-Life Balance and Gender Differences: A Study of College and University Teachers From Karnataka

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Abstract
Teaching responsibilities in today's higher education sector are increasingly demanding. Apart from the focus on the quality of teaching-learning activities, teachers of today are evaluated for their active involvement in professional and societal growth. Women in academia shoulder equal responsibilities as of men, but in India, women play multiple roles in the non-work setting unlike men. The primary objective of this cross-sectional study was to find out the gender difference in Work-Life Balance (WLB) among teachers of higher education. Institutional Ethical Committee's approval was obtained. Data was collected using the WLB questionnaire, from 127 male and 136 female faculties employed on a tenure basis in the Public Universities in Karnataka. The multiple regression analysis indicated an association of better WLB with the upper age group, male gender, and faculties of science discipline. Strategies at the organizational level and initiatives at the personal level are essential to address the issues of WLB.

Keywords
faculty, Higher Education Institutions (HEI), gender, work-life balance, Karnataka

Introduction
Work and personal life are the core domains of an individual's social world (Leslie et al., 2019), and a balance between the two has become a necessity in the modern world. The literature on Work-Life Balance (WLB), refers work predominantly to the formal paid employment in the organizational setting and personal life as the non-work domain including family, education, travel, fitness, health, and the like (Benito-Osorio et al., 2014; Kalliath & Brough, 2008). The demographic, cultural, and economic changes such as declining birth rate, aging population, rising literacy rate, the quest for financial independence, the standard of living, the transformation of family structures, growing urbanization, technological advances, practices of human capital management, and demand for flexibility in time and space for work, have influenced the evolution of the concept of WLB (Benito-Osorio et al., 2014; Kar et al., 2019). WLB is often referred to as a dynamic phenomenon and is a continuum in which the individual oscillates between the two extremes of work and life, at a particular point in time (Leslie et al., 2019).

WLB was perceived to be better in the education sector but is not true (Kumari & Devi, 2013). The higher education sector is under greater scrutiny now than ever before (Schubert-Irastorza & Fabry, 2017), and the faculty of Higher Education Institutions (HEI), experience considerable pressure at work (Harrington & Ladge, 2009; Slišković & Maslić Seršić, 2011). Global competition, open market, technological advancement, and privatization of higher education have made the higher education environment diverse and complex (Shrivastava & Shukla, 2017). Moreover, teaching is a time-consuming activity and involves a lot of timely paperwork, which drains the teacher’s time (Bhatnagar, 2018). Planning and delivery of courses, lessons, assessments, and student guidance, in itself, demands a considerable amount of faculty's time (Alboliteeh, 2019; Chandra & Varghese, 2019; Muben & Karim, 2018). On one side, the knowledge is too much (Shrivastava & Shukla, 2017) and is available on fingertips, but on the other side, knowledge is replaced too fast. Further, student enrollment to higher education programs is

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increasing, and so is the academic workload of the faculty, which adds to work stress (Chandra & Varghese, 2019). Also, the faculty has an obligation to the tasks assigned by the department, the university or the professional associations. Faculty are also expected to contribute to the body of knowledge in one’s field of work through publication, as a reviewer, and as a participant or the organizer of the professional/community development programs (University Grants Commission, 2019). While privileges (e.g., incentives, the scope for career advancement, support facilities, etc.) for faculty are available, there are times where work and non-work demands coincide, and mismatch between priorities or resources occurs.

In India, education is a subject of state governments, and the higher education is regulated by the University Grants Commission (UGC), the central regulatory body. Karnataka, one of the southern states of India, ranks fourth in the total number of universities in India and ranks first among the southern states of India. Most of the studies on WLB in India and Karnataka are confined to the WLB of female faculty (Barik, 2017; Bhatia & Kulshreshtha, 2018; Delina & Raya, 2013; Johnsi, 2017; Kar et al., 2019; Lakshmi & Prasanth, 2018; Muben & Karim, 2018; Pandu, 2019; Samuel & Mahalingam, 2016). Faculty in HEI in Karnataka work long hours, and the WLB of female faculty in academia has been a concern (Noronha & Aithal, 2019). However, it was of interest to the investigators to document the WLB of faculty from the gender perspective, in the context of socio-demographic characteristics in Karnataka, as there is a paucity of research in this field in Karnataka. Therefore, a study was planned with an aim to identify the association between socio-demographic factors and the WLB in general and the association of gender with WLB in specific.

**Review of Literature**

According to Kalliath and Brough (2008), “WLB is the individual perception that work and non-work activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual’s current life priorities” (p. 326). Work-life inputs (demands, resources, and behavior) affect the interdependencies between work and life experienced by the individual or the organization (Leslie et al., 2019). Cognition and priorities of an individual or the organization differ as one’s beliefs and preferences are influenced by the contexts (family, organization, community, and society). Where stress is evident from the demands of work, generic resources for better performance are usually tailored to help cope with the requirements by mobilizing the resources. The individual may cope by separating the work and the life zones or prefer to mix both zones at a point in time. The chosen coping strategy is an outcome of the individual’s analysis of whether the work and the life zones compete with each other or enhance one another. The outcome (conflict or enrichment), is thus a cumulative effect of the cognition on WLB and the mobilization of resources (Leslie et al., 2019).

The work and the non-work contextual factors influence the WLB which in turn is associated with the quantity and quality of work output, the level of job or life satisfaction, health, retention, commitment, and productivity of the employee (Abdirahman et al., 2020; Ampem et al., 2018; Bambra et al., 2008; Doble & Supriya, 2010; Jackson & Fransman, 2018; Singh, 2013; Slışković & Maslıė Seriśić, 2011; Tripathi, 2018). Akanni and Oduaran (2017) studied the influence of personality traits such as agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experiences on work performance, and WLB. Advancing age (Kaushal & Parmar, 2019; Noronha & Aithal, 2019), experience (Johnsi, 2017), faculty rank and institutional support (Denson et al., 2018) were associated with WLB. The findings on the association of WLB with the type of institution (Barik, 2017; Dhanya & Kinslin, 2016) were inconsistent. Authentic leadership through supervisory support and role modeling (Braun & Peus, 2018), flexible work hours and supportive colleagues (Wilson et al., 2014), workload, work arrangement, the reward scheme (Nizam & Kam, 2018), and racial and ethnic discrimination (Denson et al., 2018) had a significant impact on the WLB.

The work environments are highly competitive, and employees that wish to give their best to everything find WLB as an impossible goal (Tummala, 2016). Though the academic community enjoys the privileges of leave or semester/year breaks, work stress among faculty of higher education programs is reported in studies (Beddoes & Pawley, 2014; Delina & Raya, 2013; Lakshmi & Prasanth, 2018; Ren & Caudle, 2016). Work stress was related to WLB, and higher levels of work stress were reported among women than men in the education sector (Lakshmi & Prasanth, 2018; Muben & Karim, 2018; Senthilkumar et al., 2012; Slışković & Maslıė Seriśić, 2011; Tummala, 2016). Owens et al. (2018) in their review highlight the lack of personal time, self-imposed expectations, committee work, research and publishing demands, institutional procedures, and colleagues as the sources of academic stress.

The quality of work-life was better among men compared to women and was highly correlated with the resources available than the training and development programs at the workplace (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2013). Married women experienced difficulty to make time for their hobbies or to socialize (Ampem et al., 2018; Delina & Raya, 2013). Absenteeism and turnover rates were higher among women employees due to the lacunae in the implementation of WLB policies (Kumari & Devi, 2013). Reduced level of patience, irritability, and guilt feeling were the consequences of striking a balance between motherhood and the teaching profession (Muben & Karim, 2018).

To help employees maintain WLB, researchers recommend interventions at the organizational level. Harrington and Ladge (2009) suggested a cultural change within the
organization which would help individuals to make career choices or enable organizational leadership to incorporate work-life perspectives into workforce management practices. Flexible schedules, facilities for work commuting, employee talent development initiatives, planned vacations, leave facilities (Dhanya & Kinslin, 2016); less rigid lunch schedules, investment on tools/techniques, training on stress management (Raji, 2018); satisfactory compensation (Kar et al., 2019); review of work procedures, realistic work goals, counseling, health care, and sports facilities, family welfare initiatives such as facilities for dependents—child/elderly/disabled and family leave policies (Mari & Mohideen, 2015); and compressed working week (Bamhra et al., 2008) are documented in the literature. Workplace spirituality is recommended as a helpful tool to enhance WLB and employee wellbeing (Garg, 2017). Use of technology and innovative teaching are believed to improve the work-life or life-work balance of faculties of HEI (Rafeeq & Harish, 2015).

Women in institutions of higher education which offered flexibility, adaptability, and autonomy, viewed WLB as more of a personal management task (Toffoletti & Starr, 2016). Own strategies such as self-care (sleep, balanced diet), cognitive training, and social connectivity (Owens et al., 2018), meditation, leisure activity, and counseling would reduce work stress (Bhui et al., 2016). Support from the spouse, family, domestic staff have been appreciated by the employees to maintain the WLB (Barik, 2017; Chandra, 2012; Ren & Caudle, 2016; Tummala, 2016). The changing societal attitudes toward family structures, the availability of social support facilities for dependents, the growing interest on the issues of gender equality, availability of means of transport and communication, and the techno-friendly virtual environment have narrowed the gender gap and helped women in the education sector to achieve WLB (Tummala, 2016). Personal, societal, and organizational efforts must complement one another to achieve WLB (Chandra, 2012).

The socio-demographic features of the working population in India are changing (Catalyst, 2019; Chapman & Mishra, 2019). In the higher education sector, the learner enrollment in higher education programs in India is on the rise, and the preference of female learners to the science stream is a noteworthy development (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2019; Sahni & Godbole, 2004). The enrollment in higher education programs in Karnataka is also increasing. Of them, 56.9% in postgraduate programs and 51.64% of undergraduate programs are female. However, the number of female faculty in HEI in India is less (42.15%) compared to that of Karnataka (44.89%). Though the number of female faculty is more in Karnataka, the number reduces in higher designations in HEI. A lower percentage of female faculty in higher-order designation such as Professor, Associate Professor in the state Public Universities, and their affiliated colleges offering Art, Science, Commerce, and Management programs in Karnataka was observed between the years 2015 and 19 (Mayya et al., 2020). This motivated us to examine the gender differences in work-life balance.

Materials and Methods

Study Design and the Population

This study is a part of the larger project. These are the same participants who participated in a survey on job satisfaction (Mayya et al., 2020). The scope of this cross-sectional survey was limited to state Public Universities and the affiliated colleges teaching Arts, Science, Commerce, and Management programs. Faculty employed on tenure basis in teaching departments of Universities and affiliated colleges in Karnataka were the target population. There were 11 state Public Universities in Karnataka in the year 2016. The study was carried out in the year 2016 and 2017.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this study had two sections. Section 1 included socio-demographic characteristics of the participants. Section 2 was the WLB Questionnaire by Daniels and McCarraher (2000) and had 10 items to be rated as Agree (1), Sometimes (2), and Disagree (3). A higher total score on the WLB questionnaire indicated better WLB. The internal consistency coefficient (alpha) of the WLB questionnaire was .85 as computed from the final survey. The description of the items of section 1 and 2 are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Data Collection Procedure

Approval from the Institutional Ethics Committee was obtained (IEC 61/2016). Four of the 11 state universities were less than 10 years old. Seven universities which were more than 10 years old were approached to participate in the study. Five universities responded to the request. The questionnaire was administered in-person to faculty from teaching departments of the university and four to five colleges (selected by convenience sampling) affiliated to these five Universities. The institutions were visited with prior appointments for data collection. Participation was voluntary. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of data and written informed consent was obtained. A minimum of 75 questionnaires per university was distributed. Of the 400 questionnaires distributed, a total of 306 faculties responded to the questionnaire (77% response rate). Forty-three questionnaires were excluded from analysis (34 filled by the faculty on annual contracts, and nine incomplete questionnaires).

Data Analysis Method

The data collected from 263 participants were analyzed using the SPSS (v.15). Frequency and percentages were
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computed to present the socio-demographic characteristics. The percentage agreed to each statement of the WLB questionnaire were presented when performing item analysis. Chi-square test, t-test, and multiple regression analysis were carried out to test the following null hypotheses.

\( H_{01}: \) There will not be a significant association between WLB score and gender after adjusting for the effect of other selected socio-demographic variables.

\( H_{02}: \) There will not be a significant association between WLB score and other selected socio-demographic variables.

| Table 1. Sex-Wise Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Participants. |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                             | Male                        | Female                      |
|                             | N | %  | n  | %   | Total         |
| Age in years                |   |    |    |     |               |
| <40                         | 45 | 43.3 | 59 | 56.7 | 104          |
| 40–49                       | 52 | 55.3 | 42 | 44.7 | 94           |
| 50 and above                | 30 | 46.2 | 35 | 53.8 | 65           |
| Type of college/university  |   |    |    |     |               |
| Govt. or Govt. Aided        | 117| 52.0 | 108| 48.0 | 225          |
| Private                     | 10 | 26.3 | 28 | 73.7 | 38           |
| Discipline                  |   |    |    |     |               |
| Science                     | 38 | 39.2 | 59 | 60.8 | 97           |
| Social Science/Commerce/Management | 89 | 53.6 | 77 | 46.4 | 166         |
| Designation                 |   |    |    |     |               |
| Assistant Professor         | 66 | 47.5 | 73 | 52.5 | 139          |
| Associate Professor         | 39 | 46.4 | 45 | 53.6 | 84           |
| Professor                   | 22 | 55   | 18 | 45   | 40           |
| Involved in research        |   |    |    |     |               |
| Yes                         | 72 | 43.6 | 93 | 56.4 | 165          |
| No                          | 55 | 56.1 | 43 | 43.9 | 98           |
| Marital status              |   |    |    |     |               |
| Married                     | 117| 51.3 | 111| 48.7 | 228          |
| Other (single/separated/divorced/widow/widower) | 10 | 28.6 | 25 | 71.4 | 35 |
| Child below 6 years         |   |    |    |     |               |
| Yes                         | 47 | 55.3 | 38 | 44.7 | 85           |
| No                          | 80 | 44.9 | 98 | 55.1 | 178          |
| Type of family              |   |    |    |     |               |
| Nuclear                     | 43 | 38.1 | 70 | 61.9 | 113          |
| Joint                       | 84 | 56.0 | 66 | 44.0 | 150          |
| Residential area            |   |    |    |     |               |
| Rural                       | 73 | 72.3 | 28 | 27.7 | 101          |
| Urban                       | 54 | 33.3 | 108| 66.7 | 162          |
| Caring responsibility at home (ill/elderly/disabled) |   |    |    |     |               |
| Yes                         | 75 | 53.6 | 65 | 46.4 | 140          |
| No                          | 52 | 42.3 | 71 | 57.7 | 123          |
| Distance from home to the workplace in kilometers |   |    |    |     |               |
| Less than 10                | 70 | 43.2 | 92 | 56.8 | 162          |
| 10–20                       | 23 | 46.0 | 27 | 54.0 | 50           |
| More than 20                | 34 | 66.7 | 17 | 33.3 | 51           |

Results

Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents: Participants of the study were 127 men aged 28 to 62 years (\( M=43.24, SD=7.81 \)) and 136 women aged 26 to 63 years (\( M=42.89, SD=8.84 \)). The teaching experience of men ranged from 0 to 34 years (\( M=13.11, SD=7.89 \)) and that of women 1 to 40 years (\( M=14.2, SD=8.45 \)). The gender-wise distribution of socio-demographic characteristics of the participants is described in Table 1.

Item-wise response comparison of WLB scale among the male and female faculty are presented in Table 2. A higher
percentage of female respondents agreed on all the items except the item, “At the moment because the job demands it, I usually work long hours,” compared to the males. Three of the 10 items showed a difference of 10 percentage points. A significantly higher percentage of women worried about the effect of work stress on their health ($p = .028$). A comparatively higher percentage of them perceived, there is not much time to socialize/relax with their family/partner in the work ($p = .009$), moreover relaxing/forgetting about work issues was hard for them.

Univariate analysis did not indicate a significant difference in the mean WLB score among male and female respondents of the study (Table 3).

Since gender distribution is not uniform across categories of different demographic factors (Table 1), multiple regression analysis was performed to adjust for the effect of other socio-demographic factors. For multiple regression analysis, total WLB score was treated as a dependent variable, and socio-demographic factors were treated as independent variables. “Designation” and “Marital Status” of the respondent were not included in the model as they were significantly associated with age.

Normality of Residuals of the regression was verified with a normal Predicted Probability (P-P) plot (Figure 1), and the homoscedasticity assumption was checked by plotting the standardized predicted values and residuals on a scatterplot (Figure 2). Multiple regression indicated a significant association of WLB score with “Gender,” “Age,” and “Discipline” of the respondents (Table 4). The model was able to account for 9% of the variance in WLB score, $F (12, 250) = 2.107, p = .017, R^2 = .09, Adj-R^2 = .05$. Following this result, both the null hypotheses stated earlier were rejected.

Table 4 indicates that the average score of male respondents was 1.53 unit more than the average score of females adjusting for the effect of other independent variables. Compared to the age group “50 years and above,” the WLB of age group “below 40 years” was 2.25 unit less, and that of the age group “40–49 years” was 1.85 unit less. The average score of faculties from the science discipline was 1.6 unit more than the average score of others. The analysis shows an association of better WLB with male gender, upper age group, and faculties of science discipline. Collinearity Statistics are well within the acceptable limits (VIF $< 5$), supporting the absence of multicollinearity.

**Discussion**

This study aimed to identify whether gender was associated with the WLB of academicians in Karnataka. The mean WLB score of male faculty was higher, and the significant difference in the mean score of WLB in gender was observed after adjusting for the effect of other demographic variables. This finding is unique because the available literature in India reported no association between the gender and WLB.

Table 2. Response to the Items of the Work-Life Balance Scale.

| Items representing work-life balance                                                                 | Male ($n = 127$) | Female ($n = 136$) | $\chi^2$ value | $p$-Value |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------|
| At the moment because the job demands it, I usually work long hours.                                 | 65 (51.2)        | 61 (44.9)          | 1.054          | .305      |
| There is not much time to socialize/relax with my family/partner in the work.                        | 24 (18.9)        | 45 (33.1)          | 6.834          | .009 (Sig.)|
| I have to take work home most of the evenings.                                                       | 33 (26)          | 39 (28.7)          | .239           | .625      |
| I often work late/at the weekend to deal with paperwork without interruptions.                      | 35 (27.6)        | 42 (30.9)          | .35            | .554      |
| Relaxing/forgetting about work issues is hard to do.                                                  | 38 (29.9)        | 55 (40.4)          | 3.18           | .075      |
| Worry about the effect of work stress on my health.                                                   | 30 (23.6)        | 49 (36)            | 4.81           | .028 (Sig.)|
| My relationship with my family/partner is suffering because I do not see enough of them/I am too tired.| 14 (11)          | 23 (16.9)          | 1.883          | .17       |
| My family is missing out on my input, either because I do not see enough of them/I am too tired.      | 17 (13.4)        | 27 (19.9)          | 1.972          | .16       |
| Finding time for hobbies, leisure activities/to maintain friendships and extended family relationships is difficult. | 37 (29.1) | 49 (36) | 1.419 | .234    |
| I want to reduce my working hours and stress levels, but I feel I have no control over the current situation. | 33 (26) | 46 (33.8) | 1.92 | .166 |

Table 3. Comparison of Mean Work-Life Balance Score.

| Sex | $n$ | Mean | Std. deviation | $t$-Value | $p$-Value | 95% CI for mean difference |
|-----|-----|------|----------------|-----------|-----------|---------------------------|
| Male| 127 | 20.8 | 4.65           | 1.9       | .06       | −0.05 to 2.32             |
| Female| 136 | 19.66 | 5.06 |           |           |                           |
on the basis of univariate analysis (Dhanya & Kinslin, 2016; Doble & Supriya, 2010; Muthulakshmi, 2018; Punia & Kamboj, 2013). In India, the male employee’s involvement in caring functions at the non-work setting is less. The Indian culture considers caring functions such as cooking, sanitation, dependent care responsibilities, etc. as woman-centric (Bhatia & Kulshrestha, 2018; Dhavala et al., 2019; Ren & Caudle, 2016). These caring functions consume considerable time in the family. A woman spends 271 minutes/day on average on caring functions, and the male spends 31 minutes (Chapman & Mishra, 2019). Further, Indian society expects women to view the husband's career more important over one’s own career advancement goals (Chandra, 2012). There are bio-physiological differences between men and women (Bhola & Nigadi, 2015) which may have an influence on the WLB, and these are not explored in this study. Systematic scientific inquiries which closely examine the association of WLB with gender in all non-work contexts (bio-psycho-social including personality, and gender based policies) in sufficient detail may provide a better view of the association (Williams et al., 2016). Research in this direction in Karnataka and India is scarce and effort in this area is thus essential to justify the role of gender on WLB.

About 75% of the participants in the present study were less than 50 years, and the current study found an association between advancing age and WLB. WLB among faculty aged above 50 years was better, an observation similar to that of the finding of Noronha and Aithal (2019) and Johnsi (2017). They reported that WLB was better among employees above 50 years and with more years of service. Self-confidence and self-efficacy of the faculties grow over the years with exposure to real work and life challenges and the training related to work affairs (Johnsi, 2017; Ramakrishnan & Salleh, 2019). However, in Karnataka, the majority of the faculty are a lecturer or Assistant Professor (Table 1), maintaining WLB would be a challenge especially for female faculty as they will be by and large in the child bearing age group. The young being the beginners, need time to get adjusted to the demands of work on one side and to regulate the need for socialization or life events such as marriage, children, etc. on the other (Dhavala et al., 2019; Noronha & Aithal, 2019).

A study in Turkey (Helvaci et al., 2017) revealed no significant association between WLB and disciplines (Social Sciences and Physical Sciences). However, a study in India observed an association between the WLB and discipline (Arts, Commerce, and Science), with a higher mean WLB score in the Arts discipline (Muthulakshmi, 2018). The present study predicted better WLB among faculty of Science discipline. Science deals with quantitative, highly ordered, positive knowledge of short term performance whereas Social Sciences and Humanities is a heterogeneous collection of disciplines and address both qualitative and quantitative knowledge of permanent significance (Moed, 2005). With the application of logical thinking processes, the teaching of science programs is comparatively easier as most of the concepts can be demonstrated to students in a laboratory and elicit curiosity, unlike the methods used in teaching social sciences programs (Nesusin et al., 2014). Demonstration of the cause and effect relationships in teaching-learning sessions of social sciences courses requires greater exposure to the world outside the classroom or the course books compared to the courses in a science discipline (Bhatnagar, 2018). Time management, management of class size beyond 20, varied perception of subject utility are the major bottlenecks to handle the programs of social science. However, from the finding of the present study one can anticipate better WLB among female faculty in the coming years in the context of rising enrollment of female learners in the postgraduate programs in India, their preference over the science discipline and a belief that teaching job is most suitable for women (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2019; Sahni & Godbole, 2004).

The majority (78%) of the faculty in India are confident to balance work (Mala, 2018). The overall responses to the items of WLB scale as well as the mean of WLB scale reveals that the majority of the faculty had positive views of WLB, especially the male faculty. For one item, “At the moment because the job demands it, I usually work long,” nearly half of male and female faculty had a similar opinion. The higher percentage (33.8%) of female faculty’s response to the item, “I want to reduce my working hours and stress levels, but I feel I have no control over the current situation” is a concern. It implies female faculty experience helplessness in reducing the workload and stress levels. Forgetting about work issues was hard for 40% of female faculty. About 36% of female faculty found it difficult to engage in their hobbies or leisure time activities or socialize with the family which infers that
their personal domain is very much affected by their work (Delina & Raya, 2013; Noronha & Aithal, 2019). Increased workload (Slišković & Maslić Seršić, 2011), work arrangements (Nizam & Kam, 2018), and working more hours per week influence the WLB (Florea & Borza, 2018). Most of the female academicians mixed work with life or life with work, a strategy similar to that of the academicians in Asian countries (Chandra, 2012; Kim, 2014; Ren & Caudle, 2016). Work-family spillover is a common observation among Indians (Bhatia & Kulshrestha, 2018; Dhanya & Kinslin, 2016). In the present study, about one-third of female faculty work late at night and also worried about the work stress on health. Work-life imbalance affects health (Bhola & Nigadi, 2015). The health of a woman is a concern as it affects the health of the family. Thus measures to help maintain the WLB of female faculty are essential.

Academia poses unique challenges in the current era, with increased student enrollments, increased student demands, increased workloads, less time for preparation of lessons, frequent change of time tables, more of paperwork, increased class size, shortage of faculty, limited resources, increased emphasis on the use of technology in education, and focus on the quality of work (Ahmad et al., 2015; Bhatnagar, 2018; Chandra, 2012; Chandra & Varghese, 2019). Further, the nature of students of higher education programs these days is a mix of different age groups and marital status, a few are employed part-time, or are of foreign origin, or have varied interests and prospects within a field of study (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2016, 2019). Planning teaching-learning sessions to a group of diverse learners with diverse needs/interests demand considerable thought, review, time and energy and thus efforts to address the work-life challenges in academia are very much necessary in Karnataka.

Review reports several possible measures to uplift the WLB of employees in different sectors, including academia. Adequate compensation for every extra hour of work (Kar et al., 2019), flexible work hours (Wilson et al., 2014), 5 days of work per week (Kim, 2014), and other family-friendly supportive programs have shown an influence on the perceptions of WLB, the life expectancy (Florea & Borza, 2018) and quality of performance (Slišković & Maslić Seršić, 2011). Also, the WLB guide (Community Business, 2009) developed based on the findings of studies in Hong Kong recommended, compressed hours per week or annualized hours, term-time work or the part-time, variable year of employment or job sharing, and working from home or working remotely as a few possible alternatives. A trial on implementation of some of these options in the Indian higher education system, and Karnataka, in particular, may help evaluate the effectiveness of such strategies in enhancing WLB among faculties, especially women. These measures may also improve the health indicators of the Indian population. The Department of Women and Child Development in India, is working positively for the welfare of women, in light of the considerable unpaid household work performed by women in India and is working on the National Policy for Women (Government of India, 2016). In its draft, there is a mention on the introduction of flexi-hours, part-time work, and nursing breaks for women employees in the organized sector apart from concentrated efforts to strengthen social security and support services. However, approval of the policy is yet awaited.
The present study adds to the knowledge on the WLB of academicians of non-professional programs in HEI in Karnataka and its association with the socio-demographic variables, at a time where female enrollment in higher education is on the rise. The present study was limited in scope to faculty of state universities of Karnataka which were predominantly Government or Government Aided and hence are applicable to the local context alone. Further, the WLB studies in India and outside used different measures (tools) to assess WLB and thus a comparison of the WLB across states or regions may not be appropriate. However, the scenario of the education system in India is going to change as India has initiated a National Education Policy 2020 (Government of India, 2020). This policy envisions to transform the education system as a whole and articulates provision of real-life centered education to the learners. The implementation of the policy may pose new or additional challenges to faculty in the near future. Thus further studies are required to document the effect of policy on WLB of academicians across all levels of the education system, including higher education programs. The present study did not explore the family and organizational support systems (bio-psycho-social context). Discipline-specific systematic scientific enquiry in this area using a larger sample and a mixed methods research design would provide useful information to explain the association of WLB with the socio-demographic characteristics.

Conclusion

As the higher education sector is becoming more demanding, adequate attention has to be paid to the issue of WLB. The present study revealed WLB was associated with gender, age, and science discipline, after adjusting for the effect of other
demographic variables. WLB of faculty in the age group less than 50 years and females need specific attention. Actions at both the organizational and personal level to maintain a WLB are essential. Future studies may be planned to assess the impact of specific measures at the organizational or personal level on WLB, work productivity, health, and thereby the quality of life of academicians. The findings of this systematic inquiry may be used as a basis to compare the WLB of academicians post National Educational Policy, in Karnataka.

Author Note

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Ethical Approval

Institutional Ethics Committee of Kasturba Hospital Manipal (IEC 61/2016) approved the study.

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