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Influence of Work-Life Balance Policies on Faculty Retention in Colleges/ Universities in Gujarat

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Abstract

This study explores the pivotal role of work-life balance (WLB) policies in influencing faculty retention within institutions of higher education in Gujarat. Using well-known theoretical models including role-conflict theory, spillover theory, border theory, and work-family enrichment theory, the study looks at how psychological elements like emotional and spiritual intelligence affect faculty retention and well-being from WLB. The study emphasises in using structural equation modelling (SEM) and structured surveys that WLB results are much shaped by demographic characteristics, institutional assistance, and family obligations. With emotional and spiritual intelligence as key buffers, the results show that supportive policies—such as flexible leave, childcare facilities, and professional development—raise job satisfaction and lower work-life conflict. With organisational culture further enhancing these associations, the SEM study indicates that WLB policies greatly predict job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.698$) and faculty retention ($\beta = 0.710$). Strongness of the model is confirmed by high model fit indices (CFI = 0.964, GFI = 0.942). The study concludes by highlighting the strategic need of incorporating WLB policies within human resource frameworks in order to promote academic success and institutional stability. These realisations provide insightful direction for legislators and educational administrators trying to raise faculty retention via employee-centric and all-encompassing strategies.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance (WLB), Faculty Retention, Higher Education Institutions, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), Organizational Culture, Job Satisfaction.

Introduction

As higher education continues to change, schools and universities that want to preserve academic quality and institutional stability are finding that faculty retention is a major challenge. Among the many elements that affect retention, work-life balance rules are crucial in determining academic staff members' job satisfaction, level of professional dedication, and general well-being. The use and efficacy of such policies are receiving more attention in Gujarat, a state renowned for its growing educational infrastructure and growing number of both public and private institutions. Insufficient support may result in burnout among faculty members who often struggle with rigorous workloads, administrative duties, and research productivity demands. This research is to investigate how work-life balance regulations affect teacher retention in Gujarati colleges and universities, evaluating the ways in which institutional support systems help to establish a long-lasting and inspiring learning environment.

The study investigated how work-life balance affected University of Gujarat teaching staff members' job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The goal of this study was to determine how work-life balance impacts workers' loyalty to the company and level of satisfaction. For research purposes, a public university in Gujarat division was chosen. Researchers are interested in work-life balance and its effects in the current dynamic environment, which is why this topic was chosen for study. Three key concepts are included in the notion of work-life balance. These include the need that workers strike a reasonable balance between their personal and professional life, as well as the requirement that employers support their workers by offering programs and flexibility (Bardoel et al., 2009). A person in a work-life balance state is able to resolve conflicts between competing demands on their time and energy in a manner that meets their needs for wellbeing. Promoting work-life balance is a strategy used by organizations to draw in and keep workers who contribute to the organization's success. Unbalanced work-life has detrimental effects on an organization's ability to perform effectively (Arun, 2013). Aside from pay, job satisfaction is a reward that an employee strives for as a consequence of productive work. Therefore, in order to retain their top staff, organizations should take this element into account (Mustapha & Zakaria, 2013). Employee performance results in increased organizational productivity when employees are satisfied with the policies of the company. (Sarwar & Abugre, 2013) Rewards and workers' job satisfaction are positively correlated. When employees are happy with the rules and procedures of the company, great production results. The three dimensions of organizational commitment are normative, continuity, and emotional commitment. An employee's desire to quit or remain with the company is determined by their affective commitment.

Work-life Balance

When workplace dynamics began to shift as a consequence of economic instability, leading to a struggle for survival inside the business, work-life balance emerged as a significant study topic. The degree of control one feels over the number of hours they devote to work vs the number of hours they make accessible outside of work is known as work-life balance. pointed out that the concept of work-life balance is subjective and that the majority of definitions are situational. Each person has a different way of striking a balance between work and life activities, depending on when they are content with both their personal and professional lives. The person devotes the same amount of time to each area, therefore endorsing the absolutist definition of work-life balance. It is the capacity of the person, irrespective of age or gender, to strike a balance that allows them to integrate work and non-work-related duties in accordance with the goals associated with these domains (Reiter, 2007).

Government and policymakers place a high value on work-life balance since individuals are essential to the smooth operation of society. The working population is now dealing with an information overload as a result of a growing reliance on information technology throughout time. Employees are expected to put in extra hours and be open to working on the weekends. Additionally, it is anticipated that staff members would always be accessible and promptly respond to calls and emails outside of regular business hours. This has increased the causes of stress at work.

The lines between work-related and non-work-related hours and locations must be constantly negotiated in our complicated cultures. It is not usually the case that a person's work and non-work lives are at opposing ends of the spectrum; in fact, there is often no clear distinction between work and non-work periods. Some individuals see their employment as a social setting where they might develop a good sense of self-worth. Some people find that their jobs provide a much-needed respite from the challenges they face at home. Lack of equilibrium between the demands of personal and professional lives leads to emotional and behavioral issues, which in turn cause impaired productivity and problematic drinking. reference There is rising worry that there is less time for quality leisure outside of the work environment as a result of longer workdays and more responsibilities and pressures. Work-life balance is the result of both the organization's and the individual's constructive approaches to understanding the significance of a balanced and contented work life as well as life outside of work limits. In companies that prioritize effective and efficient performance, workers with better work-life balance may make more significant contributions to the expansion and success of the company (Naithani, 2009).

Five fundamental models of work-life balance were established by suggested SEGMENTATION paradigm, a person's life is divided into two distinct realms. There are two types: work domain and non-work domain. A person's distinct life segments do not interfere with their ability to operate, and one segment has no bearing whatsoever on the other. One domain may have a positive or negative impact on the other, according to the second model created, SPILLOVER. A person's family life may impact their professional life, and work experiences can impact a person's family life.

These spillover experiences are noticeable when a person chooses to work from home or has flexible work hours. COMPENSATION was the third model created, and it proposed that people attempt to make up for what they lack in one area by doing so in another. If a person is dissatisfied with their job environment and finds it uninspiring, they may make up for it by participating in kid-focused school activities or taking the initiative to do community service that would get them praise and acclaim. The INSTRUMENTAL model, the fourth one put out, holds that actions in one area of life are helpful and supportive to achievement in other areas. To satisfy the needs of the family, such as schooling, a worker may accept a job that is tedious and uninteresting. The fifth model created was the CONFLICT model, which postulates that when demands in all areas of life are strong, people must make tough decisions that may lead to conflict and even overload(Guest, 2002).

Numerous work-life balance models have been developed throughout the years, but model offers a thorough understanding of the idea by defining the different factors that influence work-life balance, the nature of balance, and the effects that follow. The main concerns in the study of work-life balance are attempted to be included in this model. According to the model, a demanding job may anticipate that a person would work long and irregular hours, and a demanding home may put pressure on the person with respect to duties and responsibilities within the community, at home, etc. By denying workers the option of flexible scheduling, the current workplace culture might

also contribute to work-life imbalance. Employees with a laid-back workplace atmosphere will sometimes take time off when needed. The atmosphere at home also affects how satisfied a person feels about juggling job and life outside of work. A person will experience a great deal of stress if they have too many obligations at home and their job is as demanding. directed the focus on personal elements that influence how people perceive work-life balance. According to him, the concept of balance is predicated on an individual's orientation, the degree to which they prioritize their job or home life, as well as other facets of their personality. Further supporting the idea is the idea that balance is a subjective experience, and that objective measures of work-life balance may not necessarily coincide with subjective measures of the same. The person who believes that their life is balanced is probably more inclined to prioritize their employment.

There are many different elements that determine how one views the aspects of job and life outside of work. Some people see their employment as the most important part of their lives as it satisfies their need for success and accomplishment. Work-life balance is a significant problem for both businesses and workers these days. The problem of excessive work hours has been exacerbated by technology. Work-family difficulties and telework were shown to be (Lapierre & Allen, 2006). Issues with work-life balance affect both men and women at various phases of their lives and are not exclusive to any one gender or set of professions. As a result, it is a global problem (Darcy et al., 2012). It causes people to suffer regardless of their marital situation, sex, or gender.

Employees in companies already implementing work-life practices enjoy significant benefits such as:

- Being able to effectively manage multiple responsibilities at home, work and in the community
- without guilt or regret.
- Being able to work in flexible ways so that earning an income and managing family/other commitments become easier.
- Being part of a supportive workplace that values and trusts staff.
- People want to be able to have:
 - A good quality of life
 - An enjoyable work life and career progression
 - training and development
 - Good health
 - Affordable childcare or eldercare
 - Further education
 - More money
 - Time to travel
 - Time with friends and family
 - Time to do sports and hobbies
 - Time to do voluntary work

Work/Life Balance: Challenges and Solutions

Work/life programs are initiatives created by a company that provide staff members choices for juggling work and personal obligations. These initiatives are often monetary or time-related.

Work/life initiatives are rules and guidelines set up by a company to help workers do their tasks while also giving them the freedom to manage personal and family matters (Dhas & Karthikeyan, 2015).

The degree to which an organization's culture recognizes and honors its workers' family duties and commitments and promotes collaboration between management and staff to address their personal and professional requirements is known as its work/family culture.

Prioritizing Personal Lives and Family Values The Indian work ethic is still strong, but in recent years, family and personal values have become more important, and most Indians are less inclined to compromise them for the sake of their jobs. The American worker has started to shift over time from being content to work every hour to understanding how to manage the complexity of contemporary life. Furthermore, the effects of the September 11 terrorist attacks have caused many individuals to reassess their lives and think about the purpose of their jobs. As a result, many Indians are searching for methods to have it all and are searching for choices that permit both a personal and family life.

The Indian management style, which demands that workers prioritize their job above their personal life and family responsibilities, is thus losing favor. Family time was ranked as the top work/life priority by 82% of men and 85% of women aged 20 to 39 in a 2001 Public Policy Center study. Ninety percent of working individuals expressed anxiety about not spending enough time with their family in a 2006 research conducted by Madras University and the University of Periyar.

The Changing Character of Family Given the increasing variety of family arrangements in the workforce in the new century, human resource professionals need to have a deeper understanding of how work and family relationships interact and how this affects the workplace, some workforce groups may face particular work/family demands yet often lack resources for assistance. A significant gap in work/family research and employers' comprehension of these groups' requirements is the underrepresentation of those with potentially challenging work/family demands.

Work-family conflict has serious repercussions and has a big impact on both men's and women's job success and family life quality. Women may face significant limitations in their employment options, less opportunities for professional growth and success in their roles, and the need to decide between two seemingly incompatible options: a fulfilling and active career or marriage and children. As they look for methods to make dual-career families work, many men must compromise their personal and professional ideals. This often means adopting family roles that are quite different and more egalitarian than those they were taught as children. Both work-to-family and family-to-work psychological interference have a compensating impact, according to this study. Specifically, support from two domains (partner and employer) has a significant impact on one another. The impact of partner support is greater when business professionals feel their employers are unsupportive of their lives beyond work. Conversely, for employees with relatively unsupportive partners, the employer family-friendliness reduces role conflicts more than partners. Thus, one source of support compensates for the lack of the other. Looking at behavioural interference of work on family, the picture changes. In this case, the whole is greater than the sum

of its parts: the combined impact of employer and partner support leads to a greater Reduction in conflict than does independent employer or partner support. Stress and the Consequences for Employer and Employee We live in stressful times, and each of us deals with stress every day. In the past three years, an increasing number of employees surveyed indicate they are struggling with work/life balance. A work/life balance survey conducted in 2002 by True Careers states that 70% of more than 1,500 respondents said they don't have a healthy balance between their personal and work lives. "Holding a Job, Having a Life: Strategies for Change" 2001 study by the Work Institute of America points out that employee-driven solutions help reduce overtime, stress, and workloads, and increase flexibility as well as leisure and family time. Stress may be harmless, even helpful, in moderation, according to scientists, and most individuals are able to handle it. On the other hand, rising stress levels may quickly result in low staff morale, low output, and declining work satisfaction. Abuse of sick leave, dishonesty, chronic absenteeism, mistrust, embezzlement, organizational sabotage, tardiness, job avoidance, and workplace violence are some of the particular symptoms that are directly related to productivity in the workplace. Depression, drug and alcohol misuse, marital and financial issues, obsessive eating disorders, and employee burnout are additional severe consequences.

Historical Evolution of Work-Life Balance Policies in Academia

In Indian academics during recent years, work-life balance (WLB) has become a major issue. After gaining their freedom, Indian higher education institutions mostly embraced hierarchical British academic paradigms that gave production over well-being first priority. Without institutional support for personal or family obligations, faculty have long been expected to juggle lengthy teaching hours, administrative tasks, and research. Absence of official human resource policy, bureaucratic delays and insufficient money, all of which further hindered attempts to assist WLB.

Late in the 1990s, reform initiatives got impetus when the University Grants Commission (UGC) started endorsing policies like sabbaticals, maternity leave, and faculty development programs. The 2007 National Knowledge Commission study on faculty stress and burnout called for institutional assistance and flexible working conditions. Globalisation and the growth of private institutions brought foreign HR practices like flexible scheduling and remote work in the 2000s and beyond. The COVID-19 epidemic served as a trigger for mental health campaigns and general acceptance of mixed education approaches. Recent initiatives include the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the UGC's 2021 recommendations for faculty well-being and institutional autonomy have recognised the importance of these things. continuously, there are differences in application, particularly in tier-2 and rural schools, suggesting that WLB rules are continuously changing all throughout the Indian academic scene.

The Indian Context and Evolution of Work-Life Balance in Higher Education

In India, the concept of work-life balance (WLB) in academia has evolved slowly, with early institutions modeled on hierarchical British systems that offered little support for faculty well-being. For decades, faculty members faced heavy teaching loads, administrative tasks, and

research obligations without structured HR policies or personal support systems, especially in underfunded state institutions. The late 1990s and early 2000s marked the beginning of change when the University Grants Commission (UGC) introduced policies like maternity leave, sabbaticals, and faculty development programs. However, implementation was inconsistent, benefiting central universities more than others. The 2007 National Knowledge Commission report further highlighted stress and burnout among faculty, prompting calls for more flexible work environments. In response, some private institutions adopted global best practices, offering flexible schedules and research support, although public institutions largely continued to struggle with systemic issues like overcrowding, understaffing, and bureaucratic delays.

The COVID-19 pandemic marked a significant shift, pushing institutions toward remote and hybrid work models. While many faculty appreciated the flexibility and reduced commute, others experienced digital fatigue and work-life boundary challenges. In response, some institutions launched wellness initiatives—such as IIM Ahmedabad’s counseling services and Gujarat University’s mental health webinars. Recent UGC guidelines and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 have emphasized faculty autonomy, flexible working conditions, and career support as part of academic reforms. Despite these advances, implementation remains uneven across regions, with tier-2 and rural institutions continuing to lack comprehensive WLB policies. Although awareness is growing, institutional commitment and resource allocation are still necessary to make WLB a consistent reality in Indian higher education.

Faculty Retention in Higher Education

For higher education institutions (HEIs) to continue to provide high-quality instruction and research, academic staff retention is essential. Globally, HEIs function within a variety of educational systems, each influenced by distinct sociocultural settings, economic environments, and governmental frameworks. The elements that determine academic staff retention and satisfaction are greatly impacted by this variety. For example, financing, promotion, and workload distribution regulations differ greatly across nations, posing unique possibilities and problems for academic personnel. It is crucial to comprehend these contextual subtleties in order to conduct a thorough examination of academic staff experiences worldwide. Given these contextual variations, employee satisfaction—which is strongly correlated with academic and professional progression (Adeniji et al., 2018)—becomes a crucial determinant of retention. Staff retention and happiness are greatly influenced by a number of factors, including leadership styles, mentoring, workload, pay, and working conditions.

Economic limitations, low pay, heavy workloads, inadequate mentoring, and persistent understaffing are among the issues that South African HEIs have been known to face (Chetty et al., 2015)(Selesho & Naile, 2014). These elements play a part in high turnover rates, poor work satisfaction, and burnout. Additionally, these problems are made worse by sociopolitical and cultural factors, a lack of professional development opportunities, and inadequate infrastructure, necessitating immediate initiatives to increase employee retention and satisfaction (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Economic limitations, low pay, heavy workloads, inadequate mentoring, and persistent understaffing are among the issues that South African HEIs have been known to face

(Chetty et al., 2015). These elements play a part in high turnover rates, poor work satisfaction, and burnout. Additionally, these problems are made worse by sociopolitical and cultural factors, a lack of professional development opportunities, and inadequate infrastructure, necessitating immediate initiatives to increase employee retention and satisfaction (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Despite the extensive documentation of the significance of employee satisfaction in retention, some information gaps still exist. (Nejati et al., 2016), for example, point out the need for more study on working circumstances, such as physical surroundings and organizational support systems, that have a major influence on employee retention and satisfaction. Furthermore, little is known about how distinct policy variations, cultural settings, and financial limitations influence retention variables in various HEI systems. Due of these deficiencies, HEIs—especially those in South Africa—do not have enough data to create specialized, successful retention plans.

Academic staff retention and satisfaction are influenced by a number of variables, including as leadership styles, workload, mentoring, and working conditions. There are clear obstacles to raising academic staff retention and satisfaction, especially at South African HEIs. point out that financial limitations, such as low pay and tight budgets, have a big influence on professional development opportunities and instructional materials, which lowers academic staff retention and satisfaction. academic staff members have serious concerns about compensation, which must be addressed in order to improve employee retention and satisfaction at HEIs.

Academic staff members experience burnout and low job satisfaction as a result of heavy workloads, inadequate mentorship, and ongoing understaffing at HEIs (Leibowitz & Bozalek, 2014). Furthermore, a bad work environment is caused by inadequate infrastructure and a lack of professional growth, and employee insecurity is exacerbated by safety concerns . academic staff morale is lowered by administrative responsibilities and bad management practices, and work satisfaction is further decreased by a lack of incentives and inadequate recognition, as well as sociopolitical and cultural factors. It is often known that maintaining academic personnel at HEIs depends on worker satisfaction.

Significant knowledge gaps still exist despite the well-established importance of staff satisfaction in retention, especially with regard to the unique ways that working conditions, policy variations, cultural contexts, and financial constraints influence retention factors across various higher education systems.

Retention Challenges

The retention issues are a factor of student and faculty goals of a career in the area of medicine and the degree to which these objectives were satisfied. 234 medical faculty across specialties and cadre (Senior Residents, Assistant Professors, Associate Professors, Professors) at various stages of their careers were questioned about their professional ambitions and its fulfillment. Survey indicated that the overall the faculty are self-motivated in the beginning of their career for a career in medicine (89%); because of passion for the subject (94%), service to the needy (80%), prestige associated with being professor (87.5%), greater exposure to scientific challenges in patientcare (86.4%). However, many alter their professional path, mostly toward private practice in a clinic or hospital, due to financial concerns and a desire for a higher quality of life. When

choosing to become a faculty member at a medical institution, location also plays a big role. 36% of respondents said they would want to work close to their home, while the majority (71.4%) said they would prefer to work in a Metro or Tier-1 city.

According to the survey, faculty members haven't been very excited about their goals being realized since enrolling in the medical college. Over 50% of those surveyed said that the majority of the elements in their workplace did not live up to their expectations. None of the explanations, however, were compelling enough to quit a government position. Less than 5% of study states experience overall attrition. Among other things, the majority of the attrition was ascribed to Staff (including contractual) departing for better possibilities, particularly with the approaching AIIMS in each state; contract employees quitting at the end of their term or being regularized.

The majority of faculty respondents' input identifies the following as their main grievance:

- 1) There was no performance-based incentive within the designated function, despite the fact that regular yearly increments are always available (87.6%). There is a lack of responsibility as there are no rewards for excellent performance and no penalties for poor performance.
- 2) College administration said that there is no mechanism in place to measure responsibility (80%) or track workload (71.4%).
- 3) Insufficient guidance in transitioning into a new position, particularly a management one (68.4%);
- 4) Inconsistency in tenure, promotions, and transfers (62.2%).

Additionally, faculty training was limited to NMC-mandated subjects like teaching strategies and research methodologies, which could have been utilized for individual career advancement within the specialty.

Although there are no specialized trainings to assist professors in transitioning into management positions, the majority of academics in management jobs struggle to lead in an administrative capacity (Purohit & Martineau, 2016).

In Indian higher education institutions, especially in Gujarat state, faculty retention has become a crucial concern. Retaining knowledgeable and driven faculty is essential as institutions strive to maintain academic quality, research output, and institutional prestige. Despite the development of higher education options, Gujarat, which is home to prestigious universities like Gujarat University and the Sardar Vallabhbhai National Institute of Technology, is facing an increasing teacher attrition problem.

Salary structure, possibilities for career growth, institutional support, academic freedom, work-life balance, and organisational environment are some of the connected aspects that affect teacher retention (Ahmady et al., 2016). In Gujarat, faculty positions have changed as a result of the growing privatisation and corporatisation of higher education, which often results in increased administrative duties and a decline in work satisfaction. Dissatisfaction with promotion policies and a lack of clear assessment methods were identified as the main causes of staff departures in an Indian university research on the objectives of faculty turnover. This trend was also seen in Gujarat's private institutions.

The necessity for comprehensive faculty development and governance reform is further emphasised in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Even while the policy promotes more autonomy, professional development opportunities, and participatory governance, Gujarat's actual execution of these ideas is still uneven. Retention efforts are complicated when faculty members identify a discrepancy between institutional practices and policy aim.

Pay discrepancies between public and private institutions are one of Gujarat's unique challenges; state universities follow UGC pay standards, while many private colleges provide less attractive packages. As a consequence, academics often relocate to public universities or outside the state in search of better prospects. Long-term institutional commitment is further undermined by employment uncertainty at self-financed institutions, which is caused by contractual appointments and a lack of perks like health insurance and provident funds.

Retention is further hampered by geographic restrictions. It is difficult for many Gujarati institutions in semi-urban or rural locations to attract and retain professors, particularly those with urban or metropolitan backgrounds. Faculty are discouraged from establishing long-term residences in these areas because to the dearth of metropolitan amenities, healthcare infrastructure, and educational opportunities for children. Another layer is created by gender-specific issues; female faculty members often complain about inadequate support systems including flexible work schedules and childcare (Becket & Brookes, 2008) , (Soomro & Ahmad, 2012).

Institutions must conduct a thorough evaluation of faculty requirements and put in place open promotion and appraisal procedures in order to handle these complex issues. Additionally important are autonomy in instruction, participative management, and structured mentoring (Davoudi & Fartash, 2013). Other universities should adopt the finest practices of IIT Gandhinagar and IITRAM, including as faculty development programs (FDPs), research funding, international partnerships, and sabbaticals.

The Gujarat State Higher Education Council (GSHEC) should guarantee consistency in retention tactics including housing assistance, faculty exchange programs, and performance-based recognition from a governance perspective. Increased institutional loyalty and opportunities for research commercialisation may also result from involving professors via industrial partnerships and alumni networks (Rana, 2009).

Faculty retention is similarly important on a worldwide level. A faculty member's annual pay may cost an institution up to 30% of their income, according to studies (Lavania et al., 2011). The expenses are much greater for some fields, such as medical education, where a subspecialist may cost up to half a million dollars (Flint et al., 2013). Recruitment, development, and retention—the three pillars of human resource management—are particularly important in the academic sector. Since losing talent negates the effort in hiring and training new employees, retention in particular becomes a strategic concern (Whitt, 2006).

Faculty are the key resources promoting creativity, academic performance, and social well-being; they are more than just knowledge providers. This is especially true at medical schools, where academics play a vital role in community health in addition to training future medical practitioners.

Accordingly, both institutional performance and social advancement depend on efficient retention techniques (Ahmady et al., 2016).

Lastly, there are advantages and disadvantages to the post-COVID-19 trend towards digital learning. Although flexible work patterns are made possible by online platforms, the abrupt shift has resulted in an increase in faculty effort and stress associated to technology. To facilitate this shift and guarantee faculty well-being in the digital age, institutions must provide sufficient training and assistance (Joshi, 2015).

In summary, retaining professors in Gujarat and across India calls for a methodical, policy-driven, and compassionate strategy that acknowledges faculty as the foundation of educational establishments. Institutions can only attract and keep the brightest brains by guaranteeing fair compensation, academic freedom, and a nurturing atmosphere.

Link between Work-Life Balance and Faculty Retention

Because work-life balance (WLB) has a significant influence on faculty retention, productivity, and happiness, it has become more important in academic research. Faculty personnel in higher education balance personal and family obligations with teaching, research, administration, and mentorship. Academic positions often call for after-hours labour, which reduces personal time and increases stress levels in contrast to corporate occupations with set hours.

Burnout, work discontent, and high turnover are all strongly associated with poor WLB, particularly for women and early-career faculty (Soomro & Ahmad, 2013). Talent retention is a challenge for organisations without enabling policies like sabbaticals, remote work choices, or flexible scheduling. Faculty indicate more institutional engagement and less intention to depart when they believe their personal needs are met.

WLB is also influenced by peer support, leadership, and organisational culture. Burnout may increase in toxic workplaces that normalise excessive workloads, discouraging faculty from seeking assistance. These difficulties are made worse in poor nations like India by extra responsibilities including demanding teaching schedules, ambiguous promotion guidelines, and a lack of mental health resources. Therefore, maintaining a good work-life balance is crucial for maintaining both institutional performance and faculty well-being.

Motivation for the Study

Faculty retention and work-life balance are intertwined challenges that increasingly define the success and sustainability of higher education institutions. In the Indian academic landscape—particularly in Gujarat the confluence of rigid administrative structures, uneven implementation of welfare policies, and expanding institutional responsibilities have created an environment where retaining qualified faculty is difficult. While national initiatives like NEP 2020 and UGC reforms have provided a policy framework for change, their effectiveness depends on contextual implementation, especially in semi-urban and rural academic settings.

Despite increased recognition of the role work-life balance plays in faculty satisfaction and institutional loyalty, significant gaps persist in the understanding of how specific policies impact retention. Institutions that fail to support faculty well-being through flexible policies, transparent

career progression, and a supportive organizational culture risk losing talent, thereby compromising their academic standing and student outcomes.

This study is motivated by the urgent need to explore how work-life balance initiatives influence faculty retention in higher education institutions of Gujarat. By examining faculty experiences, institutional practices, and systemic challenges, the study seeks to provide evidence-based recommendations to policymakers and administrators.

Objectives of the Study

In light of the motivation discussed, the study sets forth the following objectives:

- 1) To examine the current work-life balance practices in higher education institutions in Gujarat.
- 2) To analyze the relationship between work-life balance and faculty retention across different types of institutions (public vs private, urban vs rural).
- 3) To identify institutional and systemic factors that promote or hinder faculty well-being and long-term commitment.
- 4) To evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies (e.g., flexible scheduling, sabbaticals, mental health support) in improving faculty satisfaction and retention.
- 5) To suggest policy reforms and institutional strategies aimed at enhancing work-life balance and reducing faculty turnover.

Organization of the Study

This study opens with an introduction that lays the foundation for the study by discussing the concept of work-life balance, its challenges, and its relevance in the context of faculty retention in higher education, particularly within the Indian academic landscape. The introduction also explores the historical development of work-life balance regulations, the relationship between work-life balance and faculty retention, and the goals and inspiration behind the study. The section on the methodology describes the research design, study area, sampling strategy, sample design, data collecting processes, inclusion and exclusion criteria, data analysis methodologies, and hypothesis testing approach used in the study. The main conclusions of the data collecting analysis are shown in the results part. These results are interpreted in light of the study goals and more general body of knowledge in the discussion section, therefore providing understanding of the effects of work-life balance on faculty retention. The study concludes with a summary of the key ideas, allowing for important conclusions and laying the groundwork for more research..

Methodology

A methodical and organised research approach was used to investigate how work-life balance rules affected faculty retention in Gujarati higher education institutions. The research used a quantitative methodology, collecting and analysing data from a representative sample of faculty members using statistical methods. To guarantee clarity and openness in the study process, important methodological elements are described here, including research design, sampling, data collecting, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and data analysis methodologies.

Research Design

This study uses a quantitative explanatory research approach to investigate, at higher education institutions throughout Gujarat, the effect of work-life balance (WLB) policies on faculty

retention. The design helps to organise data for statistical analysis so that factors such flexible work schedules, job satisfaction, corporate culture, and staff retention may be investigated. By use of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), the method helps the researcher to evaluate direct and indirect correlations between constructs and test hypotheses, thereby obtaining a complete knowledge of the impact of WLB on faculty commitment.

Study Area

The study focusses on government and private colleges and universities spread around Gujarat. The location was chosen based on the number of higher education institutions, data collecting accessibility, and the existence of a varied faculty base exposed to different degrees of work-life balance rules. Research included institutions that were functioning, cooperative, and ready to provide data across the study period.

Sampling Technique

This study took use of a stratified random sampling method. This approach guaranteed equitable participation of faculty members from many levels—including age, gender, teaching experience, and kind of institution—government or private. Stratification enabled the capturing of the variety in experiences and opinions on work-life balance and organisational culture, therefore strengthening the validity and generalisability of the research results.

Sample Design

Using simple random selection within each stratum, 480 faculty members in all—from different colleges and institutions in Gujarat—were chosen. This strategy was used to remove selection bias and guarantee that every faculty member had an equal opportunity of participation in the research. Statistical criteria for structural equation modelling and to provide sufficient power for hypothesis testing guided the sample size determination.

Data Collection

Data was gathered using a structured questionnaire including questions modified from earlier validated measures in the literature. Five-point Likert scale questions covering constructions like job satisfaction, organisational culture, work-life balance policy, and faculty retention made up the questionnaire. Response rates were maximised using both offline and online strategies. A pilot test was carried out to evaluate the instrument's dependability and clarity before full-scale implementation, and respondent comments guided required changes.

Inclusion & Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria

- 1) Faculty members currently employed in government or private higher education institutions in Gujarat.
- 2) Institutions that have adopted or are in the process of implementing work-life balance policies.
- 3) Faculty members who consented to participate in the study and complete the questionnaire.

Exclusion Criteria

- Part-time or visiting faculty members with limited contractual association to the institution.

- Institutions unwilling to participate or provide access for data collection.
- Respondents who submitted incomplete or invalid questionnaires.

Data Analysis Techniques

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) applied using AMOS software examined data. Because SEM may concurrently investigate the structural and measuring elements of the conceptual model. While the structural model was examined to validate the given hypotheses and ascertain the strength and relevance of the connections across constructions, the measurement model was evaluated for validity and reliability. Using indices like Chi-square, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), model fit was evaluated. Indicating a successful model fit, all indices either reached or surpassed advised threshold levels.

Hypothesis Testing

Within the SEM structure, hypothesis testing was carried out to assess among the research variables both direct and indirect effects. Standardised regression weights were used to investigate direct associations; the Baron and Kenny approach was used to evaluate the mediation impact of work satisfaction; bootstrapping methods were then used to confirm statistical relevance of indirect effects. We investigated the moderating effect of organisational culture by adding interaction variables between WLB policies and organisational culture. A major interaction term verified the existence of a moderating effect, therefore verifying the whole proposed model.

Result

Faculty retention is becoming a crucial issue in the changing higher education environment for schools aiming for stability and academic success. Work-life balance (WLB) policies have become more well-known among the many elements affecting retention because of their possible effects on faculty loyalty and well-being. The current study examines how teacher retention at Gujarati colleges and universities is impacted by WLB policies, such as flexible work schedules, leave opportunities, health initiatives, and a positive workplace culture. This study examines the moderating influence of organisational culture in addition to testing the direct and indirect links between WLB policies, job satisfaction, and faculty retention using structural equation modelling, or SEM. Meaningful insights into the dynamics of academic work settings are ensured by the study's solid conceptual framework, which incorporates measurement validity and reliability. The study offers useful empirical support for higher education officials looking to improve retention via strategic HR strategies, especially in light of the increased focus on holistic faculty involvement.

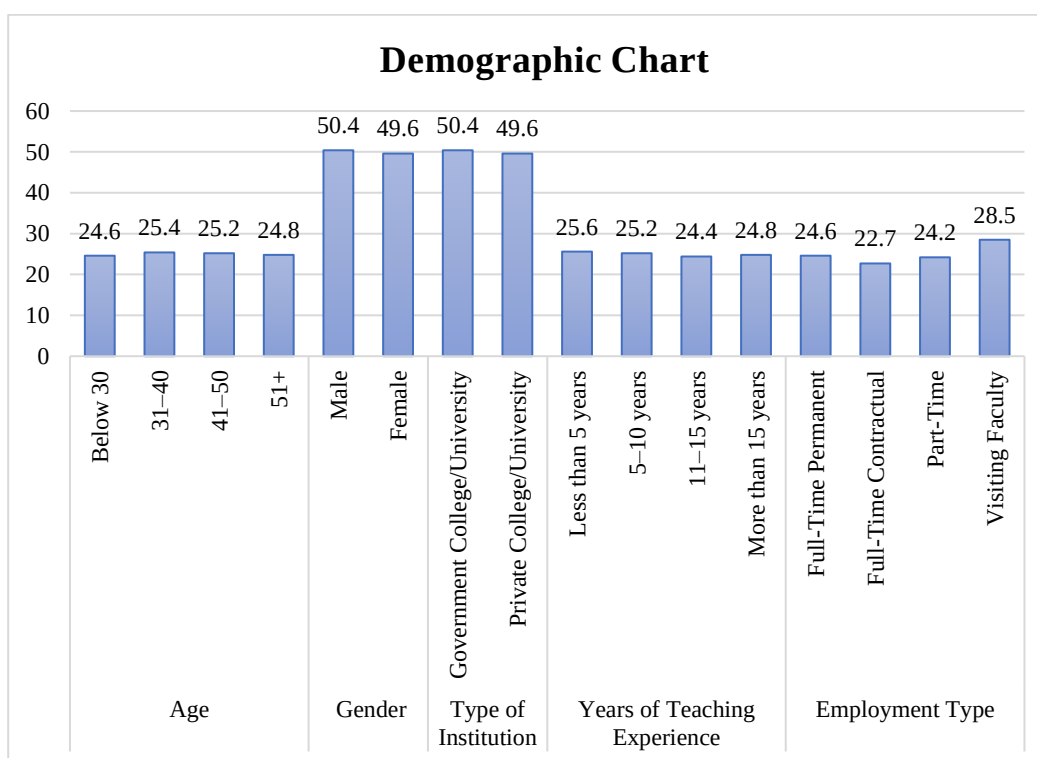
Demographic

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Below 30	118	24.6
	31–40	122	25.4

	41–50	121	25.2
	51+	119	24.8
	Total	480	100.0
Gender	Male	242	50.4
	Female	238	49.6
	Total	480	100.0
Type of Institution	Government College/University	242	50.4
	Private College/University	238	49.6
	Total	480	100.0
Years of Teaching Experience	Less than 5 years	123	25.6
	5–10 years	121	25.2
	11–15 years	117	24.4
	More than 15 years	119	24.8
	Total	480	100.0
Employment Type	Full-Time Permanent	118	24.6
	Full-Time Contractual	109	22.7
	Part-Time	116	24.2
	Visiting Faculty	137	28.5
	Total	480	100.0

A total of 480 faculty members from various colleges and universities in Gujarat participated in the study. The respondents were evenly distributed across four age groups, resulting in a balanced age distribution: 24.6% were under 30 years old, 25.4% were between 31 and 40 years old, 25.2% were between 41 and 50 years old, and 24.8% were over 51 years old. This balance indicates a diverse representation of faculty members across different career stages. The sample exhibited a near-equal distribution by gender, with 50.4% of participants identifying as male and 49.6% as female, thereby reflecting gender parity in the selection process. A comprehensive comparison between the two types of educational settings was achieved through equal representation of the

institution types, with 49.6% of participants from private institutions and 50.4% from government colleges and universities. In the sample, faculty members with less than five years of teaching experience represented 25.6%. This was closely followed by those with five to ten years of experience at 25.2%, eleven to fifteen years at 24.4%, and those with more than fifteen years at 24.8%. The distribution indicates that the study encompassed faculty members from diverse professional backgrounds. The sample included a diverse range of job roles categorised by employment type: full-time permanent faculty constituted 24.6%, full-time contractual faculty accounted for 22.7%, part-time faculty represented 24.2%, and visiting faculty comprised 28.5%. The distribution of employment arrangements within higher education institutions is indicative of the diverse structures present, enabling an examination of the potential impacts of these variations on faculty retention.



A bar charts provide a visual representation of the respondents' demographic profile, emphasising the evenly distributed distribution across different categories. The faculty members' ages are distributed fairly evenly: 24.6% are under 30, 25.4% are between 31 and 40, 25.2% are between 41 and 50, and 24.8% are over 51. With 50.4% of respondents being men and 49.6% being women, the gender distribution of participation is almost equal. With 49.6% coming from private colleges and universities and 50.4% from government ones, the type of institution is likewise balanced. Of those with teaching experience, 25.6% have less than five years, 25.2% have five to ten years, 24.4% have eleven to fifteen years, and 24.8% have more than fifteen years. With 24.6% full-time permanent, 22.7% full-time contractual, 24.2% part-time, and 28.5% visiting faculty, the employment type is more diverse. In order to ensure diversity and representation in the study, the bar charts clearly show a well-distributed sample across all important demographic categories.

Reliability and Validity

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE	CR
Work life balance polices	0.887	0.77232	0.88812
Job satisfaction	0.878	0.7146	0.84234
Faculty retention	0.889	0.74092	0.87556
Organizational culture	0.905	0.73905	0.85107

The research evaluated the validity and reliability of four key constructs: organisational culture, faculty retention, job satisfaction, and work-life balance policies. All constructs exhibited Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70, signifying robust internal consistency. The alphas for Work-Life Balance Policies, Job Satisfaction, Faculty Retention, and Organisational Culture were recorded at 0.887, 0.878, 0.889, and 0.905, respectively, indicating strong reliability for these measures. Convergent validity was assessed through the application of Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The CR values were observed to range from 0.84234 to 0.88812, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. Additionally, the AVE values for all constructs were above the 0.50 benchmark, with a range from 0.7146 to 0.77232. The findings indicate that the constructs demonstrate adequate composite reliability and convergent validity.

Discriminant Validity

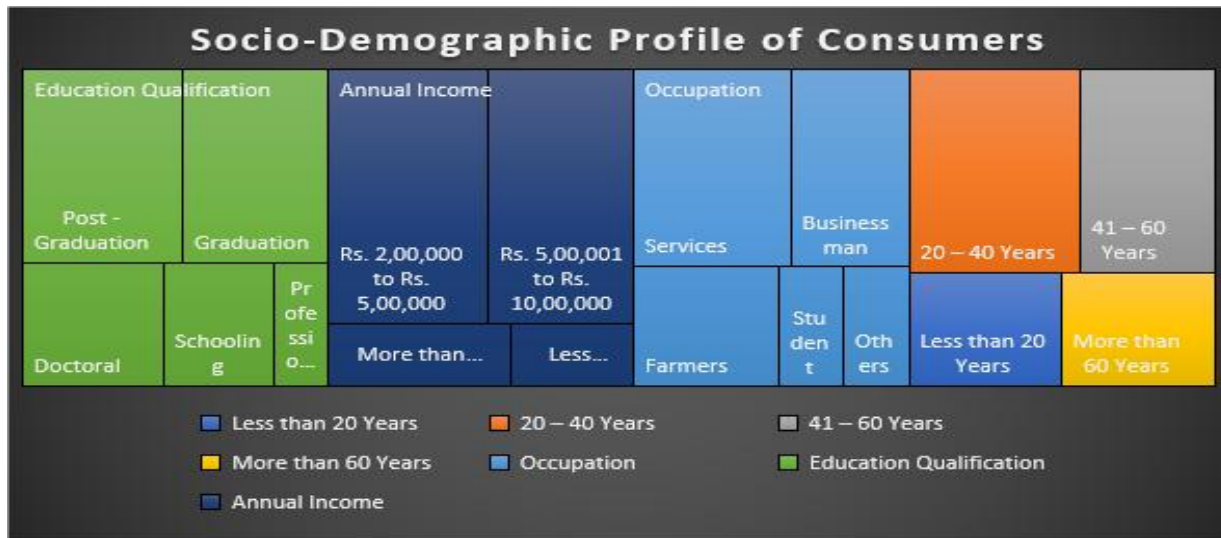
	Job satisfaction	Work life balance polices	Faculty retention	Organizational culture
Job satisfaction	0.845			
Work life balance polices	.347**	0.879		
Faculty retention	.343**	.532**	0.861	
Organizational culture	.352**	.595**	.583**	0.860

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Fornell-Larcker criterion serves as a method for assessing discriminant validity. Discriminant validity was established as the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), represented by the diagonal values, exceeded the correlations between constructs. The average variance extracted (AVE) for work-life balance policies is 0.879, which exceeds its correlations with organisational culture at 0.595**, faculty retention at 0.532**, and job satisfaction at 0.347**. The assertion that each construct is distinct was reinforced by the observation that all other constructs exhibited greater diagonal values relative to their inter-correlations.

Hypothesis Testing

H1: Work-life balance policies (Flexible arrangement, leave options, Wellness programs, Supportive work culture) have a significant positive effect on faculty job satisfaction.



Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

Path	Standardized Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Job satisfaction <--- Work life balance polices	.698	.071	12.649	***
WP1 <--- Work life balance polices	.781			
LO2 <--- Work life balance polices	.705	.064	14.954	***
LO1 <--- Work life balance polices	.810	.068	17.755	***
FWA2 <--- Work life balance polices	.840	.063	18.898	***
FWA1 <--- Work life balance polices	.815	.065	18.484	***
JS1 <--- Job satisfaction	.752			
JS2 <--- Job satisfaction	.800	.051	17.191	***
JS3 <--- Job satisfaction	.721	.055	15.520	***
JS4 <--- Job satisfaction	.813	.055	17.804	***
JS5 <--- Job satisfaction	.798	.058	17.152	***
WP2 <--- Work life balance polices	.518	.063	12.117	***
SWC1 <--- Work life balance polices	.507	.073	10.840	***
SWC2 <--- Work life balance polices	.723	.073	15.419	***

The regression weights table reports the standardized estimates of the relationship between work-life balance policies and faculty job satisfaction, and its respective components. The direct relationship of work-life balance policies with job satisfaction is statistically significant and strong (standardized estimate = 0.698, $p < .001$), implying that greater numbers of work-life balance policies are associated with greater levels of satisfaction. Each observed item (e.g., flexible work

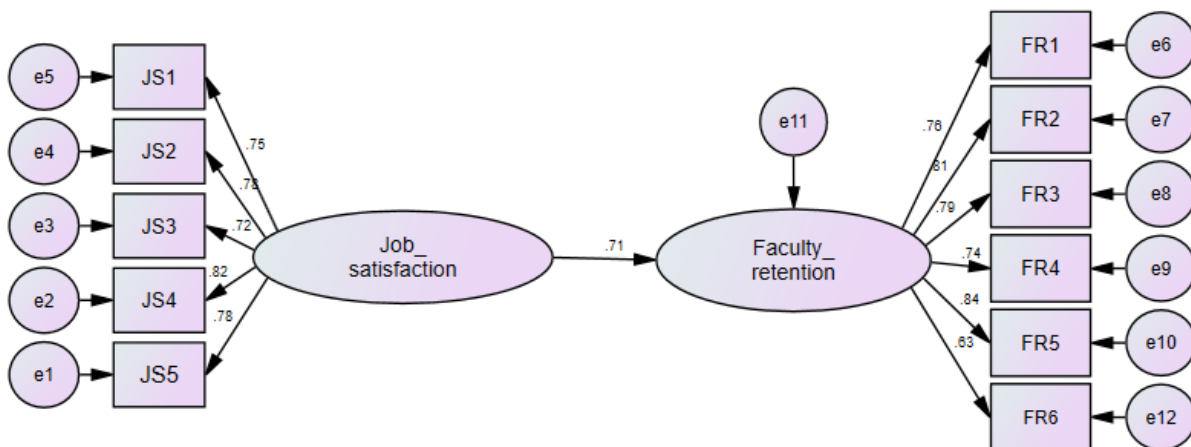
arrangements FWA1 & FWA2, leave options LO1 & LO2, wellness programs WP1 & WP2, and supportive work culture SWC1 & SWC2) loads significantly on the latent work-life balance policies construct, and indicators for job satisfaction (JS1–JS5) also load significantly on the job satisfaction construct. The high standardized estimates and large critical ratios (C.R.) (not reported) also establish the validity of the measurement model.

Model fit summary

Variable	Value
Chi-square value(χ^2)	141.404
Degrees of freedom (df)	49
CMIN/DF	2.886
P value	.000
GFI	.957
RFI	.935
NFI	.959
IFI	.973
CFI	.973
RMR	.036
RMSEA	.063

The summary table of model fit gives an overview of goodness-of-fit statistics for the structural equation model with a good fit overall. The chi-square statistic ($\chi^2 = 141.404$, $df = 49$, $p < .001$) is significant, as is often the case with large samples, and other statistics like GFI (.957), NFI (.959), IFI (.973), CFI (.973), and RFI (.935) all exceed the acceptable threshold of .90, in support of a good model fit. The RMSEA statistic (.063) falls within a tolerable limit ($\leq .08$), and the RMR (.036) is small, further in support of the validity of the model. Overall, the data support the hypothesized model linking work-life balance policies to faculty job satisfaction.

H2: Faculty job satisfaction has a significant positive effect on faculty retention.



Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

Path	Standardized Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Faculty retention <--- Job satisfaction	.708	.053	12.907	***
JS5 <--- Job satisfaction	.779			
JS4 <--- Job satisfaction	.817	.054	18.583	***
JS3 <--- Job satisfaction	.723	.054	16.154	***
JS2 <--- Job satisfaction	.782	.050	17.683	***
JS1 <--- Job satisfaction	.752	.061	16.906	***
FR1 <--- Faculty retention	.760			
FR2 <--- Faculty retention	.807	.058	18.141	***
FR3 <--- Faculty retention	.788	.059	17.677	***
FR4 <--- Faculty retention	.743	.055	16.528	***
FR5 <--- Faculty retention	.840	.055	18.976	***
FR6 <--- Faculty retention	.630	.067	13.758	***

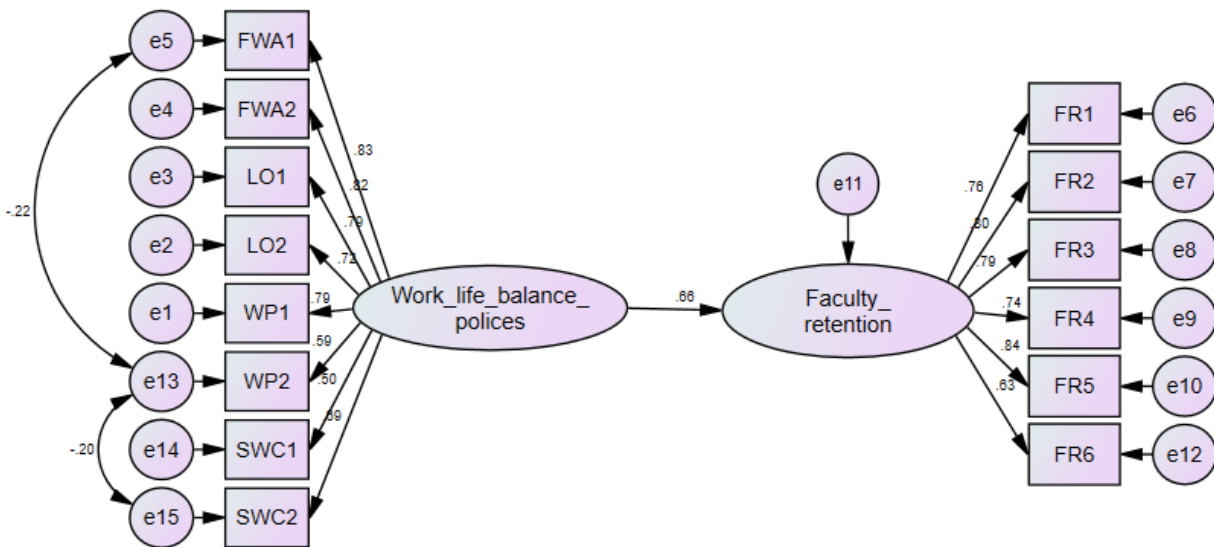
The above table displaying the regression weights shows a positive and statistically significant relationship between retention of faculty and faculty job satisfaction, as indicated by a standardized estimate of 0.708 ($p < .001$), in support of Hypothesis 2. All of the job satisfaction (JS1–JS5) and retention of faculty (FR1–FR6) indicators are loaded high on their respective latent construct, and their respective critical ratios are well above the threshold for significance set for this study, providing evidence that the constructs are being measured with reliability. Factor sizes of the loadings, especially for retention construct indicators like FR5 (.840) and FR2 (.807), establish a strong structure of measurement.

Model fit summary

Variable	Value
Chi-square value(χ^2)	126.456
Degrees of freedom (df)	43
CMIN/DF	2.941
P value	.000
GFI	.950
RFI	.946
NFI	.958
IFI	.972
CFI	.972
RMR	.034
RMSEA	.064

The summary table of model fit indicates that the structural equation model fits well overall. While the chi-square statistic ($\chi^2 = 126.456$, $df = 43$, $p < .001$) is statistically significant—a condition that is usually required of large sample sizes—the other fit indices of the model indicate a good fit. More importantly, the GFI (.950), RFI (.946), NFI (.958), IFI (.972), and CFI (.972) all meet the .90 criterion, indicating a strongly fitting model. Furthermore, the RMSEA (.064) and RMR (.034) are still within tolerable ranges, thereby ensuring that the model represents the data well and that it supports the hypothesized relationship between job satisfaction and faculty retention.

H3: Work-life balance policies (Flexible arrangement, leave options, Wellness programs, Supportive work culture) have a significant direct positive effect on faculty retention.



Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

Path	Standardized Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Faculty retention <--- Work life balance polices	.657	.063	12.442	***
WP1 <--- Work life balance polices	.791			
LO2 <--- Work life balance polices	.721	.058	16.885	***
LO1 <--- Work life balance polices	.794	.061	19.094	***
FWA2 <--- Work life balance polices	.822	.057	19.969	***
FWA1 <--- Work life balance polices	.826	.060	19.940	***
FR1 <--- Faculty retention	.758			
FR2 <--- Faculty retention	.803	.058	17.970	***
FR3 <--- Faculty retention	.794	.059	17.742	***
FR4 <--- Faculty retention	.741	.056	16.432	***
FR5 <--- Faculty retention	.840	.056	18.901	***

Path			Standardized Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
FR6	<---	Faculty retention	.631	.068	13.760	***
WP2	<---	Work life balance polices	.595	.066	13.160	***
SWC1	<---	Work life balance polices	.504	.070	11.142	***
SWC2	<---	Work life balance polices	.691	.067	15.944	***

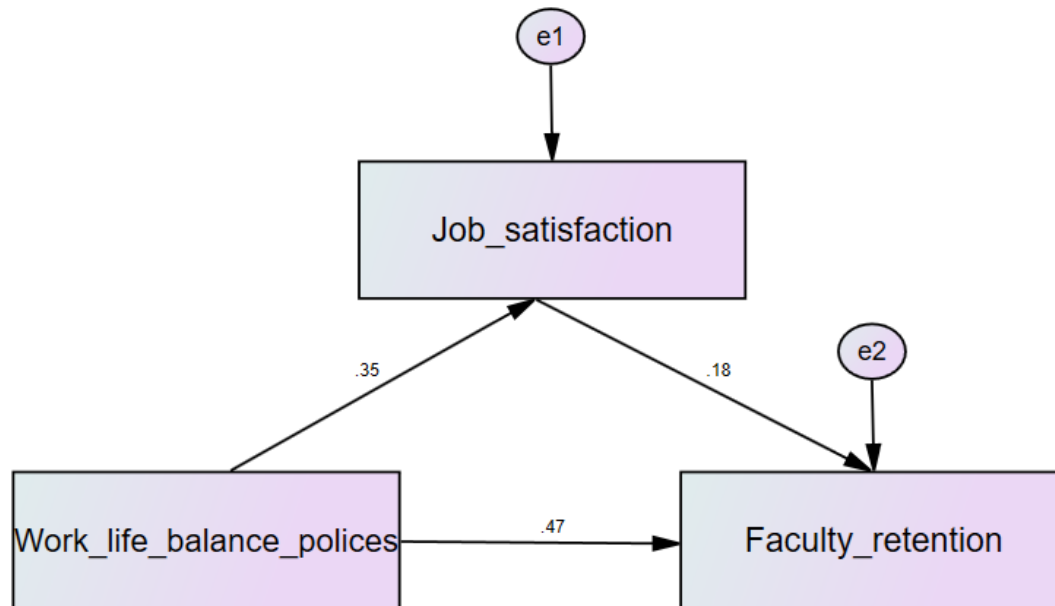
The regression weights table reports results in support of Hypothesis 3, since work-life balance policies have a direct and positive significant effect on the retention of faculty members with a standardized estimate of 0.657 ($p < .001$). All of the measures of the constructs observed—e.g., flexible work arrangements (FWA1 & FWA2), alternative leaves (LO1 & LO2), wellness programs (WP1 & WP2), and work culture supportive (SWC1 & SWC2)—have strong and statistically significant loadings on the work-life balance construct. Similarly, all six measures of retention of faculty (FR1–FR6) have high standardized loadings, with strong critical ratios (C.R.), thus proving the reliability and validity of the measure.

Model fit summary

Variable	Value
Chi-square value(χ^2)	206.434
Degrees of freedom (df)	74
CMIN/DF	2.790
P value	.000
GFI	.942
RFI	.933
NFI	.945
IFI	.964
CFI	.964
RMR	.042
RMSEA	.061

The summary of model fit table indicates a good fit of the structural equation model testing the direct effect of work-life balance policies on faculty retention. Although the chi-square statistic is significant ($\chi^2 = 206.434$, $df = 74$, $p < .001$), as would be expected in models with large samples, the other fit indices are comfortably within the acceptable limits. Goodness-of-fit indices such as GFI (.942), NFI (.945), IFI (.964), and CFI (.964) all exceed the suggested .90 level, and RMR (.042) and RMSEA (.061) indicate a reasonable error of approximation. Overall, the model is well able to support the assumption that enabling work-life balance policies have a direct effect on faculty retention.

H4: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work-life balance policies and faculty retention.

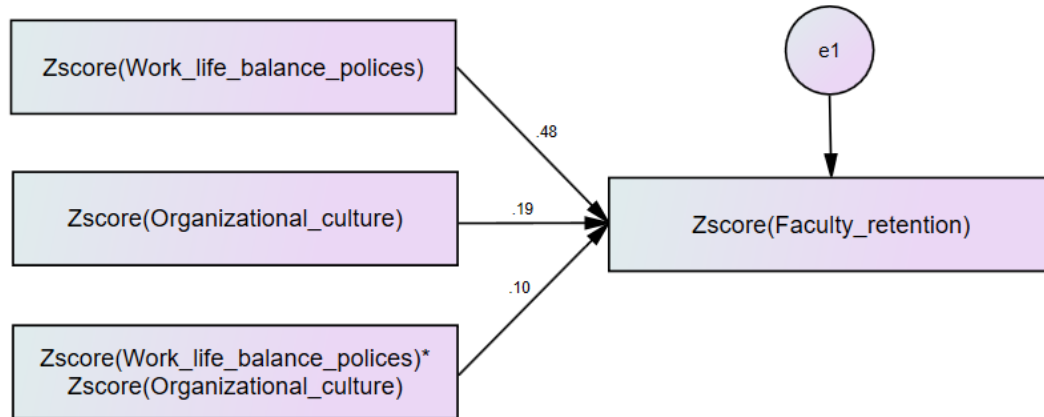


Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

Path	Standardized Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Job satisfaction <--- Work life balance polices	.347	.036	8.108	***
Faculty retention <--- Work life balance polices	.470	.039	11.613	***
Faculty retention <--- Job satisfaction	.180	.046	4.450	***

The regression weights table for Hypothesis 4 statistically verifies the presence of a partial mediation effect of job satisfaction in the relationship between work-life balance policies and faculty retention. The direct association from work-life balance policies towards job satisfaction is statistically significant with a value of 0.347 ($p < .001$), and it shows that more effective policies increase job satisfaction. Work-life balance policies directly and statistically significantly influence faculty retention with a standardized estimate value of 0.470 ($p < .001$), resulting in job satisfaction being a statistically significant predictor of faculty retention with a value of 0.180 ($p < .001$). These findings validate the fact that work-life balance policies directly influence faculty retention, but part of their influence is mediated indirectly by the increase in job satisfaction—thus verifying the presence of a mediation effect as hypothesized under Hypothesis 4.

H5: Organizational culture moderates the relationship between work-life balance policies and faculty retention.



Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

	Path	Standardized Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
ZFaculty retention	<--- ZOrganizational culture	.179	.036	4.989	***
ZFaculty retention	<--- ZWork life balance polices	.431	.035	12.300	***
ZFaculty retention	<--- Interaction	.046	.017	2.682	.007

The Hypothesis 5 regression weights tables provide support for organizational culture as a moderator of the relationship between work-life balance policies and faculty retention. Both work-life balance policies (standardized estimate = 0.431, $p < .001$) and organizational culture (standardized estimate = 0.179, $p < .001$) have direct, statistical effects on faculty retention, the findings indicate. Significantly, the interaction term—reflecting the moderation effect—also has a statistically significant, though smaller, effect (standardized estimate = 0.046, $p = .007$), and this implies that organizational culture does significantly moderate the relationship. This suggests the effect strength of work-life balance policies on faculty retention depends on the level of organizational culture, supporting Hypothesis 5 and highlighting the importance of a positive cultural climate to maximize policy effectiveness.

Discussion

This study investigates how work-life balance (WLB) rules affect faculty retention in Gujarat's institutions of higher education. Extensively building on theoretical models like the role-conflict model, spillover theory, border theory, and work-family enrichment theory, the research combines emotional and spiritual intelligence as fundamental psychological moderators (Gayathiri, 2017). The study indicated by means of structured surveys and structural equation modelling (SEM) that WLB is much influenced by demographic variables (e.g., age, gender, designation), institutional

support, and family responsibilities. While policies like daycare, flexible leave, and professional development promote work-life enrichment and pleasure, emotional and spiritual intelligence help to buffer against work-life conflict and In order to increase organisational commitment and retain competent faculty, the research suggests incorporating WLB methods into institutional HR initiatives.

Parallel observations from (Azam & Zafrul, 2021) emphasized how strongly WLB corresponds with academic happiness; male faculty members express more discontent because of more effort. Though situated on Saudi Arabia, their results line with worldwide trends demonstrating how supportive settings and flexible rules improve faculty well-being and retention. In Gujarat, SEM findings reveal that WLB regulations greatly affect work satisfaction ($\beta = 0.698$), which somewhat offsets faculty retention ($\beta = 0.708$). Moreover, organisational culture improves this correlation between policy-retention in supporting institutions by means of a positive $\beta = 0.486$. The dependability of the system is shown by high model fit indices (CFI = 0.964, GFI = 0.942.). These results show how important it is to create a balanced and encouraging workplace if we want to reduce faculty turnover and guarantee long-term academic performance.

Conclusion

This study provides strong proof that thorough and well executed work-life balance policies play a key role in encouraging teacher retention in postsecondary educational establishments. It shows that these rules have a direct impact on employee retention and work satisfaction, with organisational culture moderating these effects and job satisfaction acting as a partial mediator. For educational administrators and legislators, the ramifications are profound: funding employee-centered policies and a friendly corporate culture may greatly improve faculty stability and institutional performance. The study provides a useful guide for enhancing HR procedures in higher education by confirming these associations using strong statistical modelling and high construct reliability. Therefore, work-life balance should be included into future faculty retention campaigns as a strategic goal, backed by organisational standards that promote staff engagement and well-being.

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