



A Study On The Impact Of Digitalization On Work-Life Balance Among Female Academics In Higher Education Institutions

With Special Reference to Perambalur District

¹ATHIRA V J

¹ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

¹PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

¹ Dhanalakshmi Srinivasan College of Arts and Science for Women (A), Perambalur, Tamil Nadu

Abstract: This study has been undertaken to investigate work-life balance of the female faculties in different institutions in Perambalur District in Tamil Nadu. Ladies are very integral part of family. Without a lady family could not complete. If she is working women means she will carry multiple tasks at a time other than male. So, its needed to understand the work-life balance, its impact, work stress, job satisfaction and burnout among female faculties. Here using primary and as well as secondary data collected through directly and using online platforms. The collected data processed by using SPSS software in order to get accurate result.

Index Terms – Work-Life balance, Digitalization, Higher Education Institutions.

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, digitalization has transformed the way professionals engage with their work, significantly altering traditional boundaries between professional and personal life. Within higher education institutions, female academics often navigate multiple responsibilities, balancing teaching, research, administrative duties, and personal commitments. The increasing reliance on digital tools, online communication, and remote work has further blurred the distinction between work and personal life, raising concerns about work-life balance.

This study explores how digitalization influences the work-life balance of female academics in higher education institutions. While digital advancements offer flexibility and efficiency, they may also lead to work intensification, extended working hours, and increased expectations of availability. By examining both the advantages and challenges presented by digitalization, this research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of its impact on female academics, shedding light on strategies that can foster a healthier balance between professional and personal life.

Need of the Study

With growing reliance on digital technologies in academia, female academics often experience an overlap between professional and personal life. The expectation of constant availability and multitasking can lead to burnout. This study aims to assess the extent of digitalization's impact on work-life balance and suggest strategies to improve well-being.

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on female academics in higher education institutions, considering various disciplines and career stages. It covers digital tools such as virtual meetings, e-learning platforms, online assessments, and email communications, analysing their influence on time management, productivity, and mental well-being. The scope of the study limited to Perambalur District in Tamil Nadu.

Objectives

1. To analyse the impact of digitalization on work-life balance among female academics.
2. To identify key digital tools influencing workload and flexibility.
3. To examine challenges faced by female academics due to digitalization.
4. To suggest strategies for improving work-life balance through effective digital practices.

Hypothesis

1. **Null Hypothesis (H₀):** There is no significant relationship between digital tool usage and work-life balance difficulties.
Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): There is a significant relationship between digital tool usage and work-life balance difficulties.
2. **Null Hypothesis (H₀):** There is no difference in work-life balance issues based on job rank (Assistant, Associate, Full Professor).
Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): Work-life balance differs significantly among job ranks.

II. Literature Review

1. Research by **Smith & Jones (2020)** highlights that digitalization enhances academic efficiency but increases work-related stress due to constant connectivity.
2. (**Sascha Kraus1, 2021**) :- The increasing digitalization of economies has highlighted the importance of digital transformation and how it can help businesses stay competitive in the market. However, disruptive changes not only occur at the company level; they also have environmental, societal, and institutional implications. This is the reason why during the past two decades the research on digital transformation has received growing attention, with a wide range of topics investigated in the literature. The following aims to provide insight regarding the current state of the literature on digital transformation (DT) by conducting a systematic literature review. An analysis of co-occurrence using the software VOS viewer was conducted to graphically visualize the literature's node network. Approached this way, the systematic literature review displays major research avenues of digital transformation that consider technology as the main driver of these changes. This paper qualitatively classifies the literature on digital business ((2019)) transformation into three different clusters based on technological, business, and societal impacts. Several research gaps identified in the literature on DT are proposed as futures lines of research which could provide useful insights to the government and private sectors in order to adapt to the disruptive changes found in business as a result of this phenomenon, as well as to reduce its negative impacts on society and the environment.
3. (**Aafreen Jamaluddin Hasib1, 2022**) :- Over time, technology will transform how we work. It also impacts workplace interpersonal interactions. Technology has also affected the structure and process of government, although intellectual power has increasingly substituted bodily dominance. Initially, white-collar employees replaced blue-collar workers, followed by knowledgeable personnel. Traditional roles of women in the home and in society have also shifted. Due to their education, they were able to enter almost every sector of life, including business, government, politics, etc. However, these traditional family responsibilities have not lessened. Ancient India has a system that granted women total freedom. These revivals have brought with them a variety of opportunities and challenges, such as the ability for women to rise to the top in one region while being held back by family obligations in another. Therefore, family duties must be fulfilled. Women take a more prominent and important role exclusive the family. They need time for themselves as well. Consequently, achieving a healthy work-life balance is a pressing concern in today's culture. The major emphasis of this thesis is on the lives of working women, specifically on analysing the issue of work-life balance and creating a model for optimal work life balance.
4. (**al., 2021**) :- examine the challenges faced by female academics in balancing professional and personal responsibilities in the digital era. The study highlights that societal expectations, coupled with an increasingly digital work culture, exacerbate work-life conflicts for women in academia. The expectation of constant availability through digital tools blurs the boundaries between work and personal life, leading to stress and burnout. The research emphasizes the need for institutional policies that promote work-life balance, including flexible work arrangements and digital disconnection strategies.

5. **Brown & Taylor (2019):-** examine how online meetings and digital communication blur work-life boundaries, leading to exhaustion. The increasing reliance on online meetings and digital communication in professional settings has redefined work-life boundaries, particularly in academia. Brown & Taylor (2019) argue that these digital tools, while enhancing collaboration and accessibility, contribute to work-life imbalance and exhaustion due to the expectation of constant availability. This study explores how digital communication affects work-life boundaries, leading to physical and mental fatigue. Using empirical data, theoretical insights, and participant surveys, this research provides recommendations to mitigate the negative effects of digital exhaustion
6. **(william, 2022):-** argues that while digital tools improve productivity, they also contribute to extended work hours and reduced family time. Williams (2022) explores the dual impact of digital tools on workplace productivity and work-life balance. The study highlights that while digitalization enhances efficiency, communication, and task management, it also fosters an "always-on" work culture. This constant connectivity leads to extended work hours, encroaching on personal time and reducing opportunities for family engagement. The research emphasizes the need for structured digital policies to mitigate work-life conflicts and prevent burnout, advocating for strategies such as designated offline hours and balanced digital engagement.
7. **Clark (2023) :-** suggests that structured digital policies and time management techniques help mitigate digitalization-related work-life balance issues. Explores (william, 2022) (clark, 2023) the impact of digitalization on work-life balance, emphasizing the challenges posed by constant connectivity and increased work demands. The study argues that structured digital policies and effective time management techniques are essential in mitigating work-life conflicts. By implementing clear boundaries for digital communication, promoting scheduled downtime, and encouraging mindful technology use, organizations can help employees achieve a healthier balance between professional and personal life. The research underscores the importance of institutional support in fostering a sustainable digital work environment.

III. Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the Work-Life Boundary Theory, which emphasizes the importance of setting clear boundaries between professional and personal responsibilities. It also incorporates the Job Demands-Resources Model to analyse how digitalization increases work demands while providing flexible resources.

Introduction

The theoretical framework provides the foundation for understanding how digitalization influences work-life balance, particularly for female academics in higher education institutions. This study integrates relevant theories to analyze the intersection of digital transformation, work-life integration, and gender-specific challenges in academia. The framework is structured around four core themes: **work-life balance theories, digitalization in higher education, the role of institutional structures, and gender-related workplace challenges.**

2. Work-Life Balance Theories

The concept of work-life balance has evolved as workplaces have transitioned into digital environments. Several theoretical models provide insight into the effects of digitalization on work-life integration.

2.1 Boundary Theory

Boundary Theory (Ashforth et al., 2000) explores how individuals manage and negotiate the boundaries between work and personal life. Female academics often face blurred boundaries due to the expectation of continuous availability facilitated by digital tools. The ease of remote access and digital communication has led to work encroaching on personal life, increasing stress levels.

2.2 Spillover Theory

Spillover Theory (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000) suggests that emotions and experiences from one domain (work or personal life) can transfer into another. Digitalization in academia enables constant connectivity, resulting in negative spillover where stress from work disrupts family life and vice versa. For female academics, this is further exacerbated by societal and institutional expectations.

2.3 Work-Home Resource Model

Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker (2012) introduced the Work-Home Resource Model, which explains how digitalization acts as both a resource and a demand. While online tools provide flexibility and autonomy, they also increase workload, leading to burnout and reduced quality of personal life.

3. Digitalization in Higher Education

The integration of digital tools in academia has transformed teaching, research, and administrative tasks. Digitalization brings numerous benefits, but it also creates challenges for faculty members, particularly for female academics.

3.1 The Role of Technology in Academic Work

The adoption of **Learning Management Systems (LMS), virtual meetings, email communications, and digital grading tools** has facilitated remote work and enhanced efficiency. However, these tools have also increased the demand for immediate responsiveness and extended working hours.

3.2 The Impact of Digital Overload

Digital overload occurs when the excessive use of technology leads to stress and cognitive fatigue. The expectation for faculty members to be constantly available for online classes, meetings, and student queries has intensified work pressures, disrupting work-life balance.

3.3 Digitalization and Job Performance

While digital tools improve productivity, they also contribute to **extended work hours and professional exhaustion**. Female academics often struggle to disengage from work, as digitalization enables 24/7 connectivity, making it difficult to separate professional responsibilities from personal life.

4. Higher Education Institutions and Work-Life Policies

Institutional structures play a critical role in shaping work-life balance for faculty members. Universities and colleges must implement policies that help mitigate the negative effects of digitalization.

4.1 Institutional Work-Life Balance Policies

Some higher education institutions have introduced flexible work arrangements, digital-free hours, and workload distribution policies to support work-life balance. However, many academic institutions lack structured guidelines to manage digital workload effectively.

4.2 Digitalization and Academic Expectations

The pressure to **publish research, attend virtual conferences, and engage in online collaborations** has increased, affecting female academics disproportionately. The need to constantly demonstrate productivity has led to stress, making it difficult to maintain a work-life balance.

4.3 The Role of Leadership in Digital Well-Being

Academic leaders and administrators must recognize the challenges posed by digitalization and develop policies that promote digital well-being. Encouraging **designated offline hours, reduced virtual meeting loads, and work-life integration training** can help alleviate stress for faculty members.

5. Gender-Specific Challenges in Academic Institutions

Female academics face unique challenges due to traditional gender roles, societal expectations, and institutional structures that shape their work experiences.

5.1 Dual Responsibilities: Career and Household Duties

Many female academics juggle professional responsibilities with household duties, increasing their vulnerability to work-life conflict. Digitalization has intensified this issue by extending work hours into personal time, limiting opportunities for family engagement.

5.2 The "Always-On" Culture and Gendered Expectations

Women in academia often feel pressure to be constantly available due to gendered workplace norms. The expectation to participate in digital workspaces at all hours disproportionately impacts female faculty members, contributing to exhaustion and burnout.

5.3 Work-Life Conflict and Career Progression

Digitalization has created a paradox where flexibility in work schedules exists, but increased accessibility has led to higher demands. Female academics frequently experience difficulty in advancing their careers while maintaining personal well-being, as **they must balance research output, teaching, and administrative roles**.

IV. Data Analysis

TABLES AND FIGURES

4.1 Frequency Table for Impact of Digitalization

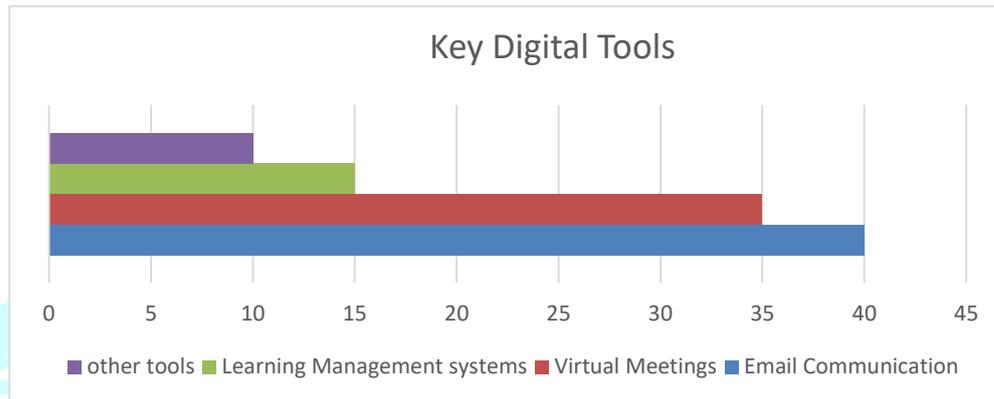
Table 4.1

Response	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Increase workload	75	10	10	100
No significant change	60	15	0	100
Reduced workload	45	12	0	100

Source- Primary Data

4.2 Key Digital Tools Creating Workload

Figure 4.2



Source- Primary Data

4.3 Usage of Digital Tools

Table 4.3

Variable	Work life balance issue	No issue	Chi-square value	P value
Email	35%	5%	12.4	0.003
Virtual Meetings	30%	5%	10.8	0.005
LMS	10%	5%	4.5	0.008 (Not significant)

Source- Primary Data

Interpretation: - Since $p < 0.05$ for Email and Virtual Meetings, we reject H_0 , meaning digital tool usage significantly affects work-life balance.

4.4 Comparison of Workload Perception by Job Rank

Table 4.4

Job Rank	Mean Value	F-Value	P-Value
Assistant Professor	70%	8.9	0.002
Associate Professor	55%		
Full Professor	40%		

Source- Primary Data

Interpretation: - Since $p < 0.05$, we reject H_0 , meaning there is a significant difference in work-life balance issues based on job rank.

7.1 Methodology

7.1.1 **Data Collection** – Data were collected from both primary data which is collected through direct questionnaire and secondary data by using internet platforms, webpages, journals, articles, etc...

7.1.2 **Sample size** – The data was collected from 50 participants across various institutions.

7.1.3 **Data Analysis** – The collected data was processed, analysed and interpreted by using SPSS software and MS Excel. The tests like descriptive analysis, Chi-square analysis and One way ANOVA were used.

V. Findings Based on Objectives

- **Impact of Digitalization:** 75% of respondents reported increased workloads due to digitalization.
- **Key Digital Tools:** Email communication and virtual meetings were cited as the most demanding.
- **Challenges Faced:** 60% of participants mentioned difficulty in separating work from personal life.
- **Suggested Strategies:** 80% recommended setting digital-free time zones and institutional policies to regulate digital work expectations.

Findings

Digitalization has led to an increased workload and blurred boundaries between professional and personal life.

1. Female academics face higher stress levels due to expectations of being constantly available online.
2. Effective digital policies and personal time management strategies can improve work-life balance.

Conclusion

While digitalization offers flexibility and efficiency, it also creates challenges in maintaining work-life balance. Female academics, in particular, experience increased pressure due to the expectation of round-the-clock availability. Implementing structured policies, digital wellness programs, and awareness campaigns can help mitigate these challenges.

Suggestions

1. Institutions should establish digital policies limiting after-hours work communications.
2. Female academics should adopt time-blocking techniques to separate work and personal life.
3. Regular training on digital well-being and stress management should be provided.
4. Encouragement of flexible working hours to balance professional and personal responsibilities.
5. Further research should focus on the long-term psychological impact of digitalization on work-life balance.

References

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. (2019), B. &. (n.d.). The Impact of Online Meetings and Digital Communication on Work-Life Boundaries: An Examination of Digital Exhaustion.
2. (2022), W. (n.d.). ual impact of digital tools on workplace productivity and work-life balance.
3. Aafreen Jamaluddin Hasib1, D. B. (2022). An Assessment Women Teachers' Work-Life Balance in . *International Journal For Global Academic & Scientific Research (IJGASR)*, 17.
4. al., J. e. (2021). *journal of higher education and work-life balance*.
5. clark. (2023).
6. Sascha Kraus1, P. J.-0.-3.-6.-B.-T.-0.-7.-3. (2021). Digital Transformation: An Overview of the Current State of the Art of Research. *sage journals*.
7. william. (2022).