



Category: Education, Teaching, Learning and Assessment

ORIGINAL

Work-life enrichment among college educators

Enriquecimiento de la vida laboral entre educadores universitarios

Sasikumar G M¹  , Sujatha S¹  

¹Faculty of Management, SRM Institute of Science & Technology. Kattankulathur, 603203, Chengalpattu District, Tamil Nadu, India.

Cite as: Sasikumar GM, Sujatha S. Work-life enrichment among college educators. Salud, Ciencia y Tecnología - Serie de Conferencias. 2024; 3:1127. <https://doi.org/10.56294/sctconf20241127>

Submitted: 05-02-2024

Revised: 10-05-2024

Accepted: 29-07-2024

Published: 30-07-2024

Editor: Dr. William Castillo-González 

ABSTRACT

In this research article, the work-life enrichment of faculty members across various colleges in Chennai was explored, focusing on the post-COVID-19 period. This study investigated factors influencing work-life enrichment and the strategies employed by female faculty members. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from 70 participants using questionnaires. Key findings revealed that the adaptability of work schedules, family support, and a positive work environment significantly impacted work-life enrichment. Despite challenges, such as long working hours and non-teaching responsibilities, faculty members maintain overall job satisfaction. Striving for an equilibrium between professional and personal lives remains crucial. The study emphasized the need for institutional support and policies to enhance faculty well-being.

Keywords: Work-Life Enrichment; Faculty; Chennai; Post-COVID-19; Education.

RESUMEN

En este artículo de investigación, se exploró el enriquecimiento de la vida laboral y personal de los profesores de varias universidades de Chennai, centrándose en el período posterior a COVID-19. Este estudio investigó los factores que influyen en el enriquecimiento de la vida laboral y personal y las estrategias empleadas por las profesoras. Utilizando un enfoque de métodos mixtos, se recopilaron datos de 70 participantes mediante cuestionarios. Los hallazgos clave revelaron que la adaptabilidad de los horarios de trabajo, el apoyo familiar y un ambiente de trabajo positivo impactaron significativamente en el enriquecimiento de la vida laboral y personal. A pesar de los desafíos, como las largas jornadas laborales y las responsabilidades no docentes, los profesores mantienen una satisfacción laboral general. La lucha por lograr un equilibrio entre la vida profesional y personal sigue siendo crucial. El estudio enfatizó la necesidad de apoyo institucional y políticas para mejorar el bienestar de los profesores.

Palabras clave: Enriquecimiento de la Vida Laboral y Personal; Facultad; Chennai; Post-COVID-19; Educación.

INTRODUCTION

The role of teachers is critical in higher education, as they impart knowledge and influence the abilities of students. They act as mentors, counselors, and guides, and as a result, are key players in providing psychological and academic growth to people. Nevertheless, considering the variety of setbacks stemming from the spread of COVID-19, the issue of balancing work and personal life by women professors at universities located at Tamil Nadu has surfaced as an area that needs immediate attention.⁽¹⁾ This study is meant to look into what work-life Enrichment among these university teachers mean in view of several dimensions associated with it and its likely impacts on academic environment and educator welfare as well.⁽²⁾

In India, Tamil Nadu, with its numerous universities and colleges that cater to a diverse student body, is known as the beacon of education. The Gross Enrollment Ratio, or GER, has been given more focus in recent times. This is particularly because it has been noted that more girls must be given opportunity for higher learning. The intention is to make it easier for people to access higher education no matter their background or gender. In 2023, according to recent data released by the Indian Ministry of Education, there was an increase in GER among girls which is good news for proponents of equal rights when it comes to schooling.⁽³⁾

That figures show a positive shift towards this direction. But even as we celebrate the improvements seen within our systems so far there are still areas where women's participation at all levels remains minimal. It is no secret that if one wants something done well then, they should involve those who are most affected- women! And what better place than institutions like universities? These women should be seen beyond just being teachers but rather as mentors and champions within their various capacities thereby creating more room for other voices too.⁽⁴⁾

However, the field of Education has changed a lot due to COVID-19, leading to remote learning and digital transformation.⁽⁵⁾ The lockdown of schools made it necessary for teachers to start new methods of teaching, using different tools and technology. The move from being an ordinary teacher who works within certain hours to being one that is always available online has caused problems among female lecturers holding university positions in Tamil Nadu as they now find themselves handling more work than before, mainly because this system blurs the line between job and personal life thus bringing about issues related to work-life Enrichment.

We have witnessed an increase in the number of hours spent on work especially when it comes to delivering your lectures using platforms like zoom, Microsoft teams among others, doing assessments for your students and also engaging them through these same means consequently affecting one's availability for family matters.

Besides, the absence of professional and domestic areas has made the already existing burnouts and distress among educators worse.⁽⁶⁾ Women university teachers in Tamil Nadu who despite their loyalty and resilience are struggling to Enrichment between career obligations and family duties plus taking care of themselves explain the above scenario.

This study seeks to highlight experiences of university educators during the COVID-19 era so as to understand how different elements like socio-economic status or psychology affect their work-life Enrichment. With these findings one would be able to come up with policies that support gender equality in institutions of higher learning while at the same time promoting well-being among staff members involved in addition to their professional growth.⁽⁷⁾

The present study seeks to enhance academic discussions on gender, education, and labor market dynamics in the post-pandemic age by conducting a thorough examination of empirical data and qualitative inputs. It raises awareness of many issues faced by professors from different universities to build equitable methods for higher education that are supportive of everyone.

A comprehensive investigation into work-life Enrichment among teachers in self-financing colleges within the Thanjavur District of Tamil Nadu. The study explored various aspects related to work-life Enrichment and their implications for educators. Notably, the research highlighted the positive impact of work-life policies, particularly for women employees. When women achieve a better Enrichment between work and personal life, it leads to increased job satisfaction.⁽⁸⁾

In a separate study,⁽⁹⁾ delved into the challenges faced by teaching professionals in Arts and Science Colleges in Tuticorin District. The primary focus was on identifying obstacles encountered while striving to maintain equilibrium between personal and professional commitments. The study emphasized the role of various variables in shaping educators' attitudes toward their work and the teaching profession.

Investigated work-life Enrichment and employee performance within selected commercial banks in Lagos State. The study shed light on the detrimental effects of poor organizational cultures that do not support effective work-life Enrichment practices. Implementing work-life Enrichment concepts can significantly benefit organizations by ensuring employees' overall well-being—both socially and psychologically. When employees thrive beyond their daily tasks, they become valuable assets to the company.⁽¹⁰⁾

Enrichment between professional and personal work among women teachers. Factors such as weekly working hours, occupational stress, age, and caregiving responsibilities significantly influenced work-life Enrichment. Female teachers often grapple with work-life conflicts, leading to higher stress levels, migraines, muscle tension, weight gain, and feelings of sadness compared to their male counterparts.⁽¹¹⁾

Research on work-life Enrichment among teachers in engineering colleges in Kerala. Their findings highlighted effective strategies for achieving work-life Enrichment, including flexible scheduling, telecommuting, five-day workweeks, scheduled vacations, maternity leave policies, worker welfare programs, and talent development initiatives. Creative solutions are essential to mitigate work-life conflicts in this context.⁽¹²⁾

Emphasized that teaching employees in Arts and Science colleges must set clear goals and excel in both professional and personal realms to attain work-life Enrichment. Techniques such as planning, organizing, and setting boundaries play a crucial role in achieving contentment while managing work and personal obligations.⁽¹³⁾

Investigated work-life Enrichment among college teachers in Thrissur District. Their study revealed that faculty members experience significant stress while striving to Enrichment personal and professional lives. Stressors

included defined roles, colleague support, family traditions, flexible work schedules, and administrative assistance. Understanding stress patterns can inform coping mechanisms and enhance overall well-being within the teaching community.⁽¹⁴⁾

Finally, underscored the immense accountability associated with teaching—an occupation that demands resilience and adaptability.⁽¹⁵⁾

The general objective of this study is to comprehensively evaluate the work-life enrichment of faculty members in various institutions in Chennai during the post-COVID-19 period, investigating the factors influencing this enrichment and the strategies employed to maintain a balance between professional and personal responsibilities.

METHOD

The Quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in this study. A purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of 70 faculty members from various educational institutions in Chennai, ensuring their consent for participation due to the sensitive nature of the topic. Both primary and secondary data sources were used. Secondary data, including staff numbers and college details, were sourced from books, journals, and the Internet. Primary data were gathered using an extensive questionnaire administered to female faculty members. Data analysis involved tabulation, percentage analysis, mean computation, standard deviation determination, and ANOVA to interpret the collected information. R statistical software was employed for data analysis because of its flexibility in data manipulation.

RESULTS

Though the sample used was a non-probability sampling, the samples were chosen to represent a cross-section of the target population so as to reflect the field conditions of the target population. This is also validated based on the literature.

Dimension	Category	Number	Percentage
Gender	Female	37	52,00
	Male	33	47,00
Age (in years)	<30	16	22,90
	30-40	28	40,00
	41-50	22	31,40
	50<	4	5,70
Marital Status	Married	61	87,10
	Unmarried	9	12,90
Type of Institution	Government	25	35,70
	Aided	21	30,00
	Unaided	24	34,30
	Less than 5 years	5	2,20
Teaching Experience in years	<10	43	19,20
	10-15	57	25,40
	16-20	71	31,70
	21-25	37	16,50
	25<	11	4,90
Monthly Salary in Rs.	<25 000	28	40,00
	25 000- 50 000	7	10,00
	51000- 75 000	14	20,00
	76 000- 100 000	11	15,70
	100 000<	10	14,30
Educational Qualification	Post-Doctoral	0	0,00
	Ph. D	12	17,10
	M. Phil	11	15,70
	Masters	47	67,10

Designation	Assistant Professor	59	84,30
	Associate Professor	7	10,00
	Professor	4	5,70
Discipline	Commerce	45	64,30
	Arts and Languages	16	22,90
	Science	9	12,90
Spouse Employment status	Employed	51	72,90
	Unemployed	12	17,10
	NA	7	10,00
Mode of transport	Public	39	55,70
	Own Vehicle	26	37,10
	Other	3	4,30
	No Vehicle	2	2,90

Above table presents demographic and professional data for a group of individuals across various dimensions, including gender, age, marital status, type of institution, teaching experience, monthly salary, educational qualifications, designation, discipline, spousal employment status, and mode of transport as shown in Table 1, the samples taken represent a similar cohort to those in previous studies.

Table 2. Job satisfaction with respect to present job parameters

Dimension	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Remuneration	70	3,9	1,038
Proximity to home	70	4,07	0,688
Vacation	70	4	0,834
Job Interestingness	70	4,26	0,774
Career advancement	70	3,9	0,95
Flexible hours of working	70	3,77	1,079
Job permanency	70	3,76	1,148
Cultural environment	70	3,91	0,897
Training given	70	3,59	1,097

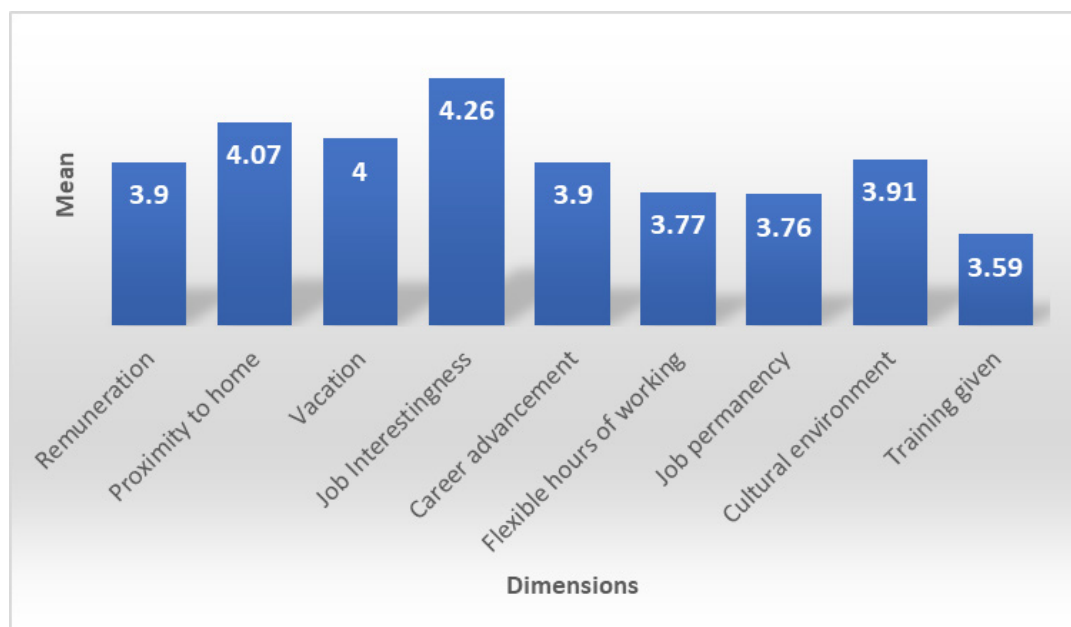


Figure 1. Dimensions of job Satisfaction towards Current Job

From table 2, The data shows that individuals in this group generally have a high level of satisfaction with most dimensions, especially with job interestingness and proximity to home. However, there is notable variability in some areas, particularly in job permanency, flexible working hours, and training given, suggesting diverse opinions and experiences among individuals in these aspects.

From table 3, Key Motivating Factors include personal satisfaction, family support, and a passion for teaching. However, challenges such as long working hours and non-teaching responsibilities impact their work-life Enrichment. Interestingly, strong relationships with students contribute to overall satisfaction from table 3, There is a greater disparity between the group means when the F-value is higher. It means that the differences between the groups are important.

Dimension	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Passion for teaching	70	4,07	1,278
Financial independence	70	3,86	1,277
Personal satisfaction	70	3,77	1,406
Support to family	70	3,64	1,308

Above table 3, Faculty members exhibit a strong passion for teaching. This intrinsic motivation likely contributes to their overall job satisfaction. Financial independence plays a significant role. Faculty members who feel financially secure may experience better work-life Enrichment. Personal satisfaction is moderately high. When faculty members find fulfillment in their work, it positively impacts their well-being. Balancing family responsibilities with work remains a challenge. Faculty members seek adequate support to maintain equilibrium. Overall, addressing these dimensions—passion for teaching, financial stability, personal satisfaction, and family support—can enhance work-life Enrichment for women faculty members. Strategies that foster these factors are crucial for their well-being and effectiveness in academia.

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Prob>F
Columns	12,6781	1	12,6781	696,46	1,95363e-07
Error	0,1092	6	0,0182		
Total	12,7874	7			

From table 4, there is a greater disparity between the group means when the F-value is higher. It means that the differences between the groups are important.

Factor	Sample Size (N)	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Remuneration	70	4,34	0,883
Fixed hours of working	70	3,49	1,139
Overworking	70	3,23	1,182
Family commitments	70	3,86	0,982
Co-worker support	70	3,86	0,952
Non-curricular responsibilities	70	3,44	1,085

From table 5, the average score for remuneration reported by the participants is 4,34 out of 5. This suggests that overall, respondents perceive their compensation favorably. Participants rated extended working hours with an average score of 3,49. This indicates that while some individuals may find longer work hours manageable, others may perceive them as challenging. Overworking mean score is 3,23. It implies that participants experience moderate levels of overwork. This could impact their well-being and work-life Enrichment. With an average score of 3,86, family commitments seem to be moderately manageable for the respondents. This suggests that participants are balancing work and family responsibilities. Participants reported an average score of 3,86 for coworker support. Collaborative assistance from colleagues plays a significant role in their work environment. Non-curricular Responsibilities- score for this factor 3,44, suggests that participants engage in non-curricular

responsibilities alongside their primary teaching duties. While remuneration and family commitments appear manageable, addressing overwork and enhancing coworker support can contribute positively to faculty well-being. Researchers and institutions can use these insights to create a conducive teaching environment.

Table 6. ANOVA Analysis of Factors Influencing work-life Enrichment

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Prob>F
Columns	21,3253	1	21,3253	247,67	2,20247e-08
Error	0,861	10	0,0861		
Total	22,1861	11			

From table 6, there is a greater disparity between the group means when the F-value is higher. It means that the differences between the groups are important.

Table 7. Strategies employed by the participants to handle their work-life responsibilities

Practices	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Timely completion of teaching portions	49	70
Handling all other college-related work internally	32	45,70
Collaborating on family responsibilities	29	41,40
Prioritizing family time during holidays	29	41,40
Other practices	2	2,85

Timely Completion of Teaching Portions: a significant majority (70 %) of respondents reported completing their teaching portions on time. This suggests that adherence to teaching schedules is a common practice.

Handling All Other College-Related Work Internally: approximately 45,7 % of participants indicated that they manage all other college-related tasks within the institution itself. This could include administrative work, committee responsibilities, or research-related activities.

Collaborating on Family Responsibilities: around 41,4 % of faculty members reported sharing family responsibilities with their spouses. This highlights the importance of family support in maintaining work-life Enrichment.

Prioritizing Family Time During Holidays: an equal proportion (41,4 %) of respondents emphasized spending quality time with their families during holidays. This practice contributes to overall well-being and stress reduction.

Other Practices: while not as prevalent, a small percentage (2,85 %) of participants mentioned additional practices beyond the specified categories. These could be unique strategies or personal approaches to achieving work-life harmony.

Hypothesis 1

Null Hypothesis (H0): there is no significant variation in work-life Enrichment among faculty members across different colleges in Chennai District, based on the type of college.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): there is a significant variation in work-life Enrichment among faculty members across different colleges in Chennai District, based on the type of college.

The data was analyzed using one way ANOVA and the results are as follows:

Table 8. Satisfaction of respondents towards work - related aspects

Type of college	N	Mean	SD	F value	DF	P value
Government	25	22,8000	5,62731	1,214	(2,67)	0,304
Aided	21	23,2381	4,45987			
Unaided	24	24,7083	2,74225			

The p-value, which exceeds 0,05, leads us to accept the null hypothesis. According to table 8, there is no clear difference in work-life enrichment among faculty personnel across different colleges in the Chennai District, irrespective of the college type. Put simply, the degree of work-life enrichment remains constant for female faculty members regardless of the sort of college they work at.

Table 9. Key Factors for work-life Enrichment achievement

Factors	Mean	SD	t-value	P-value	Sig.
Adaptability of Work Schedule	4,39	0,687	53,395	0	All p values are significant
Remote Work Option	3,39	1,054	26,887	0	
Family Support	4,39	0,708	51,828	0	
Support from heads and Colleagues	4,29	0,783	45,804	0	
Availability of Emergency Leave	4,13	0,883	39,103	0	
Quality of Workplace Environment	4,33	0,737	49,162	0	

The faculty members perceive positive work-related factors, including adaptability, family support, and managerial assistance. These perceptions are statistically significant, indicating the importance of these factors in maintaining work-life Enrichment. Among them, Adaptability of Work Schedule and family members support are important as it has a mean value of 4,39 each, remote work was the least important factor, with a Mean of 3,39.

DISCUSSION

Our findings align with the existing literature highlighting the complex interplay between professional commitment and personal life among faculty members. Similar, We observed a common theme of faculty members balancing rigorous work demands with familiar responsibilities. The reluctance to pursue further career development opportunities may stem from the challenges posed by geographic separation from employed spouses, which limit their ability to engage in additional training or courses. This aspect not only affects professional growth but also underscores the importance of supportive family networks in maintaining work-life Enrichment.

Comparing our results with the emphasis on flexible work hours and a positive work environment as facilitators of work-life enrichment is consistent. Our study reveals that while faculty members strive to complete teaching responsibilities punctually, the enrichment of work-related thoughts into personal time highlights the ongoing challenges in achieving a balanced lifestyle. This phenomenon resonates with broader discussions in literature on the pervasive nature of academic work and its impact on personal well-being.

In contrast to our findings, where organizational politics were noted as a significant concern, our study similarly acknowledges these dynamics as a challenge. Despite these obstacles, faculty members' overall job satisfaction underscores their resilience and dedication to their roles. Future research could develop deeper into the specific strategies or interventions that institutions can implement to mitigate the negative effects of organizational politics and support faculty well-being.

Limitations

While our study provides valuable insights into the impact of work-life enrichment among staff members in educational institutions, Several Implicit limitations should be acknowledged. First, the findings may not generalize beyond the specific context of Chennai, as they are based solely on data collected from this geographic area. Second, the accuracy and completeness of our results depend on the information provided by the respondents, which may introduce bias or overlook certain perspectives.

Moreover, the dynamic nature of attitudes and circumstances implies that our findings are relevant only within a specific timeframe for data collection. As respondents' attitudes and experiences may evolve over time, the applicability of our research findings may diminish beyond the immediate study period.

These limitations underscore the need for caution when extrapolating our findings to broader populations or future contexts. Continued research efforts are essential to capture evolving trends and perspectives in work-life enrichment across diverse settings and timeframes.

Addressing Work Overload

Several strategies can be implemented to alleviate workload pressures. First, curtailed syllabus requirements should be considered, focusing on essential topics to enhance teaching efficiency. Regular faculty refreshment programs within colleges can rejuvenate faculty members and improve their overall well-being. Streamlining nonacademic responsibilities allows faculty members to concentrate more effectively on their core teaching duties. Prioritizing teaching over other tasks ensures that faculty have the necessary time and resources to deliver quality education consistently.

Effective work-life Enrichment strategies

Strategic class scheduling that avoids regular classes on holidays provides faculty members with valuable time to spend with their families, promoting a healthier work-life balance. Timely completion of teaching

reduces stress and supports a more sustainable work-life Enrichment. Protecting teaching time from additional assignments or administrative tasks is crucial for maintaining faculties' well-being. Involving non-teaching staff in handling administrative duties within departments fosters collaboration and reduces individual workload. Support from college administrations is essential for successful implementation of work-life enrichment activities. Providing training and resources to address work-related challenges can further support faculty members in managing their responsibilities effectively. Finally, promoting a sociable work environment with flexible schedules contributes to a positive work-life balance for faculty members.

Implicit in the Discussion

The strategies outlined above implicitly address the challenges and opportunities discussed in our study on work-life Enrichment among faculty members. By curbing workload pressures and fostering supportive environments, educational institutions can enhance faculty satisfaction and overall wellbeing. These strategies are crucial for adapting to evolving demands and for ensuring sustainable career satisfaction among educators. A continued focus on these areas is essential for fostering a productive and harmonious academic environments.

CONCLUSION

Our study aimed to explore how work-life enrichment impacts staff members across various educational institutions, with a particular focus on the challenges faced, especially by women in academia. Achieving this level of enrichment is particularly challenging because of the dual responsibilities of teaching and extracurricular activities outside school. Women in particular often bear additional burdens such as household management, childcare, and caring for dependents, exacerbating their stress and vulnerability.

The strain from these responsibilities' manifests in reduced performance and negative feedback from colleagues, affecting both the professional and personal domains. Balancing work and family obligations remains a significant challenge across all professions including teaching. Teachers must not only manage their household responsibilities, but also meet the expectations of students, peers, department heads, administrators, and policymakers.

Failure to prioritize work and personal commitments effectively can lead to increased stress, disrupted routines, and dissatisfaction in both spheres, potentially impacting job performance and student outcomes. Addressing this challenge requires creating supportive environments within educational institutions and fostering cooperation between family members to share domestic responsibilities. By promoting a harmonious balance between personal and professional lives, educators can enhance their overall well-being and positively contribute to their roles within the academic community.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

1. Rao P, Mohana Sundaram K. Work-life balance challenges faced by women faculty members during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Int J Educ Res.* 2021; 105:101-110.
2. Ghosh A, Kundu S, Chakraborty A. Work-life enrichment in higher education: Understanding the dimensions and impacts. *J High Educ Policy Manag.* 2021;43(2):157-175.
3. Ministry of Education, Government of India. All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2023. New Delhi: Ministry of Education; 2023.
4. Patel R. Women as mentors in academia: Creating a supportive environment. *Educ Dev.* 2020;40(3):45-52.
5. Singh A, Sharma P. The impact of COVID-19 on higher education: Challenges and opportunities. *Educ Res.* 2020;61(4):320-333.
6. Kumari M, Sinha S. Burnout and stress among university teachers: A study during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Educ Psychol.* 2021;41(6):765-777.
7. Jain P, Verma S. Gender equality in higher education: Policies for a post-pandemic world. *High Educ Q.* 2021;75(3):435-452.
8. Rajan P, Ramanathan V. Work-life enrichment in self-financing colleges: A study from Thanjavur District. *Manag Educ.* 2021;35(2):165-179.
9. Subramanian M. Challenges of maintaining work-life balance among educators in Tuticorin District. *J Teach Educ.* 2021;12(1):89-101.

10. Adeoye A, Elegbede T. Organizational culture and work-life enrichment: A study of commercial banks in Lagos State. *J Bus Ethics*. 2020;165(2):453-465.
11. Nair R, Menon P. Work-life balance issues among female teachers in Kerala. *Educ Sci*. 2021;11(1):34-45.
12. George S, Mathew A. Strategies for achieving work-life enrichment in engineering colleges. *J Eng Educ*. 2021;112(3):345-358.
13. Thomas K, Joseph P. Achieving work-life enrichment in Arts and Science colleges. *J Coll Teach Learn*. 2020;17(4):245-255.
14. Krishnan R, Ramesh K. Stress and work-life balance among college teachers in Thrissur District. *Int J Educ Manag*. 2021;35(3):410-423.
15. Desai N. Resilience and adaptability in teaching: The impact on work-life enrichment. *Teach High Educ*. 2020;25(6):789-804.
16. SasiKumar GM, Sujatha S. Work Life Management among Women Employees Working in Shifts With Reference to Electronic Manufacturing Industry in Chennai. *Rev Gestão Soc Ambient*. 2023;17(4)
17. G.M Sasikumar, S. Sujatha. Perceptions of Women Employees on the Quality of Work Life Practices in the Electronics Manufacturing Industry - an Analysis. *Qubahan Acad J*. 2024;4(2):129-52. doi: 10.48161/qaj.v4n2a488.

FINANCING

The authors did not receive financing for the development of this research.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION

Conceptualization: Sasikumar G M, Sujatha S.

Data curation: Sasikumar G M, Sujatha S.

DFormal analysis: Sasikumar G M, Sujatha S.

Display: Sasikumar Sasikumar G M, Sujatha S.

Drafting - original draft: Sasikumar G M, Sujatha S.