FACTORS AFFECTING THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE OF FEMALE LECTURERS: A CASE STUDY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

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Abstract: ***This study develops and empirically tests a model of five factors influencing the work-life balance of female lecturers, based on a case study at the University of Labour and Social Affairs. Utilizing a quantitative research methodology, the study analyzes data collected from a sample of 145 female lecturers at the institution. The findings reveal five significant factors affecting their work-life balance: Role Overload (RO), Quality of Health (QoH), Time Management (TM), Support Network (SN), and Dependent Care (DC). Based on these results, the study proposes policy implications for the university and relevant stakeholders to better support female lecturers in achieving work-life balance, thereby enhancing their professional contributions.***

• Keywords: *female lecturers; work-life balance; university; the university of labour and social affairs.*

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1. Introduction

In the contemporary socio-economic landscape, the profound interplay between professional and personal life has elevated work-life balance (WLB) to a topic of increasing scholarly and managerial significance. Achieving this equilibrium is not only crucial for the health and well-being of employees but also directly influences their engagement and performance, thereby determining the sustainable development of an organization. Escalating job pressures, extended working hours, and the pervasive influence of technology have rendered the attainment of WLB a considerable challenge for workers across numerous sectors.

Within the higher education sector, these pressures are particularly acute. The academic profession, traditionally perceived as offering ample time for family, now confronts escalating demands for teaching excellence, scientific research capabilities, and international publications. For female lecturers in Vietnam, this challenge is magnified by societal prejudices and traditional gender roles. They often bear a "double burden," striving for academic career advancement while fulfilling domestic responsibilities as wives and mothers. This predicament places female lecturers at a high risk of role conflict, which adversely affects both their professional careers and personal lives.

Although numerous domestic and international studies have investigated the WLB of teachers and lecturers, such as the work of Umma & Zahana (2021) in Sri Lanka and Tran Cam Tu et al. (2023) in Hanoi, a significant research gap persists. Previous studies have typically focused on teachers in general or have been conducted in multidisciplinary settings. In-depth research into the specific factors affecting the WLB of female lecturers within a specialized social sciences institution like the University of Labour and Social Affairs where female staff and lecturers constitute over 70% of the workforce remains notably limited.

Stemming from this analysis, the primary objective of this paper is to identify and analyze the factors influencing the work-life balance of female lecturers at the University of Labour and Social Affairs.

2. Theoretical framework on factors affecting the work-life balance of female university lecturers

2.1. Role overload

Role overload among female lecturers occurs when they are required to undertake multiple roles and responsibilities that exceed their capacity and

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available time. This condition can lead to stress, fatigue, and diminished job performance and satisfaction.

2.2. Quality of health

Quality of health reflects the overall well-being of female lecturers, which may be compromised as they often prioritize professional and family responsibilities over self-care. It encompasses not only the absence of illness but also the ability to perform daily tasks, maintain social relationships, and experience a sense of happiness.

2.3. Time management

Time management for female lecturers involves the effective organization, allocation, and utilization of time to fulfill their duties in teaching, scientific research, community service, and personal development.

2.4. Dependent care

Dependent care constitutes a significant family role for female lecturers, alongside their professional responsibilities. Dependents may include children, parents, spouses, siblings, or other relatives who are unable to care for themselves due to age, illness, disability, or other serious conditions.

2.5. Support network

The support network of female lecturers comprises the relationships and resources they can rely on for assistance, encouragement, and aid in both their professional and personal lives.

2.6. Work-life balance of female lecturers

In recent decades, researchers have shown considerable interest in the health and well-being of the workforce, leading to increased attention on work-life balance as a critical determinant of employee happiness. Greenhaus et al. (2003) defined work-family balance as the extent to which individuals are equally engaged in and satisfied with their work and family roles. According to Padma & Reddy (2013), the work-life balance of lecturers merits special consideration due to the nature of their profession, which often extends beyond the university campus into their homes for preparation and research. Jumoke & Oyebanji (2016) noted that lecturers frequently dedicate extensive hours to their work, leaving limited time for other essential life aspects, thus creating an imbalance with negative consequences for themselves, their students, and the institution. Based on this theoretical foundation, this study conceptualizes the work-life balance of female lecturers as a positive state wherein they can effectively organize and manage their time to successfully fulfill their responsibilities at work, within their families, and in their communities.

3. Research hypotheses and model on factors affecting the work-life balance of female university lecturers

3.1. Research hypotheses

The investigation into factors influencing the work-life balance (WLB) of female lecturers is framed by foundational theories in social sciences and management.

Role theory posits that individuals assume multiple social roles (e.g., lecturer, mother, wife), and conflict arises when the expectations and demands of these roles are incompatible. Concurrently,

Scarcity theory asserts that personal resources such as time and energy are finite; consequently, when these limited resources must be allocated across numerous roles, competition and conflict become inevitable. Complementing these perspectives, Hobfoll's (1989)

Conservation of resources (COR) theory highlights the human tendency to accumulate, protect, and maintain resources. Psychological stress emerges when these resources are threatened, lost, or not replenished after investment. Collectively, these theories provide a robust framework for analyzing and formulating hypotheses regarding the relationship between various factors and the WLB of female lecturers.

Female lecturers in the modern academic environment frequently encounter role overload, as they must simultaneously perform three primary functions—teaching, scientific research, and community service—in addition to their familial roles. According to Role Theory, the overlap and sometimes conflicting demands of these roles inevitably lead to conflict. When a heavy workload is combined with substantial family responsibilities, finite resources like time and energy are excessively depleted, consistent with the principles of Scarcity Theory. This situation engenders stress and exhaustion, thereby diminishing the capacity to focus on both professional and personal domains. Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated this inverse relationship, identifying role overload as a significant negative predictor of WLB. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Role overload has a negative effect on the work-life balance of female lecturers.

Beyond external demands, internal resources play a decisive role. Quality of health, both physical and mental, is a core personal resource according to COR Theory. Good health provides the necessary energy and resilience to cope with pressures from multiple roles. Conversely, diminished health reduces an individual's capacity to manage stress, exacerbating work-life imbalance. Similarly, effective time management skills are considered a personal resource that optimizes the use of the scarce commodity of time (Scarcity Theory). The ability to organize and prioritize tasks systematically enables female lecturers to complete their responsibilities without extending work hours, thus mitigating stress and creating space for personal life. Empirical research supports the positive correlation of these two factors with WLB. Based on this reasoning, the next two hypotheses are proposed:

H2: Quality of health has a positive effect on the work-life balance of female lecturers.

H3: Time management has a positive effect on the work-life balance of female lecturers.

In contrast to factors that deplete resources are those that help conserve and augment them. COR Theory suggests that a support network from family and colleagues is a crucial social resource. This support can be emotional (e.g., listening, sharing), instrumental (e.g., assisting with tasks), or informational (e.g., offering advice). Access to such support provides female lecturers with additional resources to manage stress and alleviate the burden of work and family responsibilities, thereby preserving their personal energy. Research by Fatima & Sahibzada (2012) and Adekoya et al. (2021) confirms that support from both family and the workplace positively impacts WLB. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Support network has a positive effect on the work-life balance of female lecturers.

Among family roles, dependent care (e.g., for young children or elderly parents) is one of the most resource-intensive responsibilities, representing a specific manifestation of role pressure. According to Scarcity Theory, the time and mental energy devoted to caregiving reduce the resources available for professional duties and other personal activities. In the Vietnamese cultural context, this responsibility is often heavily placed on women, making it difficult for them to fully dedicate themselves to their careers. Studies by Fernando & Umma (2016) and Feeney & Stritch (2017) have indicated that childcare responsibilities negatively affect women's WLB and career advancement opportunities. Thus, the following hypotheses can be formulated:

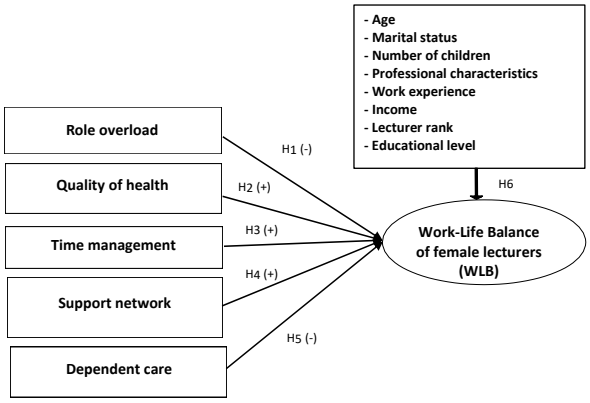
H5: Dependent care has a negative effect on the work-life balance of female lecturers.

H6: The demographic control variables of female lecturers affect their work-life balance.

3.2. Research model

Based on the synthesis of Role Theory, Scarcity Theory, and Conservation of Resources Theory, this study proposes the research model depicted in Figure 1. The model illustrates the hypothesized relationships between the independent variables (Role Overload, Quality of Health, Time Management, Support Network, Dependent Care) and the dependent variable (Work-Life Balance of female lecturers), while also accounting for demographic control variables.

Picture 1. Proposed research model by the research team



4. Research methodology

The study was conducted in three phases: (1) preliminary qualitative research, (2) preliminary quantitative research, and (3) formal quantitative research.

The measurement scales in this study consist of six primary constructs: (1) Work-Life Balance of female lecturers (WLB), (2) Role Overload (RO), (3) Quality of Health (QoH), (4) Time Management (TM), (5) Support Network (SN), and (6) Dependent Care (DC). The WLB scale was developed based on the work of Greenhaus et al. (2003), comprising three observed variables (WLB1, WLB2, WLB3). The scales for Role Overload (six observed variables:

RO1-RO6), Quality of Health (four observed variables: QoH1-QoH4), and Dependent Care (five observed variables: DC1-DC5) were adapted from Mathew and Panchanatham (2011). The Support Network (SN) scale, divided into two dimensions - support from colleagues (SFC1-SFC4) and support from family (SFF1-SFF4) - was adapted from Caplan et al. (1980). All observed variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Regarding the sampling method, a survey was administered to 150 female lecturers at the main campus of the University of Labour and Social Affairs in Hanoi between October and December 2024, using a random and convenience sampling technique. The sample size was determined based on the number of variables in the model. According to Hoang Trong and Chu Nguyen Mong Ngoc (2008), a sample size that is at least four to five times the number of variables is considered adequate for factor analysis. With 30 measurement items in this study, the required sample size is 150 (30 items × 5). Consequently, considering practical constraints of time, personnel, and finances, the authors established a target sample size of 150 observations.

This research employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to analyze the survey data. Primary data collected via questionnaires were processed using SPSS and SmartPLS 4.0. The PLS-SEM analysis involved a two-step evaluation process: assessment of the measurement model and assessment of the structural model.

5. Research results

5.1. Demographic profile of respondents

Out of 150 distributed questionnaires, 145 were deemed valid for analysis after eliminating incomplete or invalid responses, resulting in a response rate of 96.7%.

The descriptive statistics of the sample are as follows:

In terms of **age**, 29.7% of respondents were between 30 and 40 years old, 63.4% were between 41 and 50, and 6.9% were over 50.

Regarding **marital status**, 93.8% were married, 4.8% were single, and 1.4% reported another status.

As for the **number of children**, 86.9% had one or two children, 10.3% had three or more, and 2.8% had no children.

In terms of **professional characteristics**, 78.6% of respondents were primarily engaged in teaching and scientific research, while 17.2% held the position of Head of Department and 4.1% were Head of a Faculty.

The majority of participants had extensive **work experience**, with 62.8% having over 15 years of service and 33.1% having between 10 and 15 years.

The monthly **income** distribution showed that 40.0% earned between 15-20 million VND, 36.6% earned between 11-15 million VND, and 20.0% earned over 20 million VND.

For **lecturer rank**, 62.8% were Lecturers, 35.2% were Principal Lecturers, and 2.1% were Senior Lecturers.

Finally, regarding **educational level**, 49.7% held a Doctoral degree, 49.0% held a Master's degree, and 1.4% were Associate Professors.

5.2. Measurement model analysis

The measurement model, which includes 6 constructs and 26 observed variables, was analyzed. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Construct reliability and validity

Dimension	Indicator	Outer loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	C.R	AVE
Support from colleagues (SFC)	SFC 1	0,867	0,891	0,925	0,755
	SFC 2	0,901			
	SFC 3	0,894			
	SFC 4	0,812			
Support from family (SFF)	SFF 1	0,808	0,851	0,90	0,692
	SFF 2	0,848			
	SFF 3	0,879			
	SFF 4	0,79			
Dependent Care (DC)	DC2	0,775	0,772	0,854	0,597
	DC3	0,621			
	DC4	0,825			
	DC5	0,85			
Quality of Health (QoH)	QoH1	0,794	0,736	0,849	0,653
	QoH2	0,874			
	QoH4	0,752			
Role Overload (RO)	RO2	0,747	0,721	0,81	0,517
	RO3	0,77			
	RO5	0,685			
	RO6	0,67			
Time Management (TM)	TM1	0,548	0,799	0,865	0,623
	TM2	0,846			
	TM3	0,873			
	TM4	0,845			
Work-Life Balance of female lecturers (WLB)	SWLB1	0,894	0,865	0,917	0,787
	SWLB2	0,893			
	SWLB3	0,874			

The findings in Table 1 show that all outer loadings of the observed variables are greater than 0.7. Additionally, the Cronbach's Alpha

and Composite Reliability (C.R.) values for all constructs exceed the 0.7 threshold, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct is above 0.5. Therefore, the analysis confirms that the data possesses the necessary reliability and convergent validity.

Table 2 indicates that discriminant validity is established, as all Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio values are below the recommended threshold of 0.9.

Table 2. Discriminant validity

	Dependent Care (DC)	Quality of Health (QoH)	Role Overload (RO)	Time Management (TM)
Quality of Health	0,181			
Role Overload	0,772	0,160		
Time Management	0,140	0,861	0,186	
Work-Life Balance of female lecturers	0,546	0,697	0,473	0,660

5.3. Structural model analysis

First, the issue of multicollinearity was examined. Table 3 shows that all Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values in this study are less than 3, indicating that there is no multicollinearity problem among the predictor constructs.

Table 3. VIF, f^2, and R^2 values

	R^2	Work-Life Balance of female lecturers (WLB)	
		f^2	VIF
Time Management (TM)	0,621	0,165	1,966
Support Network (SN)		0,100	1,175
Quality of Health (QoH)		0,083	1,97
Dependent Care (DC)		0,066	1,648
Role Overload (RO)		0,063	1,552

Kết quả cho thấy các giá trị R^2 > 62% mức độ giải thích của biến độc lập đối với sự biến thiên của biến phụ thuộc được chấp nhận. Kết quả cho thấy tất cả các liên kết có mức độ ảnh hưởng tương đối với f^2 > 0,02, cho thấy kích thước ảnh hưởng hợp. Kết quả đánh giá mô hình cấu trúc, bao gồm hệ số đường dẫn và giá trị p được trình bày trong Bảng 4.

The results indicate an R-squared (R^2) value greater than 0.621 (or 62%), which signifies a substantial level of explanatory power of the independent variables on the variance of the dependent variable. Furthermore, the analysis of effect size (f^2) reveals that all path coefficients have a meaningful impact, with f^2 values exceeding the 0.02 threshold.

Để kiểm tra các giả thuyết mô hình cấu trúc PLS được sử dụng. Trong nghiên cứu này, có năm giả thuyết tác động trực tiếp đã được đề xuất. Mức ý nghĩa 5% được đề xuất để làm căn cứ chấp nhận hoặc bác bỏ các giả thuyết. Bảng 4 cho thấy tác động trực tiếp, chúng cho thấy rằng tất cả các giả thuyết đều được chấp nhận.

The structural model assessment, including path coefficients and p-values, is presented in Table 4. To test the hypotheses, the PLS structural model was utilized. Five direct effect hypotheses were proposed in this study, with a significance level of 5% ($p < 0.05$) established as the criterion for acceptance or rejection. The results in Table 4 confirm that all five hypotheses are supported.

Table 4. The results of testing the research hypotheses

Hypothesis	Path relationship	β	P-values	Conclusion
H1	Role Overload (RO) -> Work-Life Balance of female lecturers (WLB)	- 0,192	0,002	Supported
H2	Quality of Health (QoH) -> Work-Life Balance of female lecturers (WLB)	0,249	0,001	Supported
H3	Time Management (TM)n -> Work-Life Balance of female lecturers (WLB)	0,351	0,000	Supported
H4	Support Network (SN) -> Work-Life Balance of female lecturers (WLB)	0,211	0,003	Supported
H5	Dependent Care (DC) -> Work-Life Balance of female lecturers (WLB)	- 0,204	0,002	Supported

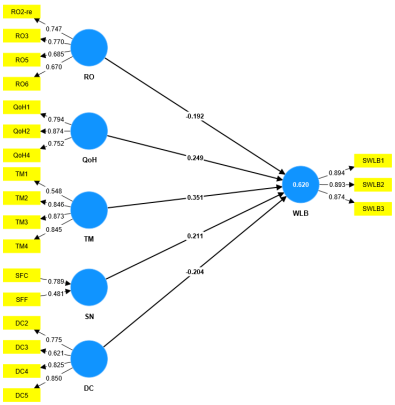
Specifically, the findings support the hypothesized relationships between the constructs. Quality of Health ($\beta = 0.249$, $p < 0.05$), Time Management ($\beta = 0.351$, $p < 0.05$), and Support Network ($\beta = 0.211$, $p < 0.05$) all have a significant positive influence on the work-life balance of female lecturers. Conversely, Role Overload ($\beta = -0.192$, $p < 0.05$) and Dependent Care ($\beta = -0.204$, $p < 0.05$) exhibit a significant negative impact. These results imply that enhancing health quality, time management skills, and support networks, while concurrently minimizing role overload and dependent care burdens, will improve the work-life balance for female lecturers. Among these factors, Time Management emerges as the most influential predictor.

Table 5. Assessment of control variables

Path relationship	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard Deviation - STDEV	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Faculty-> WLB	0,419	0,186	0,505	0,828	0,408
Civil Status-> WLB	0,084	0,011	0,515	0,164	0,87
Age -> WLB	0,117	0,127	0,184	0,634	0,526
Number of children -> WLB	0,188	-0,02	0,607	0,309	0,757
Position -> WLB	-0,339	-0,16	0,282	1,202	0,23
Years of experience -> WLB	-0,208	-0,246	0,149	1,395	0,163
Monthly Income -> WLB	-0,187	-0,198	0,113	1,659	0,097
Lecturer Rank -> WLB	0,235	0,262	0,183	1,285	0,199
Educational qualifications -> WLB	0,262	0,318	0,231	1,134	0,257

Regarding the control variables, the analysis presented in Table 5 shows that their corresponding p-values range from 0.097 to 0.757, all of which are greater than the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, it is concluded that the demographic control variables do not have a statistically significant effect on the work-life balance of female lecturers. Figure 2 illustrates the final results of the tested model.

Figure 2. Results of the model test



5.4. Discussion of findings

The empirical results reveal the descending order of factors impacting the work-life balance of female lecturers as follows: Time Management, Support Network, Quality of Health, Dependent Care, and Role Overload.

The findings underscore the critical role of Time Management as the most potent factor. Following this, the Support Network is identified as the second most significant influence. A robust support system contributes to greater life satisfaction, enhances job performance, and fosters a sense of happiness derived from familial understanding and shared responsibilities.

The Quality of Health ranks third in importance. Health-related issues not only worsen work-life imbalance but also impede the career success of female lecturers. A higher level of health and a better work-life balance are directly linked to greater dedication to both domestic life and professional motivation, leading to more significant contributions. Conversely, increased working hours and stress can lead to physical ailments such as insomnia, anxiety disorders, and depression, which in turn may precipitate further health risks.

The final two factors, Dependent Care and Role Overload, also present significant negative impacts. These results collectively suggest that to achieve and maintain work-life balance, strategic focus should be placed on reducing role overload, enhancing health, promoting effective time management, strengthening support networks, and facilitating shared responsibility for dependent care.

6. Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the influence of five factors - role overload, quality of health, time management, support network, and dependent care - on the work-life balance of female university lecturers. Based on a survey of 145 female lecturers at the University of Labour and Social Affairs and analyzed using the PLS-SEM method, the results confirm that all five factors significantly affect their work-life balance.

The research offers important contributions to both theory and practice. Theoretically, it provides empirical evidence for a model of factors influencing the WLB of female lecturers within the specific context of a social sciences university in Vietnam. Practically, the findings and recommendations serve as a valuable scientific basis for the university's leadership and human resource managers to formulate effective support policies. Such initiatives can empower female lecturers to better balance their careers and personal lives, ultimately fostering greater job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and dedication to the university's overall development.

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