



## Professional Contentment in Academia: Job Satisfaction Among Women Educators

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### Abstract:

The present study aims to explore the key factors affecting job satisfaction among women professionals employed in higher education institutions in Haryana, with a specific focus on the Hisar district. As the representation of women in the academic workforce continues to grow, understanding their experiences and the challenges they face in achieving job satisfaction has become increasingly important. The study adopts a descriptive-cum-exploratory research design to identify the underlying dimensions that contribute to job satisfaction among this target group.

A purposive sampling technique was used to collect primary data from 200 women professionals working in various colleges and universities in Hisar. The data collection instrument was an unstructured questionnaire that encouraged open responses about experiences related to professional stress and satisfaction. Secondary data was also reviewed from relevant journals, research articles, and official reports to provide a theoretical foundation. The data were analyzed using SPSS (version 21), with the application of descriptive statistics and factor analysis to extract meaningful insights. The results of the factor analysis revealed four major factors influencing job satisfaction: Work-Life Balance, Organizational Support and Policies, Career Growth and Recognition, and Compensation and Benefits. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.875 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Sig. = .000) confirmed the suitability of the data for factor analysis. Additionally, the reliability of the instrument was validated through a high Cronbach's Alpha of 0.908, indicating excellent internal consistency. The study concludes that job satisfaction among women in higher education is multidimensional and influenced by both personal and professional factors. Institutions must address these areas holistically to foster a more inclusive, motivating, and supportive work environment for women professionals in academia. The findings offer valuable insights for policy-makers and administrators aiming to enhance employee satisfaction and retention.

**Keywords:** Stress, Women, Professionals, Higher Education, Job, Satisfaction.

### Introduction:

In today's fast-paced and competitive academic environment, stress and work-life balance have emerged as critical issues, particularly for women professionals in higher education. As more women enter and excel in academic roles, they face unique challenges stemming from the dual responsibilities of professional duties and personal commitments. These pressures can lead to heightened stress levels, which, if unmanaged, may affect not only their well-being but also their productivity and career growth.

#### Nature of Stress among Women in Higher Education

Stress is a psychological and physical response to the demands and pressures of life. For women professionals in higher education, sources of stress are multifaceted. Academic institutions expect their faculty to perform a variety of roles, including teaching, research, administrative tasks, mentoring students, and participating in professional development. These demands require significant time, energy, and intellectual engagement.

Additionally, many women experience "role conflict," as they try to balance the expectations of being committed professionals while fulfilling personal roles such as mothers, daughters, wives, or caregivers.

The stress is often exacerbated by systemic factors such as gender bias, unequal pay, lack of mentorship, and limited opportunities for leadership positions. Research shows that women in academia may also face challenges like discrimination, limited networking opportunities, and a lack of support systems, further adding to their mental and emotional burden. The constant pressure to prove themselves in a traditionally male-dominated environment contributes significantly to chronic stress.

#### Work-Life Balance Challenges

Work-life balance refers to the equilibrium between professional obligations and personal life responsibilities. Achieving this balance is particularly difficult for women professionals in higher education due to several reasons. First, academic roles are not confined to the typical nine-

to-five schedule. Teaching, grading, research deadlines, publication pressures, attending conferences, and administrative responsibilities often spill over into personal time, leaving little room for relaxation or family engagement.

Moreover, cultural and societal expectations place additional burdens on women, especially in countries where traditional gender roles prevail. Women are frequently expected to manage household chores, childcare, and eldercare alongside their careers. The "second shift" phenomenon—where women, after completing their professional workday, continue with unpaid domestic work—is prevalent, leading to fatigue and burnout.

In higher education, the emphasis on research output, continuous skill enhancement, and the need to stay updated with technological advancements further stretch women's time and energy. This often results in women sacrificing personal hobbies, self-care routines, and social interactions, ultimately affecting their overall well-being.

#### **Consequences of Stress and Poor Work-Life Balance**

The consequences of stress and poor work-life balance are both personal and organizational. On a personal level, women professionals may experience anxiety, depression, sleep disorders, physical health issues such as hypertension, and strained relationships with family and peers. Prolonged exposure to stress can lead to burnout, characterized by emotional exhaustion, reduced personal accomplishment, and a sense of detachment from one's work. From an organizational perspective, high stress levels and poor work-life balance among women faculty members can lead to decreased job satisfaction, lower productivity, higher absenteeism, and increased turnover rates. Talented women may choose to leave academia altogether, resulting in a loss of intellectual capital and diversity within institutions.

#### **Strategies to Mitigate Stress and Promote Balance**

Addressing stress and promoting work-life balance among women professionals in higher education requires a multi-faceted approach. Institutions should take proactive steps to create supportive work environments. Flexible work schedules, remote working options, and reasonable workload expectations can provide women with the autonomy to manage their time effectively.

Mentorship programs and networking opportunities specifically designed for women can help them navigate career progression and overcome gender-based challenges. Providing on-campus childcare facilities, eldercare support, and mental health resources can ease some personal responsibilities, allowing women to focus on their professional roles without constant worry.

On an individual level, women professionals need to prioritize self-care and set clear boundaries between work and personal life. Time management, delegation of tasks, regular exercise, mindfulness practices, and seeking social support can play a significant role in reducing stress levels.

Furthermore, societal attitudes towards gender roles must evolve to encourage the equitable sharing of domestic responsibilities between men and women. Promoting gender equality both at home and in the workplace is essential to achieving sustainable work-life balance.

#### **Review of Literature**

**Lockwood (2003)** provided valuable insights for human resource professionals by presenting a historical perspective, relevant data, and potential solutions to address work-life balance challenges. The study identified three key factors—global competition, personal lives and family values, and an aging workforce—that intensified the complexities associated with maintaining work-life balance. Lockwood emphasized that these factors posed significant challenges for both organizations and employees. The study further suggested that human resource professionals could play a crucial role in helping organizations leverage work-life balance initiatives. By effectively implementing such strategies, companies could not only address employee needs but also gain a competitive advantage in the dynamic marketplace environment.

**Abendroth (2011)** examined the significance of various types of support in influencing satisfaction with work-life balance. It specifically focused on state, instrumental, and emotional support from both workplace and family contexts, based on a survey of 7,867 service-sector workers across eight European countries. The study initially mapped the availability of state, workplace, and family support to identify dominant sources in each country and their alignment with Esping-Andersen's welfare regime typology. The findings revealed that these support sources had both direct and moderating effects on work-life balance satisfaction. Additionally, emotional and instrumental workplace support demonstrated a complementary relationship, while emotional family support positively impacted satisfaction, unlike instrumental family support.

**Delecta (2011)** highlighted that work-life balance had increasingly attracted the attention of researchers and executives due to its relevance across all aspects of life. The study emphasized that professionals who prioritized their careers often risked neglecting other essential life activities, leading to potential imbalances and negative consequences in both personal and professional spheres. Analyzing work-life balance from an organizational perspective, Delecta argued that achieving equilibrium requires proper allocation of

time to various life domains, ensuring one aspect does not adversely affect another. The study provided valuable insights for employees to reflect on their work-life balance and offered executives a fresh perspective to address related challenges effectively.

**Rani et al. (2010)** analyzed the relationship between employee satisfaction and work-life balance. The study incorporated constructs such as career opportunities, recognition, work tasks, payments, benefits, superior-subordinate relationships, employee satisfaction, and work-life balance. Conducted on 210 respondents employed in an IT organization, the research bridged two distinct areas—employee satisfaction and work-life balance. The findings revealed a strong correlation between work tasks and employee satisfaction, with work-life balance acting as a mediating variable. The study highlighted the crucial role of balancing professional and personal life in enhancing employee satisfaction and emphasized the importance of organizational policies in supporting this balance.

**Haar et al. (2014)** examined the impact of work-life balance (WLB) on various individual outcomes across different cultural contexts. The study utilized a sample of 1,416 employees from seven distinct populations, including Malaysian, Chinese, New Zealand Maori, New Zealand European, Spanish, French, and Italian employees. Through SEM analysis, the study found that WLB was positively related to job and life satisfaction, while negatively associated with anxiety and depression across all cultures. Additionally, individualism/collectivism and gender egalitarianism moderated these relationships. High levels of WLB had a stronger positive effect in individualistic and gender egalitarian cultures. The study confirmed the universal benefits of WLB and the moderating role of culture.

**Gkliati et al. (2025)** examined the relationship between minimum wage, employee well-being, job satisfaction, and work-life balance in Greece's private sector based on employees' perceptions. The study utilized a structured questionnaire covering personal characteristics, employee well-being, job satisfaction, and work-life balance. Using correlations, t-tests, and simple linear regression, the findings revealed that wages had a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction and employee well-being. However, no strong statistical significance was found between wages and work-life balance. Additionally, wages were identified as a significant predictor of employee well-being and work-life balance, with notable differences observed

between minimum wage earners and higher wage earners in terms of well-being.

### **Objective of the Study**

To explore the factors affecting job satisfaction of woman professionals of higher education in Haryana.

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Research Design:**

The present study adopts a descriptive-cum-exploratory research design to identify and explore the key factors influencing job satisfaction among women professionals working in higher education institutions in Haryana.

#### **Population of the Study:**

The research was conducted in Hisar district, targeting women employed across various colleges and universities.

#### **Sampling Technique and Size:**

A purposive sampling technique was applied to select a representative sample of 200 women professionals, ensuring that the participants possessed sufficient professional experience and were capable of providing meaningful insights into the aspects affecting their job satisfaction.

#### **Data Collection:**

Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was gathered through an unstructured questionnaire, which allowed the respondents to freely express their views, experiences, and challenges related to their professional roles and job satisfaction. Secondary data was drawn from a wide range of relevant journals, research articles, official reports, and existing literature, providing a theoretical foundation and contextual background for the study.

#### **Data Analysis Tools and Techniques:**

The collected data was analyzed using SPSS version 21, with factor analysis being employed to extract and interpret the underlying dimensions that influence job satisfaction among the respondents.

#### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The collected data was analyzed using factor analysis to identify and interpret the underlying dimensions influencing job satisfaction among women professionals in higher education.

#### **Factor Analysis: Job Satisfaction**

Factor Analysis is a statistical technique used to identify underlying variables or factors that explain the pattern of correlations within a set of observed variables. In the context of job satisfaction, it helps group related items to uncover key dimensions influencing women professionals' overall satisfaction at work.

Table: Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.908	20

*Source: Researcher's Compilation*

The Cronbach's Alpha value for the 20 items in the scale is reported as 0.908, which indicates excellent internal consistency among the items used to measure job satisfaction. A Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.9 suggests that the items are highly correlated and reliably measure the same underlying construct.

This high level of reliability means the questionnaire is consistent in capturing responses related to different aspects of job satisfaction among women professionals in higher education. It also indicates that the scale is well-constructed, and the responses can be considered dependable for further analysis. Therefore, the instrument is suitable for assessing job satisfaction in the given context.

<b>Table: KMO and Bartlett's Test</b>		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.875
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3260.775
	df	190
	Sig.	.000

*Source: Researcher's Compilation*

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy is reported as 0.875, which is considered excellent, indicating that the sample size is adequate and the data is suitable for factor analysis. A KMO value closer to 1 suggests that patterns of correlations are compact and factor analysis is likely to yield reliable and distinct factors. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity has an

approximate Chi-Square value of 3260.775, with 190 degrees of freedom and a significance level of .000. This highly significant result ( $p < 0.05$ ) indicates that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix, meaning there are significant relationships among the variables. Hence, the data is appropriate for structure detection through factor analysis.

<b>Table: Component Matrix</b>				
	<b>Component</b>			
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
I am able to maintain a healthy balance between my professional and personal life.	.876			
My work schedule allows me to spend sufficient time with my family.	.876			
I feel stressed trying to manage both work and household responsibilities.	.872			
I have access to flexible working hours or remote work options.	.865			
My organization is supportive when I need time off for personal reasons.	.804			
My institution provides equal opportunities for career advancement regardless of gender.		.890		
I receive adequate support from my superiors and colleagues.		.870		
There are clear and fair policies regarding promotions and benefits.		.864		
I am satisfied with the maternity and childcare support policies offered by my organization.		.857		
The management listens to and acts upon employee concerns.		.664		
I am satisfied with the opportunities for professional development in my organization.			.894	
My achievements are recognized and appreciated by my superiors.			.890	
I am encouraged to attend conferences, workshops, and seminars.			.720	
There is a clear path for promotion and career progression.			.710	
I feel motivated due to the rewards and recognition I receive at work.			.668	
I am satisfied with my current salary considering my qualifications and experience.				.858
The salary I receive reflects the amount of work I do.				.804
I receive adequate additional benefits (e.g., medical insurance, leave policies, retirement plans).				.775
I believe there is transparency in the pay structure and increment policies.				.680
I feel financially secure in my current job.				.633
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.				
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.				

*Source: Researcher's Compilation*

The component matrix derived from Principal Component Analysis (PCA) using Varimax rotation reveals four distinct components that represent the underlying dimensions of job satisfaction among women professionals in higher education. Each component clusters related items based on their factor loadings, indicating how strongly each statement contributes to the identified factor.

**Component 1** groups items that revolve around **work-life balance**. Statements such as “I am able to maintain a healthy balance between my professional and personal life” (.876), “My work schedule allows me to spend sufficient time with my family” (.876), and “I feel stressed trying to manage both work and household responsibilities” (.872) load heavily on this component. These high loadings indicate that the ability to balance work and personal life plays a crucial role in overall job satisfaction.

**Component 2** represents **organizational support and policies**. Items with high loadings such as “My institution provides equal opportunities for career advancement regardless of gender” (.890) and “I receive adequate support from my superiors and colleagues” (.870) suggest that institutional fairness, support systems, and responsive management policies significantly contribute to women professionals' job satisfaction.

**Component 3** captures the dimension of **career growth and recognition**. Strong factor loadings on statements like “I am satisfied with the opportunities for professional development in my organization” (.894) and “My achievements are recognized and appreciated by my superiors” (.890) imply that opportunities for learning, recognition, and career advancement are key motivating factors for job satisfaction.

**Component 4** relates to **compensation and benefits**. High loadings on “I am satisfied with my current salary considering my qualifications and experience” (.858) and “The salary I receive reflects the amount of work I do” (.804) reflect the importance of fair compensation, financial security, and additional benefits in determining job satisfaction.

#### Identified factors are:

- Work-Life Balance
- Organizational Support and Policies
- Career Growth and Recognition
- Compensation and Benefits

#### Conclusion:

The study was conducted to explore the factors influencing job satisfaction among women professionals in higher education institutions in Haryana. Based on data analyzed using factor analysis, the study successfully identified four major factors contributing to job satisfaction:

#### Work- Life Balance, Organizational Support and Policies, Career Growth and Recognition, and Compensation and Benefits.

The findings indicate that maintaining a healthy work-life balance is crucial for women professionals, as it directly affects their overall satisfaction and well-being. Organizational support in the form of gender-equal policies, maternity benefits, and supportive leadership was found to be a significant contributor to job satisfaction. Furthermore, opportunities for professional development, recognition of efforts, and a clear path for career progression were highly valued by the respondents. Adequate salary, transparency in pay structures, and availability of financial benefits also emerged as important factors influencing job satisfaction.

The results from the KMO and Bartlett's Test confirmed the adequacy and suitability of the data for factor analysis. The reliability of the scale was also established through a high Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.908, indicating excellent internal consistency.

In conclusion, job satisfaction among women professionals in higher education is shaped by multiple interrelated factors. Institutions seeking to improve job satisfaction levels must develop inclusive, supportive, and growth-oriented environments that address both professional and personal needs of their women faculty and staff members.

#### Limitations of the Study

- The study was limited to a single district in Haryana, which may not represent the experiences of women professionals across the entire state or country.
- The use of purposive sampling may limit the generalizability of the findings to the wider population.
- Responses were based on self-reported perceptions, which may be influenced by personal bias or situational factors.
- While encouraging openness, the unstructured format may have led to varied interpretations of questions.
- The study captures a single point in time and does not reflect changes in job satisfaction over time.

#### Future Recommendations of the Study

- Expand the study to include multiple districts or states for broader generalizability of findings.
- Use a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative interviews with structured surveys for deeper insights.
- Employ longitudinal research design to track changes in job satisfaction over time.
- Include comparative analysis between male and female professionals to explore gender-specific differences.

- Incorporate organizational variables such as institution type, size, and management style for a more comprehensive understanding.
- Encourage future studies to examine the impact of digitalization and remote teaching on job satisfaction.
- Recommend policy-level interventions to enhance career development and work-life integration for women in academia.

#### Implications of the Study

- The findings can guide educational institutions in formulating gender-sensitive policies that promote job satisfaction among women professionals.
- Institutions may implement flexible working hours, childcare support, and wellness programs to help women manage dual responsibilities.
- Clear pathways for promotion and professional growth can enhance motivation and retention of female faculty members.
- Encouraging a supportive and inclusive work environment may improve job satisfaction and employee morale.
- Transparent salary structures and adequate benefits can help address financial concerns and improve job satisfaction.
- HR departments can use the insights to design targeted interventions for employee engagement and satisfaction.

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