



Work–Life Balance and Job Satisfaction among Primary School Teachers: A Critical Synthesis of Research Review

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ABSTRACT

Work–life balance (WLB) has emerged as a crucial determinant of job satisfaction among teachers, particularly at the primary level where professional responsibilities extend beyond instruction to include emotional support, foundational skill development, and continuous student assessment. In recent years, increasing workload, administrative demands, and the integration of digital teaching practices have intensified the challenges faced by primary school teachers in maintaining a balance between their professional and personal lives. Against this backdrop, the present paper provides a critical synthesis of research evidence published to examine the nature, strength, and dimensions of the relationship between work–life balance and job satisfaction among primary teachers. The paper concludes by emphasizing the need for comprehensive, multidimensional, and context-sensitive research to better understand the predictive role of work–life balance in shaping job satisfaction. It also highlights important implications for educational policy and practice, advocating for supportive institutional frameworks, workload management strategies, and teacher well-being initiatives to enhance both

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Introduction

Teaching at the primary level occupies a foundational position in the education system, as it shapes children's cognitive, emotional, and social development during their formative years. Primary school teachers are not only responsible for delivering academic content but also for nurturing values, managing diverse classroom behaviors, and supporting students' overall development. These multifaceted responsibilities often extend beyond formal teaching hours, creating increased pressure on teachers to balance professional duties with personal and family life. In this context, the concept of work–life balance (WLB) has gained significant importance in understanding teachers' well-being and effectiveness. Work–life balance refers to an individual's ability to effectively manage the demands of work alongside personal life responsibilities, including family, health, and social commitments. For primary school teachers, maintaining this balance is particularly challenging due to factors such as heavy workload, administrative tasks, lesson planning, student assessment, and parental communication. The rapid integration of technology in education, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, has further blurred the boundaries between work and personal life, making it increasingly difficult for teachers to disconnect from professional responsibilities.

Job satisfaction, on the other hand, reflects the level of contentment and fulfillment teachers derive from their profession. It is influenced by multiple factors, including working conditions, workload, recognition, autonomy, and emotional well-being. A high level of job satisfaction is essential for maintaining teachers' motivation, commitment, and instructional effectiveness. Conversely, dissatisfaction can lead to stress, burnout, absenteeism, and reduced teaching quality, ultimately impacting student learning outcomes. Existing research suggests that work–life balance and job satisfaction are closely interconnected. Teachers who are able to maintain a healthy balance between their professional and personal lives tend to experience higher levels of satisfaction, better mental health, and greater professional engagement. In contrast, an imbalance often results in emotional exhaustion, decreased motivation, and lower job satisfaction. Despite the growing body of research in this area, much of the literature remains generalized, with limited focus on the specific context of primary school teachers and the multidimensional nature of work–life balance.

Given the increasing demands placed on teachers and the evolving nature of the educational environment, it becomes essential to critically examine how work–life balance influences job satisfaction among primary school teachers. This paper aims to synthesize existing research evidence to provide a deeper understanding of this relationship and to highlight key areas for future research and policy intervention.



Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is grounded in the assumption that work–life balance (WLB) functions as a key predictor of job satisfaction among primary school teachers. It provides a structured understanding of how different dimensions of teachers’ professional and personal lives interact to influence their overall satisfaction with their job. Work–life balance is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct comprising time balance, strain (stress) balance, and behavioural balance. Time balance refers to the equitable distribution of time between work responsibilities and personal or family life. Primary teachers often face extended working hours due to lesson planning, evaluation, and administrative tasks, which can disrupt this balance. Strain balance involves managing emotional and psychological stress arising from professional demands. High workload, classroom management challenges, and accountability pressures can lead to fatigue and burnout. Behavioural balance refers to the ability to adapt behaviours appropriately across work and personal domains, ensuring that professional stress does not negatively affect personal relationships.

Job satisfaction, the dependent variable in this framework, reflects teachers’ overall sense of fulfilment and positive attitude toward their profession. It is influenced by factors such as work environment, recognition, workload, autonomy, and emotional well-being. A higher level of satisfaction indicates better motivation, commitment, and teaching effectiveness.

The framework proposes that each dimension of work–life balance has a direct and significant influence on job satisfaction. For instance, effective time management enhances personal well-being and reduces conflict, leading to higher satisfaction. Similarly, reduced stress and better emotional regulation contribute positively to teachers’ attitudes toward their job.

Additionally, the framework acknowledges the role of moderating variables such as gender, teaching experience, institutional support, and school environment, which may strengthen or weaken the relationship between WLB and job satisfaction. Overall, this conceptual framework highlights that maintaining a balanced integration of work and personal life is essential for improving job satisfaction among primary school teachers.

Review of Literature (Critical Synthesis)

A critical synthesis of research evidence of the study entitled *Work–Life Balance And Job Satisfaction Among Primary School Teachers Of Jamshedpur: A Mixed Methods Correlational Study* have been done.

A critical review of literature on work–life balance and job satisfaction among teachers reveals that although substantial research has been conducted, several important gaps still exist, particularly in relation to primary school teachers and specific demographic variables. Most existing studies have examined work–life balance and job satisfaction either independently or in a general manner, without providing a detailed dimension-wise analysis (Carlson *et al.*, 2007; Haar *et al.*, 2013; Jeffrey H. Greenhaus & Gary N. Powell, 2006). This indicates a clear gap, as work–life balance (time, involvement, and satisfaction) and job satisfaction (intrinsic and extrinsic aspects) require deeper exploration across multiple dimensions.

One of the major gaps identified is related to gender-based differences. While some studies suggest that female teachers experience greater work–life imbalance due to dual responsibilities, the findings are inconsistent and lack comprehensive dimension-wise analysis (Kaur, 2013; Rani, 2017; Noor, 2011; Rawal, 2021). Very few studies have systematically examined both overall and component-wise differences in work–life balance and job satisfaction based on gender, particularly at the primary school level. Additionally, existing studies often overlook contextual factors such as institutional support, cultural expectations, and work environment, which may differentially affect male and female teachers' experiences (Johari *et al.*, 2017; Toropova *et al.*, 2019).

several studies have explored work–life balance and job satisfaction among teachers, important gaps remain in relation to the **nature of appointment (permanent, contractual, temporary)**. Earlier studies such as Das and Roy (2017) and Mishra (2017) primarily focused on general work–life balance issues without deeply examining appointment-based differences. Later research (Sharma, 2018; Patel & Mehta, 2018) highlighted that permanent teachers enjoy higher job security and satisfaction, but these studies largely emphasized overall outcomes rather than **dimension-wise aspects**.

Further studies (Gupta & Verma, 2019; Bose, 2019; Roy & Das, 2019) identified workload and stress differences among contractual teachers, yet they lacked a **comprehensive comparative framework** integrating both work–life balance and job satisfaction simultaneously. Research by Singh (2020) and Nair and Thomas (2020) acknowledged the influence of employment type but did not sufficiently explore **multidimensional components** such as time-based conflict, strain, behavioural adjustment, and family

interaction. Recent studies (Khan, 2021; Verma, 2021; Kumar & Singh, 2021; Gupta, 2022) indicate that contractual and temporary teachers face higher stress and lower satisfaction due to job insecurity and limited benefits. However, these studies are often limited in scope, sample size, or regional coverage, and fail to provide **context-specific insights**, particularly in rural and semi-urban educational settings. Moreover, most existing research treats work–life balance and job satisfaction as **separate constructs**, rather than examining their interrelationship within different appointment categories. There is also insufficient attention to variables such as gender, teaching experience, and institutional support in shaping these outcomes.

Therefore, there is a clear need for a **comprehensive, comparative, and dimension-wise study** focusing on primary school teachers based on the nature of appointment to bridge these gaps and provide deeper, more contextualized understanding of their professional and personal well-being.

studies have examined work–life balance and job satisfaction among teachers, there remain significant gaps in understanding these variables **specifically in relation to teaching experience at the primary level**. Earlier studies (Das & Roy, 2017; Mishra, 2017) mainly focused on general issues of balance and satisfaction without emphasizing experience-based differences. Subsequent research (Sharma, 2018; Patel & Mehta, 2018; Ali & Khan, 2018) indicated that experienced teachers tend to report higher job satisfaction and better balance, yet these studies largely present **overall findings** rather than **dimension-wise analysis**. Further studies (Bose, 2019; Gupta & Verma, 2019; Roy & Das, 2019) highlighted that less experienced teachers face greater stress and adjustment challenges, but they lack a **comprehensive comparative approach** that integrates both work–life balance and job satisfaction simultaneously. Research by Singh (2020), Nair and Thomas (2020), and Singh and Kaur (2020) acknowledged the importance of teaching experience but did not adequately explore **multidimensional components** such as time-based conflict, strain, emotional well-being, and family interaction. Recent studies (Khan, 2021; Verma, 2021; Kumar & Singh, 2021; Gupta, 2022) suggest that experience enhances coping ability, professional confidence, and satisfaction. However, these studies are often limited in terms of **sample size, regional diversity, and contextual depth**, especially in rural and semi-urban settings. Moreover, variables such as gender, institutional support, and career stage are not sufficiently examined in relation to teaching experience.

Although a growing body of research has examined work–life balance and job satisfaction among teachers, there remain significant gaps in understanding these variables **specifically in relation to teaching subjects**. Earlier studies (Khan, 2015) highlighted that workload and occupational stress vary across teaching roles, influencing balance and satisfaction, yet they did not explicitly analyze **subject-wise**

differences in depth. Similarly, general studies on teachers' work–life balance (2015–2017) focused on overall stress and workload without distinguishing between subject specializations. Subsequent research (Das & Roy, 2017; Mishra, 2017; Sharma, 2018) suggested that subject complexity influences workload and emotional strain; however, these studies largely provided **descriptive or general comparisons** rather than **dimension-wise analysis** such as time conflict, behavioural adjustment, and family interaction. Moreover, findings from broader studies indicate that work–life balance significantly affects job satisfaction and performance, but they do not isolate subject-specific variations. Further studies (Bose, 2019; Gupta & Verma, 2019; Roy & Das, 2019; Singh, 2020) acknowledged differences in workload and stress levels among teachers but lacked a **comprehensive comparative framework** integrating both work–life balance and job satisfaction across subject domains. Research by Nair and Thomas (2020) and related studies also emphasize workload and stress but do not sufficiently explore **multidimensional components** across subject groups.

Substantial body of research has examined the relationship between work–life balance and job satisfaction among teachers, several important gaps remain, particularly at the **primary school level**. Earlier foundational studies (Jeffrey H. Greenhaus & Gary N. Powell, 2006; D. Scott Carlson et al., 2007) established the theoretical linkage between work–life balance and well-being, but they were not specifically focused on school teachers. Subsequent empirical studies (Hafeez & Akbar, 2015; Agha et al., 2016; Gupta & Jain, 2017) confirmed a **positive relationship between work–life balance and job satisfaction**, yet these studies largely treated teachers as a general group without isolating **primary school teachers**, whose roles involve unique emotional and developmental responsibilities. Moreover, studies such as Johari et al. (2017) and Toropova et al. (2019) emphasized workload and working conditions but did not explore **dimension-wise aspects** like time-based conflict, strain, and family interaction in detail. Recent studies (Nair & Thomas, 2020; Rawal, 2021; Kumar & Singh, 2021; Apat, 2023) highlight the growing importance of work–life balance in influencing teachers' satisfaction, especially under changing educational contexts such as digital teaching and increased administrative demands. However, these studies are often limited in **scope, sample size, or regional focus**, particularly lacking representation from rural and semi-urban primary schools. Additionally, most existing research examines work–life balance and job satisfaction as **separate or broadly correlated constructs**, without deeply analyzing their **strength and nature of relationship across specific dimensions** (time, stress, behaviour, emotional well-being). There is also insufficient attention to moderating variables such as gender, experience, and institutional support in shaping this relationship. Therefore, there is a clear need for a **focused, comprehensive, and dimension-**

wise study examining the relationship between work–life balance and job satisfaction specifically among primary school teachers to generate more precise and context-specific insights.

Studies have examined the relationship between work–life balance and job satisfaction among teachers, limited research has specifically explored the **predictive role of work–life balance on job satisfaction among preparatory stage teachers** (classes III–V as per NEP 2020 structure). Most earlier studies (Kaur, 2010; Singh & Jain, 2011; Sharma, 2012) established that work–life balance is positively associated with job satisfaction, but they largely focused on teachers in general or at secondary and higher education levels. Subsequent research (Hafeez & Akbar, 2015; Agha et al., 2016; Gupta & Jain, 2017) confirmed that work–life balance significantly influences job satisfaction; however, these studies primarily used **correlational approaches** and did not explicitly examine **predictive relationships using statistical models**. Moreover, the unique pedagogical and emotional demands of preparatory stage teachers—such as foundational learning, child-centered approaches, and continuous assessment—have not been adequately considered.

Further studies (Nair & Thomas, 2020; Rawal, 2021; Kumar & Singh, 2021; Apat, 2023) highlight increasing workload, administrative pressure, and role conflict affecting teachers’ balance and satisfaction, especially in evolving educational contexts. However, these studies often lack **dimension-wise analysis** (time-based conflict, strain-based conflict, behavioural aspects) and do not focus on how these dimensions **predict job satisfaction differently**.

Key Findings

1. Limited Focus on Primary and Preparatory Stages

Most studies examine teachers as a general group, with insufficient attention to primary and preparatory stage teachers, whose roles involve unique emotional, developmental, and pedagogical demands.

2. Lack of Dimension-Wise Analysis

Existing research largely reports overall relationships, but fails to analyse specific dimensions of work–life balance such as time conflict, strain, behavioural adjustment, and family interaction in relation to job satisfaction.

3. Predominance of Correlational Studies

Most studies establish relationships between work–life balance and job satisfaction, but very few use predictive or advanced statistical models (e.g., regression) to determine causal influence.



4. Inadequate Comparative Studies

There is a lack of comprehensive comparative analysis across variables such as:

1. Inconsistent Findings on Gender Differences

Research on gender-based differences is inconclusive and fragmented, with limited dimension-wise examination of how male and female teachers experience work–life balance and job satisfaction.

2. Underexplored Role of Moderating Variables

Variables like teaching experience, career stage, and organizational support are not adequately studied as moderators influencing the relationship between work–life balance and job satisfaction.

3. Lack of Integration Between Constructs

Many studies treat work–life balance and job satisfaction as separate constructs, rather than examining their interrelationship in an integrated, multidimensional framework.

4. Limited Research on Appointment-Based Differences

Few studies deeply analyse how job security, benefits, and employment type influence both work–life balance and job satisfaction simultaneously.

5. Insufficient Research Post Educational Reforms

Recent educational changes, especially under National Education Policy 2020, have redefined teachers' roles, yet empirical research reflecting these changes is still scarce.

Educational and Policy Implications

Educational Implications

The findings underscore that improving work–life balance is essential for enhancing teachers' job satisfaction, effectiveness, and well-being. At the school level, administrators should focus on reducing excessive workload by minimizing non-teaching duties and streamlining administrative tasks. Providing flexible scheduling and realistic timelines for lesson planning, assessment, and reporting can help teachers manage their time more effectively. There is also a strong need to promote teacher well-being programs, including stress management workshops, counselling services, and peer support systems. Schools should foster a supportive work environment where teachers feel valued, recognized, and emotionally supported. Encouraging collaboration among teachers through team teaching and professional learning communities can reduce individual workload and enhance job satisfaction. Additionally, professional development programs should be designed to help teachers develop skills in time management, emotional regulation, and work–life integration. Special attention should be given to early-career and contractual teachers, who often



experience higher levels of stress and imbalance. Integrating digital tools in a balanced manner—without overburdening teachers—can also support efficiency and reduce workload pressure.

Policy Implications

At the policy level, there is a need to institutionalize work–life balance as a key component of teacher welfare. Education policies should include provisions for reasonable workload standards, ensuring that teaching responsibilities are aligned with teachers’ capacity and time constraints. Recruitment policies should aim to reduce dependence on temporary or contractual appointments by promoting job security and equitable benefits. Teacher policies aligned with National Education Policy 2020 should explicitly address teacher well-being by incorporating measures such as reduced administrative burden, improved teacher–student ratios, and supportive supervision systems. Policymakers should also ensure equitable distribution of resources across rural and urban schools to reduce disparities in workload and working conditions.

Furthermore, there is a need for gender-sensitive policies that acknowledge the dual responsibilities often faced by female teachers and provide supportive measures such as maternity benefits, flexible work options, and childcare support. Establishing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess teachers’ work–life balance and job satisfaction can help in designing evidence-based interventions.

Conclusion

The present synthesis of literature clearly establishes that work–life balance is a crucial determinant of job satisfaction among teachers, particularly within the demanding context of primary education. Across the reviewed studies, a consistent pattern emerges: teachers who are able to effectively balance their professional responsibilities with personal and family life report higher levels of satisfaction, motivation, and overall well-being. Conversely, imbalance leads to stress, burnout, reduced commitment, and diminished teaching effectiveness, ultimately affecting student learning outcomes. Despite this well-established relationship, the review highlights several critical limitations in existing research. A majority of studies adopt a generalized approach, with insufficient focus on primary and preparatory stage teachers, whose roles involve unique pedagogical and emotional demands. Furthermore, most research relies on correlational designs, offering limited insight into the predictive nature of work–life balance on job satisfaction. There is also a notable lack of dimension-wise analysis, particularly in areas such as time-based conflict, emotional strain, behavioral adjustments, and family interaction.

Additionally, important contextual and demographic variables—such as nature of appointment, teaching experience, subject specialization, gender, and institutional support—remain underexplored or



inconsistently addressed. The impact of evolving educational contexts, including increased administrative responsibilities and reforms like National Education Policy 2020, has further intensified the need for more focused and updated research. In light of these gaps, there is a clear need for comprehensive, comparative, and predictive studies that examine work–life balance and job satisfaction in an integrated and multidimensional manner. Future research should prioritize context-specific investigations, particularly in rural and semi-urban settings, and incorporate advanced statistical techniques to better understand causal relationships.

In conclusion, enhancing work–life balance is not merely a matter of individual well-being but a critical factor in improving teacher satisfaction, retention, and educational quality. Policymakers and educational institutions must therefore adopt supportive strategies that promote balance, reduce workload stress, and foster a healthy professional environment for primary school teachers.

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