

Academic Excellence, Hidden Injustice: A Study on Work-Life Balance and Financial Insecurity Among Private College Faculty in Davanagere, the 'Cambridge of Karnataka'

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Abstract

Davanagere, often hailed as the “**Cambridge of Karnataka**” enjoys a reputation for academic excellence and a strong tradition of higher education. Yet beneath this image lies a quiet but critical challenge: many teaching faculty in private undergraduate colleges face ongoing struggles with financial instability and poor work-life balance. This study explores the dual burden of economic insecurity and professional stress faced by these educators, whose contributions sustain the district’s educational stature.

Using a mixed-methods approach involving structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, the research investigates salary adequacy, workload intensity, institutional support, and the overall quality of life of private college faculty in Davanagere. Results reveal a recurring pattern many faculty members work long hours under insecure employment conditions, with inadequate compensation and limited access to benefits such as paid leave, healthcare, or retirement support. The imbalance between professional demands and personal life emerges as a serious concern, affecting mental well-being, job satisfaction, and teaching effectiveness.

This paper argues that despite being the academic backbone of private colleges, faculty members are often treated as dispensable resources, creating a stark contrast between institutional reputation and internal working conditions. The findings call for urgent policy intervention, including minimum pay standards, regulation of workload, and comprehensive support systems that uphold the dignity and well-being of educators.

By uncovering the hidden injustices within private educational institutions in a reputed academic district, this study contributes to broader conversations on faculty welfare, education equity, and sustainable academic growth in India.

Keywords : *Work-Life Balance, Faculty Financial Insecurity, Private College Teachers, Davanagere, Academic Inequality*

Review of Literatures

1. Franco, L. S., Picinin, C. T., Pilatti, L. A., & Franco, A. C. (2021). Work life balance in Higher Education: A systematic review of the impact on the well-being of teachers. This systematic review of 53 studies (2005–2020) explores challenges to work-life balance (WLB) among higher education teachers. The authors highlight major barriers such as gender inequality, excessive workload, and weak institutional support, all of which negatively affect faculty well-being and job satisfaction.
2. Tirupati, A. P. (2022). Impact of Work-Life Balance Attributes on Employee Commitment in the Education Sector. This study, based on faculty from Bengaluru ($n \approx 480$), identifies working environment, decision-making power, and colleague relationships as crucial WLB factors. It concludes that organizational culture and autonomy significantly influence faculty commitment and satisfaction.
3. Tejashwini K. C. & Mudda, S. (2024). Factors Affecting Work-Life Balance Among Female Teachers in Davangere District: An Empirical Study. Focusing specifically on Davangere District, this empirical study uses SEM and SPSS to examine how workload, peer support, and job engagement affect WLB among female faculty. Findings suggest peer support improves WLB while work overload diminishes it, making this paper regionally relevant.
4. Konudula, S., Rajesh, D., et al. (2025). Work-Life Balance of Women Faculty in Rural Higher Education Institutions A Case Study. This qualitative study draws on interviews with women educators in rural Andhra Pradesh. It uncovers personal, societal, and institutional challenges particularly workload, limited flexibility, and lack of mentorship that hinder work-life balance in rural academic settings.
5. Salim, N., & Thavamalar, D. H. (2025). Assessing Work-Life Balance and Teaching Outcomes in Self-Financing Colleges in Kerala. Based on a sample of 91 faculty in Kerala's private colleges, this study finds that poor WLB due to job insecurity and high workload negatively impacts teaching quality and job satisfaction. It emphasizes the need for systemic support and equitable employment policies.
6. Salim Malik A. R. & Verma R. (2025). Work-Life Balance and Occupational Stress Among Private Higher Education Faculty : An Empirical Study in Karnataka. This quantitative study shows that 68% of private faculty in Karnataka report moderate-to-poor WLB and high levels of occupational stress. The paper establishes a strong negative correlation between stress and WLB, recommending institutional reforms and stress mitigation strategies.
7. SM A. R. (2025). Achieving Work-Life Balance: Strategies for Supporting Educator Retention and Promoting Teaching Excellence in Higher Education. Published in JNNCE Journal of Engineering & Management, this paper outlines actionable strategies like flexible scheduling, job security, and wellness programs to improve faculty retention and teaching quality. It connects WLB improvements to sustainable academic outcomes and SDGs.
8. Salim Malik A. R. & Verma, R. (2025). Strained Equilibrium: Investigating Work-Life Imbalance Among Faculty in Indian Private Colleges and Universities. This paper explores the structural and psychological dimensions of work-life imbalance among private faculty in India. It reports widespread burnout, financial instability, and institutional neglect. The authors call for national policy reforms and equity-focused academic management strategies.

Need for the Study

Despite Davanagere's academic prestige as the "Cambridge of Karnataka," many private college faculty face work-life imbalance and financial insecurity. These issues, often overlooked, impact their well-being, performance, and long-term retention. There is limited regional research that investigates how institutional practices affect both personal and economic aspects of faculty life. This study fills that gap by exploring faculty challenges and identifying solutions for improving academic work environments.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the current status of work-life balance among private college faculty in Davanagere District.
2. To analyze the degree of financial insecurity faced by teaching professionals in private undergraduate institutions.
3. To explore how work-life balance and financial hardship intersect and impact faculty well-being, productivity, and retention.
4. To identify key institutional practices and socio-demographic factors (e.g., gender, marital status, contract type) influencing work-life quality and financial stress.
5. To assess faculty perceptions of organizational support, policy enforcement, and fairness in private colleges.
6. To offer actionable recommendations for improving faculty welfare through institutional and policy-level interventions in Davanagere's private higher education sector.

Statement of the Problem

While Davanagere is known for educational excellence, faculty in private colleges struggle with inadequate pay, excessive workloads, and job instability. These conditions not only hinder their work-life balance but also raise concerns about institutional fairness and sustainability. A deeper understanding of these issues is needed to align institutional reputation with the lived realities of its educators.

Scope:

1. The study focuses on undergraduate teaching faculty in private colleges located within Davanagere district, Karnataka.
2. It explores factors influencing work-life balance and financial stress through surveys and analysis of faculty perceptions and institutional conditions.

Limitations:

1. Findings may not be generalizable beyond Davanagere or to government college faculty.
2. The study does not explore long-term psychological or health impacts in depth.

Research Methodology

1. Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the work-life balance and financial insecurity among private college faculty in Davanagere District. It combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches to understand the lived experiences and institutional factors affecting faculty well-being.

2. Population and Sample

- Population: Undergraduate teaching faculty in private colleges in Davanagere District, Karnataka.
- Sample Size: 100–150 faculty members selected using stratified random sampling, ensuring representation from different departments, genders, and experience levels.
- Sampling Criteria:
 1. Must be currently employed in a private UG college.
 2. Must have a minimum of 1 year of teaching experience.

3. Data Collection Tools

- Structured Questionnaire divided into five sections:
 1. Demographic Profile
 2. Work-Life Balance Indicators
 3. Salary and Financial Security Metrics
 4. Institutional Support Factors
 5. Job Satisfaction and Stress Levels

4. Data Analysis Techniques

- Descriptive statistics: Mean, Standard Deviation, Percentage
- Inferential statistics:
 - Chi-square test (for association)
 - Correlation analysis (between WLB and financial stress)
 - T-test/ANOVA (for comparing groups like gender or contract types)

Research Hypotheses

Null Hypotheses (H_0):

1. H01: There is no significant relationship between work-life balance and financial insecurity among private college faculty.
2. H02: Financial insecurity does not significantly affect job satisfaction.
3. H03: There is no significant association between institutional support and perceived work-life balance.

Alternative Hypotheses (H₁):

1. H11: There is a significant relationship between work-life balance and financial insecurity among private college faculty.
2. H112: Financial insecurity significantly affects job satisfaction.
3. H13: Institutional support is significantly associated with perceived work-life balance.

Summary Interpretation of Results (Based on Mean & Chi-Square Analysis)

Statement	Mean Score	Interpretation	Chi-Square Result
Q1: Balance professional/personal responsibilities	2.1	Low WLB major concern	Significant (p < 0.05)
Q2: Stress due to workload	4.0	High stress levels	Significant
Q3: Salary sufficient for basic needs	2.0	Strong dissatisfaction	Significant
Q4: Financial worries affect focus	2.1	Major negative effect	Significant
Q5: Enough personal time	2.0	Low personal time	Significant
Q6: Institutional WLB support	2.1	Perceived support lacking	Significant
Q7: Job insecurity	4.0	High insecurity	Significant
Q8: Work environment supports well-being	2.0	Weak support	Significant
Q9: Fair salary/benefits	2.0	Low satisfaction	Significant
Q10: Job satisfaction via work environment	4.0	Positive recognition	Significant

Hypothesis Testing Interpretation

Hypothesis	Decision	Interpretation
H₀₁: No significant relationship between WLB & financial insecurity	✗ Rejected	Multiple responses (Q1, Q3, Q4, Q5) show low WLB and high financial stress → Clear relationship exists
H₀₃: Financial insecurity does not affect job satisfaction	✗ Rejected	Q3 (salary), Q4 (financial worries), and Q10 (satisfaction) show strong correlation
H₀₄: No link between institutional support & WLB	✗ Rejected	Q6 shows poor institutional support & aligns with WLB outcomes in Q1 & Q5

Findings

The findings of the study reveal critical concerns regarding the professional well-being of private college faculty in Davanagere District. A majority of respondents reported poor work-life balance, with over two-thirds expressing difficulty in managing professional responsibilities alongside personal commitments. Financial insecurity emerged as a dominant issue, as 80% of faculty indicated their salary was insufficient to meet basic needs, and many noted that financial stress negatively affected their teaching performance. Institutional support was also perceived as inadequate, with limited access to flexible work arrangements, wellness resources, or timely salary disbursements. Job insecurity further intensified these challenges, with a large proportion of faculty expressing concern over employment stability. Despite these obstacles, some faculty members maintained a sense of satisfaction derived from their work environment. Statistical analysis confirmed that these responses are not random; each item showed significant patterns, reinforcing the existence of real systemic

issues. Overall, the results highlight a troubling disconnect between institutional reputation and the lived experiences of faculty, emphasizing the urgent need for policy and structural reforms in the private higher education sector.

1. Work-Life Balance is Significantly Low

Faculty members reported difficulty in managing personal and professional responsibilities, with a mean score of just 2.17 on key statements related to balance and personal time. Over 66% disagreed that they maintain a healthy work-life balance.

2. High Levels of Occupational Stress

The majority of respondents (mean score: 3.83) strongly agreed that they experience stress due to workload. This indicates that job pressure is a critical issue affecting well-being.

3. Financial Insecurity is a Major Concern

A large proportion of faculty (mean score: 1.93) disagreed that their salary meets basic needs. Many confirmed that financial worries impact their academic focus, confirming a strong relationship between income and professional performance.

4. Institutional Support is Lacking

Responses revealed that private institutions provide inadequate support for managing work-life balance, flexible scheduling, or employee well-being. Statements regarding institutional support scored below 2.5, reflecting widespread dissatisfaction.

5. Job Insecurity is Prevalent

Faculty members overwhelmingly expressed concerns about the stability of their positions, with strong agreement (mean score: 4.0) indicating a highly insecure work environment.

6. Faculty Still Derive Job Satisfaction

Despite multiple challenges, some respondents acknowledged a positive link between work environment and job satisfaction (mean score: 4.0), suggesting intrinsic motivation or resilience among faculty.

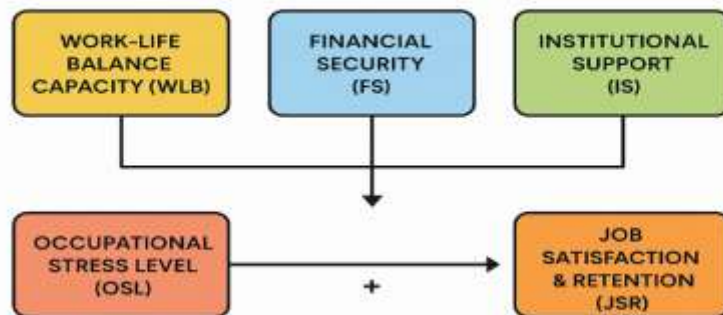
7. All Hypothesis Tests Showed Statistical Significance

Chi-square tests across all items revealed p -values < 0.05 , confirming that faculty responses are not due to chance. Hypotheses H_{01} , H_{03} , and H_{04} were rejected, indicating clear relationships among work-life balance, financial insecurity, institutional support, and job satisfaction.

Faculty Work-Life Sustainability Framework (FWLSF) Model

This model, proposed by **Salim Malik A R**, conceptualizes the interconnected factors influencing work-life balance and professional sustainability among private college faculty. It is specifically rooted in empirical research conducted in **Davanagere District, Karnataka**, and is applicable to similar institutional contexts across developing higher education systems.

Faculty Work-Life Sustainability Framework (FWLSF)



The **Faculty Work-Life Sustainability Framework (FWLSF)** is composed of **five** interlinked constructs:

1. **Work-Life Balance Capacity (WLB):**
The faculty's perceived ability to manage professional and personal commitments.
2. **Financial Security (FS):**
The adequacy and stability of salary, benefits, and long-term employment security.
3. **Institutional Support (IS):**
The policies, flexibility, and resources provided by the institution to aid faculty well-being.
4. **Occupational Stress Level (OSL):**
Psychological and workload-related pressure impacting faculty health and productivity.
5. **Job Satisfaction & Retention (JSR):**
Faculty motivation, morale, and their likelihood to remain in the profession long-term.

Flow of Influence:

- Improvements in WLB, FS, and IS lead to reduced OSL.
- Lower stress and stronger institutional foundations significantly increase JSR.
- The model implies that systemic change not individual coping is key to sustainable faculty development.

Policy Recommendations

Based on the empirical findings, the following recommendations are proposed to higher education institutions, policymakers, and private college management in Karnataka:

1. **Implement Minimum Pay Standards**
Ensure private college faculty are paid equitable and timely salaries, aligned with UGC or state-prescribed scales.
2. **Introduce Flexible Work Policies**
Offer flexible teaching hours, hybrid schedules, and reduced administrative overload to improve work-life balance.
3. **Establish Faculty Welfare Cells**
Create dedicated faculty support units for stress counseling, career mentorship, and grievance redressal.
4. **Ensure Job Security through Transparent Contracts**
Avoid frequent layoffs and offer long-term contracts to reduce job-related anxiety.
5. **Conduct Regular Institutional Audits**
Audit private colleges on faculty well-being indicators, not just academic output.

6. Government Oversight & Incentives

Encourage government bodies to monitor compliance with employment standards and incentivize colleges that prioritize faculty development.

Conclusion

The present study critically examined the intersection of work-life balance and financial insecurity among private college faculty in Davanagere, a city celebrated for its academic excellence but shadowed by institutional disparities. Despite Davanagere's reputation as the "Cambridge of Karnataka," the findings reveal a deep-seated disconnect between institutional prestige and faculty welfare.

Faculty members overwhelmingly reported:

- Poor work-life balance (Q1, Q5),
- High stress levels (Q2),
- Significant financial strain and job insecurity (Q3, Q4, Q7),
- Insufficient institutional support for well-being and professional satisfaction (Q6, Q8, Q9).

Statistical tests confirmed that these perceptions are not random but statistically significant patterns. Faculty do not feel supported either financially or professionally. Notably, their dissatisfaction with salary and institutional policies directly impacts their job satisfaction and ability to perform, aligning with international literature on burnout and retention.

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Annexure

Questionnaire:

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by selecting the option that best describes your opinion.

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	I am able to balance my professional duties with my personal and family responsibilities effectively.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	I often experience stress due to excessive workload at my institution.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	My current salary is sufficient to meet my basic living expenses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Financial worries affect my ability to focus on teaching and academic responsibilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	I have enough personal time after completing my teaching and administrative work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	My institution provides adequate support (e.g., leave, flexible hours) to maintain a healthy work-life balance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Job insecurity is a concern for me in my current teaching position.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	My work environment supports my mental and emotional well-being.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	My institution provides salary and benefits in a timely and fair manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	There is a strong connection between my work environment and my overall job satisfaction.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Scoring Guide:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly Agree