

An Analytical Study of Work–Life Balance, Family Responsibilities, and Job Satisfaction Among Muslim Female Teachers in Surathkal, Dakshina Kannada District

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51583/IJLTEMAS.2025.1408000067>

Abstract: This study examines the relationship between work-life balance, family responsibilities, and job satisfaction among Muslim female teachers in Surathkal, Dakshina Kannada. It highlights how cultural, religious, and social contexts influence their dual roles as professionals and caregivers. Most respondents, early-career married women with master's degrees, reported a generally positive work-life balance. However, many experienced stresses, guilt over unmet family expectations, and felt unsupported by institutional systems. Over 60% of participants reported challenges in observing religious practices during working hours, while domestic responsibilities frequently interfered with their professional duties. Nevertheless, the teachers showed remarkable perseverance and remained deeply committed to both their careers and religious values. The study reveals gaps in institutional support and recommends flexible schedules, religious accommodations, on-site childcare, and wellness programs. These changes can foster a more inclusive and supportive work environment.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance, Muslim Female Teachers, Job Satisfaction, Family Responsibilities, Institutional Support.

I. Introduction

In today's professional landscape, the importance of work-life balance (WLB) has grown significantly, especially for women who often juggle professional responsibilities with personal and family obligations. This balance becomes even more complex for Muslim female teachers, who must navigate not only the demands of their careers but also substantial domestic responsibilities influenced by cultural and religious norms. These women frequently assume multiple roles—including that of educator, spouse, caregiver, and community member - which intensifies the challenge of maintaining equilibrium across various aspects of life. In many Muslim communities, women are traditionally expected to prioritize family and home. Yet, increasing educational attainment and financial needs have led many Muslim women to enter the workforce (Hashim & Ahmad, 2021). This dual responsibility often creates conflicting demands, contributing to stress, fatigue, and decreased job satisfaction when adequate balance is not achieved.

Teaching, by nature, is a demanding and emotionally taxing profession. Educators are often required to work extended hours, manage administrative duties, support student needs, and meet the expectations of parents and the broader community. For Muslim women, these professional responsibilities are further layered with religious commitments such as daily prayers, fasting during Ramadan, and participation in religious or community events. These intersecting roles and responsibilities can increase emotional strain and complicate efforts to maintain a healthy work-life balance (Abd Razak, Ahmad, & Jauhar, 2019).

Understanding WLB in the context of Muslim female teachers is both timely and essential. This demographic is often underrepresented in academic research, despite being uniquely impacted by the intersection of gender, religion, and culture. Their experiences call for a more nuanced and inclusive perspective in workplace policies and support systems. Recognizing the significance of faith, family, and cultural identity is crucial for designing effective institutional strategies that accommodate the needs of such educators (Ismail, Khalid, & Sulaiman, 2020).

Moreover, this research offers valuable insights for school administrators, HR professionals, and policy-makers. It underscores the need for flexible work arrangements, religious accommodations, and family-friendly policies to create supportive and inclusive work environments. As the number of working women continues to grow, particularly in diverse societies, institutional responsiveness becomes critical. Schools that prioritize work-life balance are more likely to benefit from improved job satisfaction, higher retention rates, and enhanced educational outcomes (Othman & Mohd Noor, 2019).

Finally, this study contributes to broader discussions on gender equity and religious inclusivity in the workplace, helping to challenge stereotypes and foster a deeper understanding of Muslim women's experiences in education.

Objectives of The Study

- ❖ To Examine the Influence of Work-Life Balance on Job Satisfaction.
- ❖ To Assess the Impact of Family Responsibilities on Work Performance.
- ❖ To Explore the Relationship Between Job Satisfaction and Retention.
- ❖ To Identify Socio-Cultural and Institutional Factors Affecting Work-Life Balance.
- ❖ To Investigate the Role of Workplace Support Systems in Enhancing Work-Life Balance.

Scope of The Study

The study focuses on Muslim female teachers in primary, secondary, and higher secondary schools and colleges in Surathkal, a city in Dakshina Kannada District, a suburban area with a significant Muslim population and diverse educational institutions. It examines the interplay of work-life balance, family responsibilities (e.g., childcare, household duties), and job satisfaction, exploring their influence on work performance and teacher retention, while identifying socio-cultural, religious, and institutional factors, including workplace support systems like flexible hours. The findings aim to inform policies enhancing teacher well-being and empowerment but are limited to Surathkal formal educational settings, potentially restricting generalizability to other regions or demographics.

Problem Statement

While gender-related challenges in the workplace and education have received increased scholarly attention, there is still a significant lack of research specifically exploring the work-life balance (WLB) experiences of Muslim female teachers. Much of the existing literature addresses women's WLB in broad, generalized terms, often neglecting the distinct cultural, religious, and societal factors that shape the lives of Muslim women. This oversight leads to inadequate institutional support and limited understanding of their unique circumstances. The core problem this research addresses is: How do Muslim female teachers navigate the complex demands of their professional roles, religious obligations, and societal expectations in maintaining work-life balance? Exploring this question will shed light on the specific challenges they encounter, the strategies they use to cope, and the institutional changes needed to better support them. The study underscores the pressing need for workplace policies that are both culturally aware and religiously accommodating, to create more inclusive and supportive environments for this underrepresented group.

II. Research Methodology

Research Design: The study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between work-life balance, family responsibilities, and job satisfaction. The quantitative component will involve a structured survey to collect numerical data, while the qualitative component will include semi-structured interviews to capture in-depth insights into the experiences of Muslim female teachers in Surathkal.

Study Area: The study was carried out in Surathkal, a suburban locality in Mangalore, located in the Dakshina Kannada District of Karnataka, India. This area was chosen for its concentration of educational institutions—ranging from schools to colleges—and its substantial Muslim population, making it a suitable and relevant setting for examining the experiences of the target group.

Population and Sampling: The target population included Muslim female teachers working in primary, secondary, and higher secondary schools, as well as colleges in Surathkal. To ensure statistical reliability, a sample of approximately 100 participants was selected for the quantitative survey. Additionally, for the qualitative component of the study, 15 to 20 teachers were interviewed in-depth to achieve data saturation.

Sampling Technique: Quantitative data: A stratified random sampling method was employed to ensure representation from various types of educational institutions—government, private, and aided - as well as across different teaching levels, including primary, secondary, and higher secondary/college.

Qualitative data: Purposive sampling was used to select participants with diverse backgrounds, taking into account factors such as years of teaching experience, marital status, and family structure.

Data Collection Methods: This study employed an empirical methodology, utilizing both primary and secondary data to examine the influence of work-life balance and family responsibilities on Muslim female teachers. Secondary data was obtained through an extensive review of existing literature, including journal articles, research reports, and prior studies related to work-life balance, gender roles, and cultural norms within Muslim communities.

Primary data was collected through a field survey involving Muslim female teachers from a range of educational institutions. A structured questionnaire was administered to gather information about their experiences, the challenges they face, and the coping strategies they use to manage both professional and family obligations. The primary aim of the study was to gain a deeper understanding of how these responsibilities impact their careers and overall well-being.

Limitations of The Study

The study's focus on Surathkal limits the generalizability of results to other areas. Self-reported data may cause response bias, though triangulation reduces this. The sample size, though sufficient locally, may not reflect all Muslim female teachers' experiences.

III. Literature Review

Hayman (2005) Hayman (2005) conducted a study titled "Development and Validation of a Work-Life Balance Scale" Defined work-life balance and its positive impact on well-being and job satisfaction. While foundational, this study's broad focus on general

employees across Australia lacks the specific cultural and religious context of Muslim female teachers in Surathkal, thus creating a gap in understanding how localized socio-cultural norms (e.g., family expectations, prayer schedules) influence their work-life balance.

Emslie and Hunt (2009) Emslie and Hunt (2009) explored "Gender Differences in Work-Life Balance: A Qualitative Exploration" Revealed that women experience greater work-life conflict due to societal domestic and caregiving expectations, a finding relevant to Muslim female teachers in Surathkal where cultural norms often amplify family responsibilities. However, the study's UK context, lack of focus on Muslim women or the teaching profession, and absence of religious considerations leave a gap in understanding how Surathkal's specific religious obligations (e.g., Ramadan fasting) or localized cultural expectations shape their work-life balance.

Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2018) Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2018) investigated "Teacher Burnout and Work-Life Balance: A Structural Analysis" -life balance and burnout. Identified a direct link between heavy teacher workloads, reduced work-life balance, and increased burnout, which is highly pertinent to the administrative burdens faced by teachers in Surathkal. Nevertheless, the study's Norwegian setting, lacking cultural diversity, and its omission of religious or gender-specific factors create a gap in exploring how Surathkal's socio-cultural and religious context (e.g., family-centric roles, prayer schedules) specifically impacts Muslim female teachers' work-life balance and burnout.

Syed and Ali (2011) Syed and Ali (2011) explored "Work-Family Conflict Among Muslim Women Professionals" Explored how family-centric norms and religious obligations increase work-family conflict among Muslim women professionals, directly informing the socio-cultural dynamics faced by Muslim female teachers in Surathkal. However, the Australian context, focus on non-teaching professions, and lack of exploration of India's localized cultural dynamics (e.g., Surathkal community expectations) create a research gap regarding the specific challenges faced by Muslim female teachers in Surathkal educational settings.

Kossek et al. (2011) Kossek et al. (2011) studied "Workplace Policies and Their Impact on Work-Life Balance" Demonstrated that flexible hours and counselling significantly improve work-life balance and satisfaction, guiding the investigation of support systems in Surathkal schools. Yet, the study's general employee focus, lack of attention to teachers or Muslim women, and absence of cultural context create a research gap in exploring the specific institutional challenges and effectiveness of localized support systems for Muslim female teachers in Surathkal.

IV. Major Findings

- ❖ A large proportion of respondents (48%) fall within the 30–40 age group. This suggests that the study mainly reflects the experiences of early to midcareer Muslim female teachers balancing work and family life.
- ❖ The majority (55%) of respondents are married. This highlights that most participants are managing dual responsibilities at home and in the workplace.
- ❖ 35% of respondents do not have children, while 50% have one or two children. This indicates a relatively lower childcare burden, though a significant portion still manages parental responsibilities alongside their careers.
- ❖ Nearly half of the respondents (45%) have 1–3 years of teaching experience. This reflects a largely early career demographic that may still be adapting to both job demands and personal life balance.
- ❖ A dominant majority (80%) hold a Master's degree. This shows a highly qualified group of professionals who likely have the academic grounding to handle work-related pressures.
- ❖ 70% of respondents (45% agree, 25% strongly agree) feel they maintain a good work life balance. This reflects a generally positive perception of their ability to manage both personal and professional responsibilities.
- ❖ 55% of respondents agree that their work schedule allows quality family time. This suggests that a majority feel supported by their current work structure to maintain family relationships.
- ❖ 55% of respondents (45% agree, 10% strongly agree) say work intrudes on personal time. This points to blurred boundaries between work and home life, potentially affecting mental wellbeing and family dynamics.
- ❖ 70% of respondents (45% agree, 25% strongly agree) experience stress while balancing work and life. This reveals that stress is a widespread concern among Muslim female teachers in managing dual roles.
- ❖ 45% of respondents (25% disagree, 20% strongly disagree) feel unsupported by institutions. This indicates a critical gap in organizational policies or practices aiding work life balance for teachers.
- ❖ 60% of respondents (35% strongly agree, 25% agree) feel guilty when work affects family duties. This underscores the emotional toll that balancing professional and familial expectations takes on these educators.
- ❖ 60% of respondents maintain religious practices despite other commitments. This suggests strong personal discipline and prioritization of faith even amidst professional and family demands.

- ❖ 65% of respondents (40% agree, 25% strongly agree) report household duties impact their job. This highlights the direct influence domestic responsibilities have on professional performance for many teachers.

Suggestions

Educational institutions should implement clear policies and support systems such as flexible working hours, leave options, and on-site childcare to help ease the combined pressures of work and home responsibilities. Since 45% of respondents felt a lack of institutional support, schools must strengthen structural assistance to better address these needs. Wellness programs, including stress management workshops, mental health counselling, and peer support groups, should be introduced to provide emotional and psychological support, as most participants reported stress in balancing work and life. Regular awareness sessions and training on time management, self-care, and work-life integration strategies should be conducted to empower teachers.

V. Conclusions

This study examined the interplay between work-life balance, family responsibilities, and job satisfaction among Muslim female teachers in Surathkal. It aimed to understand how these women navigate their professional duties alongside familial and religious commitments within a culturally demanding environment. Findings revealed that many face challenges balancing household and work roles, often leading to emotional stress and reduced job performance. Difficulties in maintaining religious practices and a lack of institutional support were also noted. Future research could explore similar issues in different regions or groups and assess how policy changes and institutional reforms can enhance support for female educators' holistic well-being.

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