Quality of Work Life, Work Life Balance and Career Satisfaction: Faculty Perceptions in Pakistan

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Abstract

Maintaining the quality of work-life (QWL) is a global challenge faced by higher education institutions, and the same is true for the universities of Pakistan. Unless appropriately managed, the negative feelings about QWL may adversely impact on attraction, performance, and retention of the faculty in any university. The purpose of this research was to gather the perceptions of faculty to explore the interrelationship of QWL attributes, work-life balance (WLB), and career satisfaction (CS). For this survey, a correlational research design was opted to gather perceptions of the faculty teaching in the universities of Lahore. The researcher used the cluster sampling technique to get a target sample comprising 300 faculty members. The sample was drawn from six (3 public and 3 private) universities of Lahore, Pakistan. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied for the analysis and interpretation of data. Pearson Product Moment Correlation confirmed the association between the variables; regression analysis identified the predictive value of QWL attributes and WLB for career satisfaction. The study concluded that the achieved status of work-life balance strongly predicts career satisfaction. However, perceptions of inequality regarding faculty promotions, workload distribution, and allocated work hours affected QWL negatively. Faculty also disagreed that their employers provide adequate facilities and flexible working hours to manage work-life balance (WLB). The findings and results will assist leadership and faculty in implementing quality work-life programs to improve the retention of current employees and attract quality employees in the future.

Keywords: Higher education, job satisfaction, quality of work life, university faculty, work life balance

Introduction

Continuous efforts to develop human capital (Argyris, 1973) and human social capital (Putnam, 1993) have led to the integrated concept of QWL. Herzberg's (1987) two-factor theory (motivation-hygiene) of job satisfaction provides a rationale to identify why employees may be more productive, creative, and committed to their employer. Previous research has noted when faculty works in a flexible work environment, the perceptions about QWL and job satisfaction are significantly enhanced (Arif, Ejaz, & Yousaf, 2017; Arif & Ilyas, 2013; Hameed, Ahmed-Baig, & Cacheiro-González, 2018).

The term QWL refers to the favourableness and positivity of the workplace environment provided to the people on the job (Afroz, 2017; Arif & Ilyas, 2013; Jaiswal, 2014). In general, QWL attributes relate to the individual perceptions of a person's job and working environment, such as reward and professional development opportunities (Sirgy, Efraty, Siegel, & Lee, 2001; Lee, Back, & Chan, 2015). According to Rethinam and Ismail (2008), QWL is an improved sense of employees' wellbeing. Previous research asserts that QWL covers a vast range of variables, including the needs of employees, a better and pleasant work environment, and the achievement of organizational goals; thus, QWL is conceptualized as a multi-dimensional and dynamic construct varying according to situational demands (Mudrak, 2018; Sirgy, Reilly, Wu, & Efraty, 2008).

Work-life balances (WLB) and QWL, are rapidly becoming the primary goal for most people, especially generation X and Y (Cogin, 2012; Twenge, 2010). Thus, meeting the future generation's needs is posing a challenge to most employers, and universities are not an exception. Sundaray and Sahoo (2013) argue that if organizations want to attract and retain the most competent employees, they must apply the quality of work-life philosophy to satisfy their employees. It is vital to procure better performance and job satisfaction and better job and organizational commitment (Zare, Haghgooyan, & Karimi, 2014). Many leading organizations like Google, Microsoft, and Amazon believe that QWL programs can enhance employee confidence and organizational effectiveness (Pandey & Jha, 2014; Shue & Falahat, 2017).

Efforts for QWL may prove advantageous to both the faculty and the management of universities (Anderson, Morgan, & Wilson, 2002; Zare et al., 2014) because these efforts intend to remove the source of undesirable behaviours by replacing them with better and modified working conditions and management attitudes (Islam, 2012). Previous research has confirmed that one of the most critical attributes of QWL, job satisfaction, is closely related to customer satisfaction; that is, an increase in one may cause an increase in the other (Hameed et al., 2018; Tschopp et al., 2014). Not only do employees express satisfaction and loyalty, but the turnover intentions are also reduced as well (Rahman, 2015).

Researchers have proclaimed that faculty satisfied with QWL proves to be more creative and efficient (Janes & Wisnom, 2010; Singh & Singh, 2015). Moreover, positive perceptions of QWL and work-life balance led to faculty's commitment and engagement (Arif & Alharbi, 2018). Therefore, many universities in the developed world are working on QWL programs for their workers' holistic wellbeing and care (Alqarni, 2016; Chaturvedi & Saxena, 2017; Ching & Seok, 2018; Jabeen, Friesen, & Ghoudi, 2018). Presently, much research is being conducted to analyse the relationship of QWL with desirable organizational outcomes in universities worldwide.

Srivastava and Kanpur (2014) identified the relationship between employee performance and QWL at Esfahan University. Pandey and Jha (2014) have asserted that faculty performance was causally related to ample and fair rewards, a safe and healthy workplace, improved human capacities, and social work-life. Steenkamp (2002) has identified that poor working conditions, such as high noise levels, poorly designed workplaces, and extended working hours, can negatively affect employees at work and home. Similarly, previous research-informed that most faculty members spend 90% of their time indoors, in offices and classrooms, where indoor air quality is detrimental to their health (). In the case of Pakistan, little effort is expended in this respect; therefore, this need must be studied in the Pakistani context.

Attributes of QWL

According to researchers (Jones, George, & Hill, 2000; Mukhtar, 2012), job satisfaction is a mind-set and employee's beliefs about his current job and university faculty in this case. Mamiseishvili and Rosser (2011) have reported that job satisfaction directly influences the work-related outcomes of the university faculty. Job satisfaction is related to the satisfaction of higher-order needs (respect and recognition), as well as lower-order (job security and salary) needs of faculty (Chitakornkijsil, 2009, p. 215). Therefore, Job satisfaction is identified as a critical component must for any measure of QWL (Cohen, Kinnevy, & Dichter, 2007). The job satisfaction of the faculty is vital in boosting any nation's economic potential as the faculty plays a vital role in the development of social capital by providing better learning opportunities, and creating skilful workforce for the society (Allameh, Hosseini, Mahabadi, & Samadi, 2018; Carr et al., 2017; Hasan, Chowdhury, & Alam, 2008).

Faculty have expressed their diverse needs, such as reimbursement and health job security that the organization needs to satisfy to keep the individual satisfied and motivated (Lee et al., 2015). Regarding QWL of university faculty, the researchers have mentioned the distinguishing attributes of the knowledge workers of the 21st century; they do not wish to indulge in boring routines; instead, they want creative involvement in work to step up in their careers (Cogin, 2012; Rose & Naresh, 2006).

University faculty demands autonomy at work and search for meaningful and purposeful work (Afroz, 2017; Aguenza & Som, 2018; Shue & Falahat, 2017). Many faculty members will fully seek work which requires exercising one's abilities and potential; they show commitment to challenging tasks

needing personal initiative, seeking personal direction, boosting self-esteem, and taking personal credit for what they had achieved through hard efforts (Aguenza & Som, 2018; Alfonso, Zenasni, Hodzic, & Ripoll, 2016; Alqarni, 2016; Ismail & Razak, 2016). Researchers have identified that the issues related to meaningful and satisfying work are limiting job satisfaction; hence such factors need inclusion in the QWL scale (Afroz, 2017; Arif & Ilyas, 2013; Arif & Farooqi, 2014; Singh & Singh, 2015).

Researchers (Antonio, Gutierrez de Blume, & Geor, 2018; Bravo Seibert, Kraimer, Wayne & Robert, 2017; Carr et al., 2017) indicated that university faculty have much to complain about control at work, work autonomy or academic freedom to make decisions; demands at work are ever-increasing while job autonomy and organizational support keep declining (Barnett & Bradley, 2007; Szelényi & Denson, 2019). Faculty also need the freedom to spend time on personal research as research is the most critical agenda for their career development and satisfaction. The faculty are reported to express higher levels of satisfaction when cultural wellbeing is felt (Haar & Brougham, 2011). Moreover, the faculty do not cherish time binds, and absence of flexible work environment (Lamolla & Ramos, 2020; Marra, 2020). A balanced life is the one where energy and efforts are spread over key areas of importance; hence, QWL is linked to WLB. In a changing knowledge economy, management of individual employees and their diverse needs has become a real challenge (Allameh et al., 2018). Work-life imbalance and increasing stress of research and productivity are making higher education teaching jobs difficult (Arif & Farooqi, 2014), disturbing both the personal and work lives of faculty.

Another significant dimension of QWL is work and family life, critically affecting the relationship between the individual and the organization (Arif & Ilyas, 2013). The latest wireless technology in the workplace has removed the borders and boundaries of organizations and created virtual workplaces that allow users to work anywhere without being limited by the physical work environment (Bravo et al., 2017; Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009), thus linking long working hours with a family breakdown (Almuftah & Lafi, 2011; Antonio et al., 2018).

The spillover between work and family leaves a critical impact on QWL perceptions (Tabassum, 2012). Professional and personal conflicts lead to harmful effects on the health and wellbeing of faculty, reducing their organizational commitment and performance, decreasing job satisfaction, and increasing burnout, ultimately leading to poor quality of life at work (Rithenam et al., 2008).

Perceived organizational support is understood as the employees' global beliefs about care and concern extended to him at the workplace, the appreciation he/she gets for work, and the overall value demonstrated for the wellbeing and welfare of the employee (Eder & Eisenberger, 2008). Perceived organizational support corresponds to faculty's perceptions of what he or she is getting from the university in terms of favouring his/her chosen actions; thus, it signifies the relationship of an employee with the management and leadership of institution he/she works for (Barnett & Bradley, 2007; Haar & Brougham, 2013).

Statement of the Problem
The massification and commercialization of higher education have simultaneously affected the personal and professional lives of employees. The study aims to provide an overview of QWL as perceived by the faculty of Pakistan's faculty of public and private universities. The study also explores the relationship between QWL factors that affect WLB and career satisfaction consequently.

Research Questions
This study was conducted to seek the answers to the following questions.
   1. What is the relationship between perceptions of WLB and career satisfaction?
   2. Which factors lead to negative perceptions of QWL?
   3. What measures could be taken to enhance perceptions of QWL?

The Conceptual Framework
The framework of the current research was adapted from Arif and Ilyas (2013). They had focused on the quality of work-life in private universities in Lahore, Pakistan. They explored different dimensions

of quality of work-life, which have a substantial effect on the life and intellectual stance of teachers. Work environment, work-life balance, the value of work, and satisfaction with interpersonal and social relationships were significant factors in that research. This study has perceptions of inequality and perceived organizational support as a new dimension to enhance the scope of research. The framework explains the relationship between different factors in Figure 1 below. It is assumed that all factors attributing to QWL lead to a satiated state of work-life balance, which in turn translates to career satisfaction.
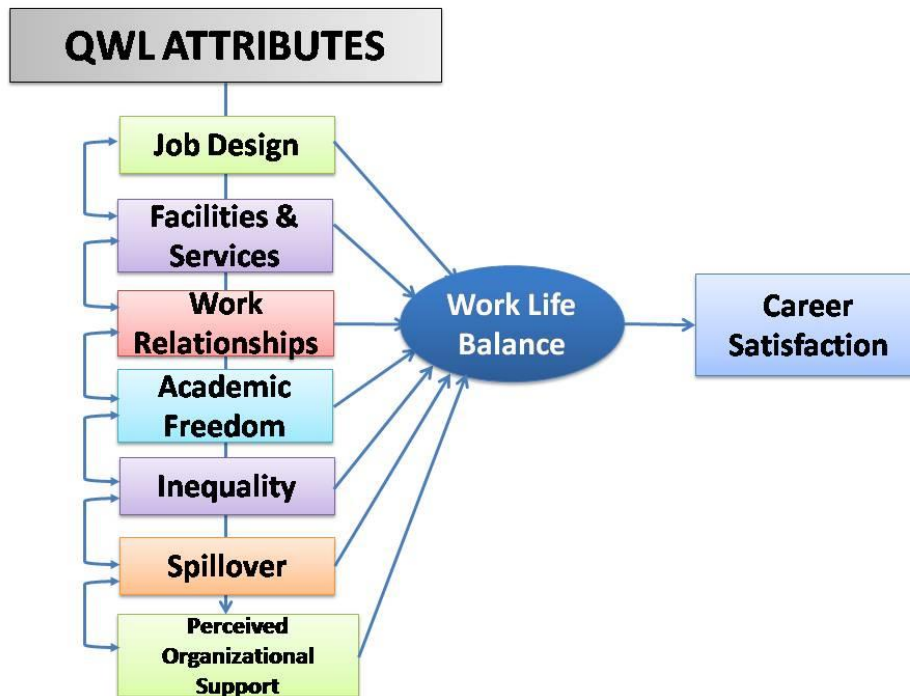

Figure 1. Conceptual model of the research

Methodology

The survey method allows a quantitative explanation of the background of QWL in the context of higher education (Sultan & Wong, 2010). Descriptive research is the most common method used in social sciences for data collection from a sample of a population at a specific time (Amin & Isa, 2008). The population of the study was the faculty of public and private universities in Pakistan. The aim was reduced costs, rapid collection of data, and getting accurate results (Williams, 2011). Cluster sampling was used for identifying target sample because the population (university faculty) was widely dispersed within a geographical boundary (university), making simple random or systematic sampling possible (Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Myers, 2011). The universities were selected conveniently, and the permanent faculty teaching in the university were given the option to become the part of the study if they were willing.

The instrument used to collect data was an improved version of the tool used by Arif and Ilyas (2013), comprising 73 items categorized on five-point Likert Type Scale. The quality of work-life dimensions used in the tool of Arif and Ilyas (2013) were: job satisfaction, the general wellbeing of employees, stress at work, and control at work, working conditions, spillover, work-life balance, and career satisfaction; items about perceptions of inequality and perceived organizational support were added. Since reliability (0.98) and validity of the questionnaire were predetermined, the pilot was not conducted. However, internal consistency (α), composite reliability (CR) and discriminant validity (AVE) scores were also calculated (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

The researcher administered questionnaires personally. Seventy-five questionnaires were distributed in each university, making a total of 450; 325 questionnaires were returned. Only 300 questionnaires were selected out of 325 for final analysis because these were the most appropriately and accurately filled.

Results

In this section the findings of the research are described. First, the demography is depicted in Table 1, followed by results of confirmatory analysis of data, providing mean, standard deviation, alpha, and composite reliability (CR) and discriminant validity (AVE) of the research variables in Table 2. Secondly, Pearson Product Moment Correlation is computed to check the relationship between the variables as portrayed in Table 3. Finally, multiple linear regression was applied to find out the factors which contribute to predictability of QWL; the results are described in Table 4.

Table 1. Demographic distribution of data

	f	%	M	Mode	SD
Gender					
Male	171	57	1.4	2.2	.49
Female	129	43			
Position					
Lecturer	158	52	1.8	1	1.0
Assistant Professor	85	28			
Associate Professor	23	8			
Professor	25	8			
HODs	9	3			
Qualification					
Masters	16	6	3.1	3	.55
MPhil	203	67			
PhD	81	27			
Experience					
> 5 years	117	39	1.9	1	.99
6-10 years	115	39			
11-15 years	44	14			
16-20 years	16	5			
< 20 years	8	3			

Factor Analysis

All items included in the questionnaire measuring various aspects of QWL, WLB, and career satisfactions were factorized using common factor analysis. Principal component factoring, followed by a varimax rotation, identified high factor loadings (approximately 0.4 or more) for all items (Costello & Osborne, 2005). The factors fulfilled the minimum identifiability criteria of at least three items per factor (Beavers et al., 2013). Scree plot identified the presence of nine factors explaining 72.02% of the total variance (see Table 2). KMO and Bartlett's sphericity test (KMO =0.712, χ^2 = 12752.533, p < 0.001) showed that the items included in the common factors fit well making exploratory factor analysis worthwhile. Internal consistency of each subscale (factor) was measured by using Cronbach's Alpha, which scored more than 0.6 for all factors meeting the minimum cut point (Wang, 2003).

Table 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis results

No	Factors	Mean	SD	Alpha	CR	AVE
1	Job Satisfaction	25.79	3.19	0.775	0.884	0.606
2	Facilities & Services	28.04	6.51	0.827	0.873	0.590
3	Social Relationships	17.92	3.42	0.666	0.851	0.550
4	Academic Freedom	13.66	9.52	0.761	0.842	0.526
5	Inequality	11.61	3.42	0.743	0.830	0.510
6	Spillover			0.853	0.840	0.513
7	Perceived Org-Sup	17.04	4.15	0.842	0.846	0.520
8	Work-Life Balance	19.15	3.28	0.769	0.850	0.533
9	Career Satisfaction	30.84	4.96	0.660	0.831	0.597

Correlation Analysis

Pearson product moment correlation was calculated to determine association between the factors. Most of the factors were found to be positively and significantly correlated with each other; only perceptions of inequality were found to be negatively correlated with other variables. The details are explained below.

Table 3. The matrix of Pearson Product Moment Analysis

	Factors	JD	FSERV	WRLT	ACF	Inequality	Spillover	POS	WLB	CSF
1	Job Design	1	.388**	.091	.472**	-.259**	.029	.232**	.084	.097
2	Facilities		1	.102	.463**	-.082	-.055	.372**	.071	.120*
3	Relationships			1	.237**	-.030	.379**	.323**	.306**	.417**
4	Academic Freedom				1	-.334**	.171**	.479**	.410**	.282**
5	Inequality					1	.108	-.370**	-.228**	-.111
6	Spillover						1	.220**	.433**	.618**
7	Perceived Org-Support							1	.480**	.248**
8	Work-Life Balance								1	.470**
9	Career Satisfaction									1

Regression Analysis

The results quoted above presented a mixed result; there is only one strong link for career satisfaction with negative spillover ($r = 0.618$, $p < 0.01$); whereas other correlation values are moderate or weak. In order to further manipulate the results, multiple linear regression using step-wise method was applied to identify the significant risk factors associated with career satisfaction.

The predictor variables considered were satisfaction with job design, academic freedom, social relationships, infrastructure and other facilities, and perceptions of inequality, spillover, perceived organizational support and work-life balance. Consequently, six models were generated, which are explained below:

Table 4. Step-wise Regression Analysis on career satisfaction as the dependent variable

	Model	β	t-value	p-value	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)		5.938	.000		
	Spillover	.618	13.561	.000	1.000	1.000
2	(Constant)		3.905	.000		
	Spillover	.510	10.510	.000	.813	1.231
	WLB	.249	5.139	.000	.813	1.231
3	(Constant)		2.048	.041		
	Spillover	.456	9.204	.000	.746	1.341
	WLB	.218	4.534	.000	.789	1.267
	SocRlt	.178	3.789	.000	.832	1.202
4	(Constant)		.788	.431		
	Spillover	.472	9.560	.000	.734	1.363
	WLB	.207	4.337	.000	.783	1.276
	SocRlt	.163	3.488	.001	.821	1.219
	SFSERV	.115	2.667	.008	.972	1.029
5	(Constant)		1.734	.084		
	Spillover	.501	9.973	.000	.696	1.436
	WLB	.170	3.435	.001	.716	1.397
	SocRlt	.161	3.465	.001	.820	1.219
	SFSERV	.110	2.579	.010	.970	1.030
	Inequality	-.113	-2.543	.011	.894	1.119
6	(Constant)		1.842	.066		
	Spillover	.511	10.228	.000	.692	1.445
	WLB	.214	4.110	.000	.635	1.574
	SocRlt	.183	3.911	.000	.791	1.265
	SFSERV	.154	3.366	.001	.829	1.206
	Inequality	-.151	-3.251	.001	.797	1.254
	POS	-.140	-2.519	.012	.563	1.777

Discussion

The causal relationships among the factors of QWL and career satisfaction were examined in order to check the quality of work-life model for university faculty. The results of this research adhere to findings of the previous research that attributes of QWL are closely related to WLB and career satisfaction (Hameed et al., 2018; Rahman, 2015; Singh & Singh, 2015; Tschopp et al., 2014). Positive perceptions of QWL and WLB lead to faculty's commitment and engagement (Arif & Alharbi, 2018) and turnover intentions are reduced (Rahman, 2015).

The results of this study unfold that Pakistani universities are interested in establishment of hygiene factors only; the job design, which include satisfaction with pay, workload, and work conditions do not seem to hinder WLB. Faculty was moderately satisfied with infrastructure, facilities, and social relationships as well. However, perceptions of inequality and spill over negate the presence of motivation; hence, the situation can be best described as of no-dissatisfaction, but not complete satisfaction and motivation as identified by (Arif, Ilyas, & Hameed, 2013; 2017). These perceptions of inequality being negatively associated with WLB are posing a greater risk to perceptions of job and career satisfaction of Pakistani faculty as postulated by (Antonio et al., 2018; Bravo et al., 2017; Carr et al., 2017; Szelényi & Denson, 2019).

Shin and Jung (2014) pointed out that newly founded academic managerialism and market-oriented reforms highlighting the bottom-line agenda uses quantitative performance-based management criterion, which becomes a major source of stress for academia. University teaching has become as demanding and stressful as any other corporate work. It is becoming increasingly difficult to enjoy the traditional prestige associated with the profession. Lacking in perks and benefits, it is no more the choicest jobs for the most competent persons. Would it lead to a dearth of quality faculty, the phenomenon already rampant due to globalization and increased competition in the market?

Cogin (2012) remarked that initiatives taken for quality of life by the human resource department of any institution have a universal appeal. While employees may belong to diverse age groups, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y, or they may have a traditional or bureaucratic or modern approach to look at various problems of the organization; therefore, management will have to face challenges creatively to meet the needs of such a diverse group (Arif et al., 2017). Xiao and Cooke (2012) argued that Asian cultures are still traditional in their human resource management practices. Most of such managers and employees understand work-life conflicts as a fact of life and believe that each individual employee has to opt for a personal coping mechanism to deal with such conflicts. Therefore, there is a lack of collective effort by governing bodies to shift to caring policies. Terms like work-life balance and quality of life are pronounced as luxuries rather than basic needs; therefore, the fulfillment of such needs is hardly prioritized in any institution.

Baruch (2006) advises that research on QWL and career satisfaction should enrich interdisciplinary research for a broader vision and scope. Opting for a discursive approach will enhance understanding of multiple dimensions of QWL and career satisfaction (Srivastava & Kanpur, 2014). This research highlights the various issues related to QWL and career satisfaction faced by faculty of public and private universities of Pakistan. Moreover, it also provides the guidelines for higher education leadership and governance for policy reforms and creates new job designs suiting the lifestyle of global workers of the 21st century. The real innovation and change are needed in management and governance styles following the Scandinavian model (Mohan & Suppareakchaisakul, 2014). The management of universities may learn to demonstrate a deep concern for the higher needs of their workers, precious because chosen after much deliberation.

The most challenging situation is encountered in the form of negative spillover precariously hovering at the edge. The advent of technology, excessive use of smartphones, and other communication devices have captured the leisure hours of workers. Since the 'work' for university faculty is not limited to teaching, they must play essential roles in administration and research as well; the family time keeps restricting due to insatiable demands of publications and research supervision. The bi-directional conflict (family to work and work to family spillover) keeps interfering in the life of academics (Arif &

Ilyas, 2013; Sirgy et al., 2008) and has become a cause of major friction where family and work roles become mutually incompatible with each other (Alqarni, 2016). A similar situation is prevailing in the Pakistani context, where there are rigid time binds, and no flexibility in working hours is available (Arif et al., 2017; Lamolla & Ramos, 2020).

Therefore, universities in Pakistan, whether public or private, will have to offer more organizational support to deal with issues such as emergency leaves, time pressures, and staff turnover not only to enhance the performance but provide career satisfaction. The task of the human resource department of any university is to create a competitive ladder path of a successful career for their employees, and the task of management is to provide full organizational support to climb that ladder to the top. The focus of university management should shift from physical aspects of job and compensation to the psychological satisfaction of their employees. The management guru Mintzberg (1983, p. 180) had once stated: "As long as society demands cheap, mass-produced goods and services - a great many jobs will remain petty much as they are now."

Conclusion

The results indicate that perceptions of career satisfaction are strongly associated with WLB, meaning that unless WLB is achieved, career satisfaction will remain low. According to regression results, both family-to-work and work-to-family spillover are the strongest risk factors causing a variance in WLB and career satisfaction perceptions.

The Rho scores indicate that the perceptions of inequality are negatively and significantly associated with WLB, indirectly contributing to the reduction in career satisfaction. It means that the unequal distribution of rewards negatively affects satisfaction with perceived organizational support, job design, and academic freedom and weakens the perceptions of QWL by diminishing the relationship of all these variables with WLB.

The perceptions about QWL of the faculty teaching in the universities located in Lahore are very weak. Unless the universities implement some policies to manage negative spillover and improve work-life balance, faculty career satisfaction will not improve. Universities have been slow to realize the importance of developing a family-friendly work environment and/or publicizing it. It is felt that certain management embargos restrict knowledge managers to transform into knowledge leaders. Until the bureaucratic governance prevails, cutting the wings of researchers to fly high and reach the skies of their dreams, the dream of entrepreneurial universities will not be realized.

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