

EXPLORING THE WORK-LIFE DYNAMICS OF ISABELA STATE UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC STAFF: BASIS FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT

EXPLORANDO A DINÂMICA ENTRE TRABALHO E VIDA DO CORPO ACADÊMICO DA UNIVERSIDADE ESTADUAL DE ISABELA: BASE PARA O DESENVOLVIMENTO DE POLÍTICAS

Article received on: 6/23/2025

Article accepted on: 9/29/2025

Mary Grace O. Gumpal

Isabela State University (ISU)

Isabela, Philippines

Orcid: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7932-1568>

marygrace.o.gumpal@isu.edu.ph

Pio D. Bagtilay, Jr

Isabela State University (ISU)

Isabela, Philippines

Orcid: <http://orcid.org/0009-0000-0655-7799>

pio.d.bagtilayjr@isu.edu.ph

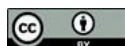
The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest

Abstract

This study examines the work-life equilibrium experienced by male and female academic staff at Isabela State University, Philippines. Understanding the intricacies of their work-life dynamics is paramount, as an imbalance may precipitate heightened stress, depression, and other psychological and physical ailments. Employing a sequential explanatory design, the quantitative findings reveal that both male and female academic staff exhibit poor work-life balance, signifying potential risks to their overall well-being. Through qualitative analysis, five prominent themes emerged: (1) adaptation within the workplace, (2) challenges of maintaining equilibrium, (3) introspection and guilt, (4) the significance of work-life balance, and (5) "wish ko lang" (aspirational desires). These themes offer deeper insights into the participants' experiences and the myriad factors influencing their work-life balance. Based on these findings, the study advocates for the implementation of a comprehensive work-life policy tailored to the specific needs of academic staff, aimed at fostering a healthier and more sustainable professional environment. This aligns with the institution's response to SDG 3, ensuring healthy lives and promote well-being and SDG 5, which seeks to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls." Addressing work-life balance issues of teachers

Resumo

Este estudo examina o equilíbrio entre vida profissional e pessoal vivenciado por docentes e docentes da Universidade Estadual de Isabela, nas Filipinas. Compreender as complexidades da dinâmica entre vida profissional e pessoal é fundamental, pois um desequilíbrio pode precipitar estresse elevado, depressão e outros problemas psicológicos e físicos. Utilizando um modelo explicativo sequencial, os resultados quantitativos revelam que tanto docentes quanto docentes apresentam baixo equilíbrio entre vida profissional e pessoal, o que representa riscos potenciais para seu bem-estar geral. Por meio da análise qualitativa, emergiram cinco temas proeminentes: (1) adaptação no ambiente de trabalho, (2) desafios para manter o equilíbrio, (3) introspecção e culpa, (4) a importância do equilíbrio entre vida profissional e pessoal e (5) "wish ko lang" (desejos aspiracionais). Esses temas oferecem insights mais profundos sobre as experiências dos participantes e a miríade de fatores que influenciam seu equilíbrio entre vida profissional e pessoal. Com base nesses resultados, o estudo defende a implementação de uma política abrangente de vida profissional e pessoal, adaptada às necessidades específicas dos docentes, com o objetivo de promover um ambiente profissional mais saudável e sustentável. Isso está alinhado com a resposta da instituição ao ODS 3, que garante vidas



will consequently ensure quality education (SDG 4).

Keywords: Academic Staff. Isabela State University. Sequential Explanatory Design. Work-Life Dynamics. Sustainable Development Goals.

saudáveis e promove o bem-estar, e ao ODS 5, que busca "alcançar a igualdade de gênero e empoderar todas as mulheres e meninas". Abordar as questões de equilíbrio entre vida profissional e pessoal dos professores garantirá, conseqüentemente, uma educação de qualidade (ODS 4).

Palavras-chave: *Corpo Docente. Universidade Estadual de Isabela. Design Explicativo Sequencial. Dinâmica entre Vida Profissional e Pessoal. Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável.*

1 INTRODUCTION

The topic of work-life balance has gained increasing attention in recent years, particularly in the academic world where the demands of research, teaching, and administrative responsibilities can be all-consuming. The pursuit of work-life balance has become a key factor in attracting and retaining talented academic staff, as well as in ensuring their well-being and productivity. However, achieving work-life balance can be a complex and multifaceted issue, influenced by a range of individual, organizational, and societal factors.

In a local study conducted, (Cabrera, 2019) found that married career women and working mothers, particularly teachers, are confronted with many issues. At the forefront of these issues is the work-home interface, such as having less time to do their hobbies, socialize, and engage in leisure activities to relax. They also felt that their relationship with their partners and their families was already at the expense of missing their input.

Understanding the work-life balance of faculty is essential to help them survive and thrive under the pressure of multi-faceted academic demands and identify organizational actions to help the faculty achieve a balanced life. Their work demands may limit the faculty members' ability to spend time on the needs they deem necessary to them, thus limiting the potential to achieve a life balance (Owens et al., 2018). The demands of both work and non-work roles of faculty may lead to high stress (Eagan et al., 2014), depression, other psychological problems, and eventually physical problems (Wilkinsons, 2013).

There are various ways to define work-life balance. In his seminal work (Greenhaus, 2003) defined work-life balance as the extent to which an individual is

equally engaged in – and equally satisfied with – his or her work role and family role. For this study, work-life balance refers to the proper management of demands associated with work and non-work roles that offer happiness and fulfillment to the individual (Gumpal, 2021). Non-work roles may include but are not limited to family, personal growth and development, social interest, social and civic involvement, and others. Work-life balance has been studied mainly within the context of business organizations and only a few in the context of the educational sector.

Responding to the demands of multiple roles as teachers, it may result in conflicts that eventually lead to mental health concerns like stress, anxiety, and depression, not to include the physical effects it could cause as mentioned above. Ensuring work-life balance may offer organizational benefits and personal growth and development, such as self-confidence, crisis management, problem-solving, increased work engagement, and efficiency. Employees become more creative and derive more satisfaction from their jobs. They become better team players and communicators, leading to a healthy working environment. (Darcy, 2012) reported that work-life balance can increase organizational productivity and commitment of employees. He further explained that work-life balance is also associated with good health, thus reducing absenteeism and turnover, thus saving a high cost for the organization.

The findings of this research can provide insights and recommendations for both individuals and institutions to promote a healthier and more sustainable academic culture. It will be the Institution's response to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 3, which is to "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages," and to SDG number 5, which is to "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls." by addressing the work-life balance issues, particularly of those married and female faculty members who assume larger roles. Consequently, this will address also SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth and SDG 4 -Quality education.

The majority of research on work-life balance has historically concentrated on commercial enterprises, with relatively little research on the educational industry. This emphasizes a major deficiency in the literature, particularly in the context of developing nations like the Philippines, where the educational environment faces unique difficulties. and the dynamics involved in work-life balance. The current study aims to add to this comparatively sparse body of research by examining work-life balance among teachers and education administrators at Philippine higher education institutions.

2 OBJECTIVES

The general purpose of the research is to explore the work-life balance of the academic staff of the ISU- Echague cluster. Specifically, it aims to:

1. Describe the work-life balance of the female and male faculty members of the ISU- Echague cluster;
2. Identify the differential situations in the work-life balance of the faculty members on the account of age, sex, civil status, and tenure;
3. Explore the factors that exacerbate the current work-life balance issues of the male and female academic staff;

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

In today's society, individuals strive to play many roles in order to find satisfaction over jobs, marriage, parenting, civic involvement, and more (Shiels, 2014). Many employees work about half their day before going home, but teaching professionals have a different reality when their houses become an extension of their job. Many times, professors take their work home to grade beyond normal hours, blurring the lines between personal and professional life (Shastri, 2015). Though teaching at college could seem fulfilling, the great variety of obligations including teaching, counseling, research, extension, and several services makes juggling work and life difficult. Intense and difficult personal life (Key, 2013). Along with family obligations including self-care, elder care, and childcare, faculty members manage academic activities like as lecture preparation, grading, and administrative chores. These expectations were exacerbated by the epidemic as professors had to generate resources for simultaneous and asynchronous instruction, therefore greatly increasing their workload.

Owens et al. (2018), citing Yordy's research, show how high academic stress severely influences professors' work-life balance. He pointed out six main stressors that strongly forecast faculty's failure to preserve a good balance: lack of personal time, self-imposed high expectations, committee responsibility, institutional processes, publication and research expectations, coworker stress Together these elements produce a difficult environment where professors find themselves juggling competing professional and personal responsibilities.

Personal time constraints restrict leisure, family interaction, and rest possibilities, therefore causing weariness and poor well-being. Many times, faculty members' high standards force them to overreach themselves in the quest for excellence, but they also risk burnout. Exacerbating workload pressures, committee work adds administrative demands that consume time without immediate academic benefit. Faculty are constantly under intellectual and time demands due to the great demand for research output—including publication. Institutional policies, often bureaucratic and time-consuming, add other obstacles that postpone project completion and fuel frustration. At last, interpersonal conflict with coworkers may produce a tense climate that stifles support and cooperation.

These factors interact to generate chronic stress that affects faculty members' job satisfaction, physical and psychological health, and performance. The complicated juggling act of several responsibilities makes it hard for academics to draw lines between their professional and personal lives, increasing emotional stress. Understanding these stresses highlights how important it is for organizations to put in place support networks including flexible scheduling, workload management, mental health services, and encouragement of collegial settings. Helping professors rediscover equilibrium, safeguard their well-being, and maintain academic production in the face of difficulties depends on addressing these issues.

3.1 Health risk of unbalanced life

The mental and physical health of university professors is significantly affected by the demands made upon them from both job-related and non-work-related roles. Studies continually reveal that chronic job stress can cause mental issues including depression and anxiety and can ultimately result in significant physical health concerns. (Eagan et al., 2014; Wilkin, 2013). Chronic stress depletes the body's resources, therefore compromising the immune system and making people susceptible to a range of diseases from cardiovascular illnesses to simple colds and musculoskeletal pain. Excessive strain on the cardiovascular system as a result of chronic stress increases the risk of heart attacks and other life-threatening illnesses by compromising the body's capacity to preserve homeostasis.

Apart from the immediate physical effects, ongoing stress affects essential cognitive and emotional processes. Over time, it degrades attention, memory retention, and general cognitive performance. Faculty members under ongoing stress frequently say they are more irritable, have mood swings, and have signs of depression, which not only impair their own health but also stress their personal relationships and business contacts. The cyclical character of stress and burnout can cause people to isolate themselves even more, therefore decreasing their ability for social support—a key buffer against stress.

Particularly among academic professors, emotional burnout—a psychological syndrome caused by extended exposure to work stressors—is rather widespread. Research show that the triad of stressors—teaching, research, and administrative duties—each separately adds to emotional exhaustion, which mediates the connection between work-related stress and lower life satisfaction. Emotional burnout saps enthusiasm, motivation, and energy, therefore lowering job performance and general quality of life. With faculty members trying to fulfill demanding expectations across several spheres at once, the competitive and rigorous nature of the academic setting frequently worsens this burnout.

Uncontrolled stress has drawbacks that go beyond personal health and affect organizational results like employee retention, output, and job satisfaction. High levels of burnout and stress much influence faculty turnover, absence, and lower organizational commitment. These impacts sabotage the stability and efficiency of educational institutions, hence it is absolutely critical for colleges to recognize, evaluate, and reduce faculty stress using thorough support networks. Programs emphasizing workload management, mental health awareness, flexible work schedules, and the building of good collegial connections have been shown to lessen the negative effects of stress and advance faculty well-being.

3.2 Work-life balance in the workplace

As Darcy (2010) clarifies, work-life balance is essential in influencing main outcomes in the workplace. Employee turnover, stress levels, organizational commitment, absenteeism, job satisfaction, and productivity are all much affected by it. Employees who strike a balance between personal life and professional commitments often do better, feel more satisfied in their jobs, and show more allegiance to their

employers. Conversely, a conflict can increase stress and result in discontent, greater absenteeism, and a higher chance of staff departing the company. Maintaining work-life balance is hence seen as crucial for creating a good and long-lasting workplace.

One of the most important problems affected by work-life balance is employee turnover. Studies reveal that employees who have difficulties balancing professional and personal obligations could feel overwhelmed and leave their employment in search of better possibilities. Research show that good work-life balance lowers intentions for employee turnover by enhancing job happiness and organizational loyalty. Employees who feel supported in managing their duties often stay longer and work more effectively, hence lowering the costs and disturbances related with regular staff turnovers.

Another job problem closely connected with work-life balance is stress. Poor balance usually causes increased stress, which lowers employee concentration and productivity besides influencing physical and mental health. Chronic stress causes burnout, a condition marked by emotional exhaustion and detachment that greatly cripples motivation and performance. Employers who give work-life balance priority by means of Reducing stress levels greatly can help workers keep their well-being and sustain top performance by means of flexible scheduling, wellness programs, and supporting policies.

Employees who have work-life balance improve their organizational loyalty and job satisfaction. When employees feel their job and personal lives are respected and accommodated, their emotional attachment and loyalty to their employer is enhanced. Commitment shows this. Likewise improves job satisfaction as workers see their personal needs and those of their jobs as being better suited. High job satisfaction and commitment to the company result in greater morale, cooperation, and general office harmony that helps both the institution and the staff members.

Finally, work-life balance is intimately connected to productivity. Efficiently managed time and energy helps employees to be more creative, engaged, and productive. Conversely, imbalance and stress reduce output, sometimes leading to errors, absenteeism, and lower quality output. Organizations that create an environment favorable of work-life balance not only raise employee well-being but also boost their operational efficiency.

3.3 Theoretical framework

Role theory holds that every worker represents a particular mix of job roles, each carrying particular rights and responsibilities. People work to juggle the expectations linked with each role by simultaneously holding several positions (Shastri, 2015). A married junior manager may be a supervisor at work, a subordinate to top management, and a spouse at home, for instance. Especially when the demands of one job conflict with one's ability to execute another, properly reconciling these concurrent responsibilities may pose several difficulties and role clashes.

Building on the connection between the two primary spheres of a person's life, Clark (2000) presents the work-family border theory. These spheres are different, yet they constantly shape one another. The theory holds that people are border crossers who constantly move between the spheres of family and the world of employment. People dynamically mold and compromise the limits between these two worlds, therefore impacting their relationship with and behavior within each one. This dynamic boundary management process can be complicated as people try to strike a balance between caring family life and meeting job responsibilities. Talukder (2016) observes that this two-way influence and boundary bargaining make it difficult to methodically research the idea of work-life balance.

For both companies and workers, a good work-life balance is a realistic and helpful objective rather than an unreachable ideal. Higher job satisfaction and well-being result from people successfully balancing their professional and personal obligations. Balanced workers often find more pleasure in life and relational satisfaction as well as being more efficient, involved, and driven in their job. Moreover, such equilibrium results in less absenteeism and fewer turnover intentions as workers are less prone to suffer burnout or persistent stress that could drive them to quit their jobs.

By establishing helpful policies and surroundings that acknowledge the many obligations of their staff, organizations are instrumental in helping to achieve work-life balance. Offering flexible work schedules, tools for stress reduction and wellness, and a culture that values and honors individual life obligations comprise this. Employees feel appreciated and are more inclined to reciprocate with higher discretionary effort and corporate commitment when businesses show knowledge and backing.

4 METHODOLOGY

The study employed a mixed-method research design (sequential explanatory), this strategically integrated quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a more thorough knowledge of the research issue. In this approach, this quantitative data gathering and analysis, which yields numerical results providing a broad view of the phenomena under study. These early results ground the next qualitative phase, when qualitative data are gathered and examined to clarify and expand on the quantitative results in more depth.

When researchers want to explain surprising or complicated quantitative results, sequential explanatory design is especially helpful. The qualitative phase lets one investigate hidden reasons, points of view, and processes that quantitative data alone might miss by providing a contextual and nuanced understanding. Survey findings could, for instance, point to a notable trend or pattern, yet the qualitative data—often gathered through interviews or focus groups—can reveal why these patterns occur, exist, participants' perceptions of them, and the personal or environmental influences on them. This sequential layering of information enhances the validity and richness of the findings, therefore supporting more informed interpretations and advice.

Furthermore, the design encourages a methodical integration of both data types such that the quantitative findings inform and direct the qualitative phase. This integration helps the general coherence and narrative of the study by allowing a holistic investigation of the problems at hand. Moreover, the sequential approach of the design offers flexibility that lets academics change qualitative data collection instruments depending on quantitative results and, if needed, re-engage participants to deepen knowledge. This cyclical approach guarantees that the research stays reactive and reflective of new discoveries.

One more major benefit of the sequential explanatory approach is its fit with research questions mostly quantitative yet needing qualitative interpretation. It works especially well for applied research contexts where clear decision-making depends on knowledge of both the what and the why. The design appeals to a range of audiences—including practitioners, legislators, and researchers—by accepting both numerical data and rich, descriptive material, hence increasing the practical relevance and influence of the research.

In essence, the serial explanatory mixed-method approach provides a strong basis for thoroughly tackling research questions.

4.1 Participants

The participants in this study were the female and male faculty members of Isabela State University Echague cluster (Echague, Jones & Angadanan campus) regardless of their tenure for 2021-2022. Random sampling was used in the quantitative phase while purposive sampling was employed for the qualitative phase.

4.2 Measures/instruments

4.2.1 Quantitative measures

The study utilized Work-Life Balance Scale created by Hayman (2005). Measuring three particular areas, this tool is a 15-item self-report scale: Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL), Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW), and Work Personal Life Improvement (WPLE). The first domain, WIPL, reflects the extent to which employment obligations negatively affect personal life—including factors like disregarding personal needs, prioritizing personal life on hold for employment and fighting to reconcile non-work and professional activities. For instance, the second domain, PLIW, judges how personal life demands conflict with work performance—feeling drained of energy required for work because of personal Problems—that is, having difficulty focusing at work due of family problems. WPLE next assesses the good interactions between personal life and job, namely how one area can improve the other, therefore producing better moods or Higher energy at work either follows a satisfying personal life or vice versa. Three spheres working together offer a nuanced assessment of how personal and work life interact, therefore emphasizing synergies and clashes.

Respondent indications of their level of agreement with each statement using a 5-point Likert format help to quantify the degrees of interference or enhancement seen, hence defining the scale's design. High marks in the interference domains imply reduced bad effects, whereas great scores in the enhancement domain point to strong positive spillover effects, both of which match to better work-life balance. Prior studies have

verified the psychometric characteristics of this scale, demonstrating good reliability across all three dimensions. Hayman's scale is therefore a strong tool for capturing the complex character of work-life balance as seen by staff, therefore facilitating both thorough measurement and insightful analysis.

4.2.2 *Qualitative measures*

Qualitatively, the research utilized a self-structured interview guide meant to investigate faculty members' personal experiences and viewpoints of work-life balance more thoroughly. Expert panel verification verified this interview guide to guarantee the questions were pertinent, concise, and thorough in reflecting the subtleties of how faculty members manage their personal as well as professional life. Rich, contextual insights from the qualitative indicators clarified the causes behind the survey scores, therefore supplementing the quantitative scale and enabling respondents to share detailed stories on their difficulties, coping mechanisms, and goals for job-life balance.

4.3 **Profile of the participants**

The study was participated by 113 faculty members of ISU Echague Cluster, 80 or 70.80% female faculty and 33 or 29.20% male faculty responded to the online survey. This gender allocation implies that teaching is still seen stereotypically as a mostly feminine profession, a perception that is in line with more general social and cultural norms in several nations, including the Philippines. Such ideas might affect academic staff recruitment procedures as preconceived ideas about gender roles may inform tastes or biases in employment judgments. Hiring panels, for instance, might unconsciously favor female applicants for teaching jobs based on the belief that women are better suited to parenting and educational tasks roles, especially in lower or middle-level academic positions.

Deeply entrenched and frequently linked with women in caring and supporting roles, gender stereotypes in the teaching profession usually expect males to pursue occupations seen as more authoritarian or technological. These stereotypes can limit diversity in faculty composition, perhaps dissuading qualified male applicants from entering or moving up in academic careers because of seen contradictions with

conventional male roles. Conversely, female academics may experience expectations based on their gender in terms of conduct, career path, or amount of work, which could affect their professional opportunities and experiences for advancement.

Stereotyping teaching as a female job also impacts institutional dynamics and could help to maintain gender disparities in leadership and decision-making jobs. Women frequently dominate faculty positions yet remain underrepresented in top administrative jobs, reflecting a glass ceiling limiting professional development. This dynamic could strengthen a cycle in which male underrepresentation is caused not just by hiring prejudices but also by fewer role models and mentors for aspiring male academics.

Furthermore affecting interactions inside academic institutions and corporate culture are these stereotypes. Female-dominated faculties might have particular workplace challenges brought on by gendered communication styles, expectations for emotional labor, and juggling family obligations with professional requirements. Identifying and challenging these stereotypes is essential for establishing fair opportunities for all applicants regardless of gender and for designing inclusive recruiting methods that value merit and diversity.

In essence, the unequal presence of women faculty at ISU Echague Cluster shows ongoing gender assumptions about the teaching profession. Hiring procedures, faculty diversity, workplace culture, and career development all depend on these stereotypes. Promoting equality and maximizing the abilities of all students depends on gender-sensitive hiring procedures, awareness campaigns, and support systems that institutions targeted toward eliminating historical gender prejudices in academia.

5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study revealed that a significant proportion of participants (39%) are between 30 and 39 years old, indicating that Isabela State University Echague cluster has a relatively young academic workforce. Individuals within this age range are typically in the early stages of family-building and career establishment, factors which can contribute to achieving a balanced life.

Furthermore, the results indicated that a majority of the participants (78 or 69%) are married, 28 or 24.8% are single, and 7 or 6.2% are widows, widowers, or single

parents. The civil status of these individuals may influence their non-work roles, thereby affecting their work-life balance.

A notable finding is that the majority of the academic staff are female and married (62 or 54.86%), highlighting the impact of multiple roles on work-life balance. In contrast, only 16 or 14.15% of the faculty are married males. Among the married faculty members, 19 males and 23 females are the heads of their families, with 10 identified as dual earners. Being the head of a family often entails substantial responsibilities, and for dual earners, the challenge of managing multiple roles may significantly affect their work-life balance.

Hayman's Work-Life Balance Scale results showed that the ISU academic staff now experience a poor work-life balance, especially in the areas of Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW) and Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL). The poor WIPL means that work-related demands and pressures actively intrude into the personal lives of faculty members, making it difficult for them to disengage from job roles and enjoy their personal time. Long working hours, stress spillover, or the inability to rank non-work activities ultimately impacting their general well-being can all be signs of this intrusion.

Table 1.

Scores of ISU Academic staff in the three domains of Work-life balance

WLB Domain	Mean Score	Descriptive Equivalent
Work Interference with Personal Life	2.44 (Poor)	Work-life is unsteady. Significant action is required the soonest time possible.
Personal Life Interference with Work	2.50 (Poor)	Work-life is unsteady. Significant action is required the soonest time possible.
Work Personal Life Enhancement	3.69 (Fair)	Work-life is on the borderline of being balanced.

The faculty members' poor scores in the PLIW area indicate as well that personal life events and obligations interfere with their professional life. This might include health problems, other personal concerns, or family obligations that divert from or conflict with professional duties, thereby reducing work productivity and raising stress levels. These dimensions' two-way interference makes clear how difficult it is to negotiate conflicting needs and how porous the borders between work and personal life are.

The participants noted a fair level of Work Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE), nonetheless, suggesting that elements of their work positively impact their personal lives

and vice versa. This improvement points to the possibility that meeting professional roles, successes, and contacts in personal spheres might improve happiness, energy, and mood. Similarly, a good personal life can help one to be motivated and resilient at work. As the work-family border theory suggests, this good reciprocity highlights the close relationship of work and family systems.

The results suggest that because these domains are interwoven, ISU academic personnel find it difficult to successfully segregate their personal and professional lives. Faculty members find difficulty in keeping a clean boundary and attaining a balanced life since work demands constantly overlap, affecting personal time and personal problems. This backs the idea that in dynamic ways work, life, and family systems not separate but constantly influence and form one another.

In summary, the results highlight how vital it is to spot and solve the two-directional work-life interference to enhance general work-life balance. Faculty members could better control the limits between their personal and professional lives by interventions designed to handle workloads, improve support systems, and promote flexible work arrangements. Encouraging the good aspects of work-life enhancement may also help initiatives that improve the positive interaction between work and personal satisfaction, therefore fostering more resilient and healthier academic staff.

Further, situational analysis showed that male and female academic staff both have poor work-life balance as reflected in the table below.

Table 2.

Quality of work-life balance of ISU Academic staff as to sex and civil status

WLB Domain	Sex		Civil Status		
	F	M	M	S	O
Work Interference with Personal Life	2.8 Poor	2.73 Poor	2.7 Poor	2.83 Poor	3.39 Fair
Personal Life Interference with Work	2.43 Poor	2.38 Poor	2.34 Poor	2.62 Poor	3.53 Fair
Work Personal Life Enhancement	3.78 Fair	3.61 Fair	3.77 Fair	3.63 Fair	3.93 Fair
Overall WLB	2.19 Poor	2.90 Poor	2.93 Poor	3.02 Fair	3.62 Fair

The findings concur with Punia and Kamboj (2013) that there are no differences in the quality of work-life balance of teachers in terms of sex; however, the current

findings contradict this in terms of their civil status. Those faculty members who are single have an overall fair score in work-life balance compared to the poor work-life balance of those who are married. Role theory claims that each employee has a unique set of work roles with individual rights and responsibilities. Married people have far more roles and responsibilities that they are trying to manage and fulfill hence the result.

5.1 Qualitative phase

Work-life balance is an integral aspect of a healthy work environment, and maintaining it will benefit both the workers and the organization. The followings are the results or themes of the thematic analysis from the participants' narratives.

5.2 Theme 1. adaptation within the workplace

Teachers play many roles and are prone to juggle their acts, but despite this situation, most of the faculty members admitted that they were all able to adjust to their work:

"Okay naman ma'am, adjusted na ako pati sa work environment and work culture."

(It's okay, Ma'am. I am adjusted even to the work environment and work culture)

-Professor Ey

Being adjusted implies that ISU faculty members have a satisfactory work-life; however, most find their non-work life problematic as theme 2 explain.

5.3 Theme 2. Challenges of maintaining equilibrium

Although the participants are well adjusted to their work, including the work environment and culture, they admitted that figuring out how to balance their work and non-work life is challenging. Both male and female participants chimed that their work has the most significant slice of their time and attention at this moment: *I realize (that my life) is not balanced now that you asked* - *Professor Bie*

Achieving a balanced life is hard because life is constantly changing, and these changes are also changes in priorities and roles. As one participant said- *Trying, trying to balance everything but it is not easy.* -Professor Zie

5.4 Theme 3. introspection and guilt

Lack of a work-life balance can have a dramatic impact on a teacher's life, and it can affect their physical health, mental health and well-being, and personal.

It is only now that I realized...I thought it was okay. But now I realized how I poorly managed my time for my children, and I want to cry for my poor baby - Professor Bie

Most of the time, poor work-life balance dramatically affects the personal relationship of workers especially working mothers, because they lack time with their children and other family members:

" parang nagsisisi rin ako pero hindi ko na maibabalik na yung ako ang magbabantay sa anak ko."

(I regret but I cannot turn back the time that I am the one looking after my child,) – Professor Zie

Arguably Filipinos are family-oriented and work hard to support their family needs inculcated in the Filipino value system. In today's society, individuals are trying to do it all, to find life satisfaction through multiple roles in their careers, marriage, parenting, community, and others (Shiels, 2014). However, if they are not spending their time in ways congruent with their values, they are unlikely to find the happiness they seek.

5.5 Theme 4. significance of work-life balance

Poor or lack of work-life balance remains a significant issue at work that can drive not only poor mental health or well-being but also the physical health of academic staff:

" Importante lalo na sa mental health natin"

(It is important especially for our mental health)– Professor Den; Professor Bie

" Importante kasi mahirap kapag merong nako-compromise..I mean kapag work overload ka we experience stress and alam naman natin stress and other mental health issues can affect our physical health. Mahirap ma compromise yung health natin especially that we are the breadwinners."

(It is important because it is difficult when something gets compromised. I mean, when our work overloads, we experience stress, and we know that stress and other mental health issues can affect our physical health. It's hard to compromise our health, especially since we are the breadwinners of our families) - Professor Ey

Undeniably, work-life balance is essential, and studies have shown that long working hours are bad for one's health, with adverse effects on cardiovascular and mental health (Sandoui, 2016). Other damaging effects include a higher risk of strokes, coronary heart diseases, and mental disorders, such as anxiety and depression:

" Marami talaga sa mga faculty and staff na kailangan ito... meron akong kilala na dahil lahat ng responsibilities sinasalo nya kaya parang nagkakaroon sya ng mental problems."

(Many faculty and staff really need this... I know someone who, because she takes on all the responsibilities, she seems to be developing some mental problems.) - Professor Zie

Moreover, others believe that work-life balance is vital to the teaching staff because it can significantly affect the quality of their performance:

" Sa atin as employee, kahit mapa-male or female, or may family ka or wala kailangan din kasi para maging productive din tayo sa mga work natin. Lalo na mga teachers tayo para na rin sa mga students natin. "

(For us as employees, regardless of sex and civil status, it is necessary for us to be productive in our work especially as teachers, it's also for the sake of our students. – Professor Ef

5.6 Theme 5. “Wish ko lang” (aspirational desire)

Translated as "how I wish" or " wish," is a Filipino phrase expressing a desire or a request for something. When asked how can we at ISU achieve a work-life balance, they quipped:

"Usually, kasi ito sa mga may administrative designations, siguro dapat ng bawasan ang workloads. Nakakalimutan na yung quality ng students at quality ng faculty."

(This is true to those with administrative designations. Perhaps the workloads should be reduced. The quality of students and the quality of faculty are being set aside.)"

- Professor Bie

Reports can also mean a heavy workload over a short period, particularly if you have multiple classes as the participant quipped:

"Ang dami kasi sila nilang pinapa-submit. Sana mas simplehan na lang." and "Kahit every Friday lang yung walang documents na ipe-prepare para lang makapag rest."

(They are requiring a lot; it is better if they can reduce it. How I wish that there's no paper work even during Fridays so we can rest) – Professor Ef

Getting away from the classroom even temporarily increases the worker's productivity:

"Isang konswelo yung academic break..para lang makahinga sa sobrang hecticng sched.. that will be a breathing space for us."

(An academic break is a consolation...to have a breather away from the hectic schedule.)

-Professor Ey

"Having flexible platforms will ease up the situation of teachers." Professor Ef

"A retreat or spiritual talk before the semester starts..even College Based." Professor Bie

"Recreation time or retreat for us 1-2 days every end of the semester. Kahit dito lang sa loob ng University." (even within the University) – Professor Zie

There are many steps an individual can take to achieve a balanced life, but Shiels (2014) argued that this should be a shared responsibility of individuals, their families, employers' unions, communities, and the government. She further argues that work-life balance is necessary for individuals and their families, as well as for organizations and society as a whole. The above ideas were some of the simple things that the academic staff asks from the administration; even as the individual teacher struggles to achieve a balanced life if the organization does not support it, a work-life balance is impossible. Employees who have a balanced life tend to feel more motivated and less stressed at work, which increases organizational productivity and reduces the number of conflicts between

colleagues and management. Additionally, Darcy (2012) reported that work-life balance is a factor that can impact key workplace issues such as employee turnover, stress, organizational engagement, absenteeism, job satisfaction, and productivity. Work-life balance is an integral aspect of a healthy work environment, and maintaining it helps reduce stress and prevent burnout in the workplace.

6 CONCLUSION

The results show that most of the academic staff members at Isabela State University (ISU) now struggle to strike a work-life balance, therefore mirroring a differential experience throughout the labor. Irrespective of marital status or sex, all academic employees need to be aware of the great influence that work-life balance has on Their mental well-being as well as their physical health. Burnout, reduced output, and poor health results that result from chronic imbalance and stress highlight the need of awareness to this problem for long-term faculty sustainability and quality of life.

Among female faculty members, especially those who are married and have children, a very evident gap exists. These employees negotiate a delicate balance of professional obligations and family obligations, hence increasing the challenge in integrating work and non-work activities. These women have several needs in addition to research and teaching responsibilities: caregiving, household management, and frequently emotional labor—all of which cumulatively affect their ability to strike equilibrium. This circumstance exposes the gendered nature of work-life obstacles in academics, where women disproportionately shoulder the brunt of family-related obligations in addition to career demands.

Many continue to battle in the achievement of work-life balance despite the general acknowledgement among ISU staff of its need. Factors like academic rank or designation, demanding reporting obligations, many paperwork tasks, heavy workloads, and the multiplicity of family roles provide major challenges. These factors cause fatigue, stress, and time restrictions that limit successful management of personal and professional areas. The endurance of these problems points to the necessity of focused institutional initiatives to ease job load demands and create supportive systems for academics juggling several responsibilities.

Beyond personal well-being, the results of these studies have effects on faculty retention and institutional performance. Unmanageable workloads and competing family obligations overwhelm teachers, making them more vulnerable to job unhappiness, absence, and lowered participation, therefore degrading the general academic environment. Solving the obstacles to work-life balance is essential for creating a nurturing, diverse, and effective academic environment in which personnel may flourish both personally and professionally.

Hence, the research emphasizes how important it is for ISU to acknowledge and answer the demanding work-life balance issues experienced by its academic personnel. Better balance is made possible by policies offering flexibility, lowering pointless burdens, and funding for family support. Along with improving faculty health and well-being, such programs help in the long run to maintain institutional resiliency and academic excellence

7 RECOMMENDATION

This paper suggests setting up and enforcing clear, supportive policies within Isabela State University to successfully address the difficulties encountered by academic staff in striking a work-life balance. Acknowledging that academic staff's well-being directly affects productivity, involvement, and institutional success, these rules should give their mental and physical health top priority. Creating a healthier workplace that promotes job satisfaction and lowers burnout depends in part on proactively concentrating on health-promoting initiatives including mental health resources, flexible working arrangements, and wellness programs.

It is proposed that Isabela State University consider recruiting more administrative personnel in addition to policy creation. This smart decision would lessen the administrative load now overburdening academic staff, which include significant documentation, reporting needs, and other non-teaching chores that distract from their main academic obligations. Faculty members may better concentrate on teaching, research, and meaningful student engagement by reassigning these tasks, hence enhancing their work efficiency and general work happiness.

Fostering a work environment where academic personnel can flourish both professionally and personally requires the development of a supportive institutional

structure. Such an environment supports the development of a more content and engaged workforce, which finally advantages the organization in terms of lowered turnover, increased morale, and better organizational dedication. Employees who feel valued and supported in juggling their many roles are more likely to contribute positively to their academic community.

Moreover, the paper requests a thorough, system-wide investigation of the work-life dynamics of all academic personnel inside Isabela State University. This further thorough study will offer deeper understanding of the unique difficulties and requirements experienced across several departments and campuses. This kind of information would let the university create customized interventions that are contextually appropriate and meant to help sustainable work-life integration.

Finally, promoting work-life balance at Isabela State University calls for a multifarious strategy that includes policy change, resource distribution, and investigation. These initiatives show dedication to the overall well-being of academic staff and increase the institution's ability to provide top-notch instruction. Encouragement of staff in finding equilibrium strengthens the university's reputation and general performance in addition to enhancing their quality of life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank Isabela State University for their invaluable assistance during the execution and conclusion of this research. The institution's facilitation, support, and resources were very important in letting the research to go forward and meet its aims. Special thanks go to the administrative staff and faculty members who supported and worked with the study, therefore creating a favorable setting for it.

REFERENCES

- Cabrera, G. A. (2019). *Difficulties on Work-Life Balance of Married Career Women: The Case of Generation X*. Asia Pacific Journal of Academic Research in Business Administration Vol 5, 16-21.
- Clark, S. (2000). *Work/Family Border Theory: A New Theory of Work/Family Balance*. Human Relations. Class Professionals. (2024, March 26). Balancing act: Why teachers should decide their own boundaries. Retrieved from

<https://www.classprofessionals.com.au/2024/03/27/balancing-act-why-teachers-should-decide-their-own-boundaries/classprofessionals>

- Darcy, C. M. (2012). *Work-life balance: One size fits all? An exploratory analysis of the differential effects of career stage*. European Management Journal, 111-120. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2011.11.001>.
- Greenhaus, J. e. (2003). *The relation between work-family balance and quality of life*. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 510-531.
- Gumpal, M. G. (2021). *Generational Perspective on Work-Life Balance of Filipino Workers*. International Journal of Science and Research, 588-592 <https://doi.org/10.21275/SR201007212347>.
- Joan Owens, C. K. (2018). *Strategies to Attain Faculty Work-Life Balance*. Building Healthy Academic Communities Journal Vol. 2, No. 2, 58-73.
- Key, D. (2013). PhD diss., *Understanding Community College Work/Life Balance Issues through Socialization Theory and Academic Discipline*: https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/2442
- Peralta, T. I. (2011). *Work Life Balance, Multidimensional Nature of Work-Family Conflict and The Demographic Profile of Selected Employees of Phinma Property Holdings Corp.: An Assessment*. Unpublished Masters Thesis.
- Punia, V. a. (2013, December). *Quality of Work-life Balance among teachers in Higher Institutions*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261830642>
- Sandoui, A. (2016). *Poor work-life balance leads to poor health later in life*. Medical News Today: <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/313755>
- Shastri, M. M. (2015). *A Qualitative Study on Work Life Balance of Employees Working in Private Sector*. International Journal of Recent Scientific Research vol. 6, Issue 7, 5160-5167.
- Shiels, R. (2014). *Changes in Work Life Balance Over time: Implications for Job and Family Satisfaction*. Unpublished Dissertation.
- TealHQ. (2024, December 31). Do teachers have a good work-life balance?. Retrieved from <https://www.tealhq.com/work-life-balance/teachertealhq>
- Talukder, A. K. (2016). *Work-Life Balance in the Australian Financial Sector: A Mixed Methods Study*. <https://researchdirect.westernsydney.edu.au/islandora/object/uws%3A40960>
- Wilkinsons, M. (2013). *Work-life balance and psychological well-being in men and women*. etd.auburn.edu/bitstream/handle/10415/3605/mw_disseration..

Authors' Contribution

Both authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

How to cite this article (APA):

Gumpal, M. G. O., & Jr, P. D. B. (2025). EXPLORING THE WORK-LIFE DYNAMICS OF ISABELA STATE UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC STAFF: BASIS FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT. *Veredas Do Direito*, 22(2), e223463. <https://doi.org/10.18623/rvd.v22.n2.3463>