A comprehensive study on factors that contribute to high attrition of women faculty in higher education institutions at Mysore in 2023-24

Tejasvini C K, Sangeetha B R, Laxith Mouna M A, Ranganatha Y

Ranganatha Y

Parivarthana business school

Abstract:

Workers are an organization's most precious resource and are frequently regarded as its lifeblood. The skill and productivity of an organization's employees have a significant impact on its success or failure. As a result, organizations place a high premium on keeping talented workers. High staff turnover can have a detrimental effect on output, the performance of the organization, and the need for more hiring. Addressing this issue requires creating a strong policy for staff retention. HR managers face a major issue in keeping talented workers in the competitive employment market of today when there are many opportunities. The retention of female employees, a crucial issue for many firms, is the special emphasis of this research. Work-life balance concerns, insufficient maternity leave policies, a lack of supportive work environments, physiological factors, and limited career growth chances are some of the particular difficulties that female employees face when it comes to retaining their jobs. Higher attrition rates among women are frequently the result of these difficulties, particularly during critical life periods like childbirth and caregiver obligations. The research examines the elements that affect the retention of female employees, assesses the obstacles they encounter, and identifies tactics for creating a welcoming and encouraging workplace culture. The results are intended to support gender diversity in the workforce and enhance retention tactics. This paper sheds light on the myriad factors that contribute to the high attrition of women faculty and also recommendations to retain them in the institutions.

Keywords: graduate female workforce, job satisfaction, employee turnover, employee retention, human resource management.

INTRODUCTION

The retention of women faculty in higher education institutions is a critical issue that impacts both the quality of education and gender equality in academia. While significant progress has been made in promoting gender inclusivity in the educational sector, women faculty in India, particularly in regions such as Mysore, continue to face unique challenges that lead to high attrition rates. These challenges range from systemic inequalities, gender-based discrimination, and work-life balance issues to institutional support structures that are often inadequate for female academics.

Mysore, a prominent educational hub in Karnataka, is home to various reputed higher educational institutions. However, reports and anecdotal evidence suggest a significant number of women faculty members leave their academic positions prematurely. Understanding the underlying factors contributing to this attrition is essential to develop sustainable strategies to retain women faculty and create a more inclusive academic environment. This study seeks to explore the socio-cultural, institutional, and personal factors that influence the decision of women faculty to leave higher education institutions in Mysore. By identifying these key factors, the study aims to provide recommendations that will assist institutions in improving retention rates and ensuring a more equitable environment for women in academia.

Literature Review

The issue of women faculty attrition in higher education is a growing concern across various regions, including India. Recognizing staff members, offering training and development, emphasizing well-being, giving feedback, and fostering career advancement are some attrition control strategies suggested in this paper.

- **Hemangi Gurjar, Student, NMIMS Kriti P. Mehta School of Law (2021);** The safety of female employees, a healthy workplace, and increased organizational effectiveness are all components of their quality of work-life balance. Women frequently encounter a variety of obstacles at work, which can make it challenging for them to stay employed, particularly if their company does not have the support networks they need. This study looks at the infrastructure available to reduce female employee turnover, studies the literature to determine the factors that deter women from returning to work or cause them to resign, and emphasizes the importance of creating a friendly work environment for women.

- **According to Preethi Sharma, Garima, Bhumika Samal, and Abhinay (2023)**, there are two types of factors that affect the attrition of female employees: personal and professional. Attrition can be classified as natural, forced, involuntary, or voluntary. When workers' expectations and interests diverge from company objectives, job dissatisfaction results, which leads to attrition.

- **Fahad Abdali, Prof. Dr. M. Abuzar Wajidi, Dr. Prof. Faraz Ahmed Wajidi (2020);** For the private sector, attrition is a big problem that is greatly impacted by societal norms, work satisfaction, corporate culture, and inadequate pay. Work profiles, better chances, and personal reasons on job listings are frequently the reasons why women quit. Workplace culture is essential for retention when work and family obligations are balanced. According to this document, work-life rules should be put into place, and job satisfaction should be guaranteed by safe working conditions, reasonable workloads encouraging interpersonal interactions, and pleasant working conditions. Furthermore, societal customs and high-quality care are important, especially for mothers.

- **Matthew Joy Maniyamkott (2020);** Workplaces that are sympathetic and friendly to women are necessary, particularly in the wake of the pandemic, which exacerbated the issues that female employees were already facing, according to Matthew Joy Maniyamkott (2020). In order to reduce the percentage of female employee turnover, the author provided recommendations on how businesses could allocate their resources. The author listed the following strategies to ensure that businesses provide a more welcoming environment for their female employees:1) maternity leave; 2) flexible work arrangements; 3) mentorship programs for women; 4) improving cultural merit; 5) audits of compensation equity; 6) understanding the challenges faced by working mothers; and 7) cultivating an inclusive culture.

1. **Rabiyathul Basariya and Dr. Ramya Zgarahmed (2019);** Opportunities for career advancement, work hours, personal or family issues, connections with coworkers, employee welfare, working conditions, pay, and sentiments of undervaluation are some of the aspects the author identified as having an impact on employee turnover. Additionally, they recommended tactics to lower turnover, like making the workplace fun, interesting, and supportive of employee loyalty.

- **Singh (2019):** Personal reasons, including family obligations, work-life balance, and career aspirations, are often cited as significant contributors to women's decision to leave academia. In the Indian context, women often bear the majority of domestic and caregiving responsibilities, which impacts their ability to manage the demands of academic careers.

- **Radhakrishnan (2021)** Work-life imbalance, particularly in the absence of sufficient support systems such as daycare or flexible work hours, exacerbates the challenges faced by women in academia.

- A study by **Sharma (2022)** further highlights how women academics often prioritize family over career advancement, leading to their departure from academic positions.

- **Patel & Joshi (2020),** Gender bias in promotion practices, unequal distribution of administrative roles, and the underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions have been shown to lead to dissatisfaction and ultimately, resignation.

- Research by Bhagat (2021) suggests that women faculty members often face implicit biases when it comes to leadership roles and academic recognition, leading to their underrepresentation in key positions within institutions.

- **Nair & Reddy (2019),** the lack of supportive infrastructure, such as gender-sensitive policies or grievance redressal mechanisms, contributes to the marginalization of women faculty. This lack of institutional support is often compounded by the absence of policies aimed at promoting gender equality and diversity. The societal expectations placed on women, especially in a patriarchal society like India, often intersect with their professional lives. Cultural norms related to women's roles in society, such as the expectation to fulfill domestic duties and the undervaluation of women's work in academia, further perpetuate gender disparities in the educational sector.

- According to **Gupta (2020),** women faculty often struggle to balance societal expectations with their professional ambitions, which leads to feelings of isolation and burnout.

- According to an analysis by **Mehta (2021),** the economic disparity between male and female academics in terms of salary, funding opportunities, and resource allocation contributes to dissatisfaction and can drive women to leave academia in search of more lucrative opportunities.

- **Vaidyanathan & Subramaniam (2023),** Despite the existing challenges, several institutions have implemented gender diversity initiatives to encourage women faculty to stay and thrive in academia. Programs such as women-specific leadership training, mentorship networks, and policy changes aimed at improving gender equality have been shown to positively impact retention.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To comprehend the concept of employee turnover intention.

2. To investigate and emphasize the elements influencing the purpose of the faculty turnover.

3. To find the factors responsible for the retention of female employees.

Methodology

This study was conducted based on the primary research method and the secondary research method. In this study, we used the survey as primary data to collect data so that our research project could be carried out. We have prepared questionnaires by using Google Forms to ensure the respondents can easily access the questionnaires. Through the primary method, we distributed 75 sets of questionnaires to the faculties. Meanwhile, we also conducted research through secondary data such as reference materials (books, magazines, newspapers, articles, and journals) and internet networks. In this chapter, we have selected some suitable study designs to facilitate access to information from respondents and data collection. Organized and strategic research

procedures, processes, and methods are important to get the solution to the problem under study. We use a cross-sectional study to allow us to answer research questions. A cross-sectional study is a type of study in which data are collected only once.

1. Survey Design

A structured questionnaire was developed to collect quantitative data on the factors contributing to attrition. The questionnaire included questions on personal demographics, job satisfaction, work-life balance, institutional support, career growth opportunities, and gender biases. The survey was administered to 75 women faculty members.

2. Interview Design

In-depth interviews were conducted with 20 women faculty members who had resigned from their positions in the last year or were considering leaving. The interviews aimed to capture their personal experiences and perceptions regarding the challenges they faced in academia. These qualitative insights helped complement the quantitative findings from the survey.

1. Results and Discussion:

A set of questionnaires is created to investigate the factors that affect employee turnover. The questionnaire consists of several sections, such as the background of respondents, the concept of employee turnover intention, the elements influencing the purpose of faculty turnover, and the factors responsible for the retention of female employees.

The questions are created in various forms, such as dichotomous questions, multiple-choice questions, and rate order scaling questions, by using the Likert Scale to analyze the collected data.

1. Demographic Profile of Respondents:

1. Age: 60% of the respondents were aged between 30 and 40 years, while 40% were above 40 years of age.

2. Institution Type: 55% of the respondents were employed in private institutions, and 45% worked in government colleges.

3. Teaching Experience: 70% of the respondents had over 5 years of teaching experience.

2. Key Factors Contributing to Attrition:

1. **Work-Life Balance:**

   o 68% of the respondents indicated that work-life balance was a significant factor influencing their decision to leave academia.

   o Women faculty members reported facing difficulties in balancing professional responsibilities with household duties, especially in the absence of flexible working hours and childcare facilities.

2. **Gender Discrimination:**

   o 55% of the respondents reported experiencing gender-based discrimination, particularly in terms of recognition, promotions, and leadership opportunities.

   o Several respondents felt that male colleagues were more likely to receive high-profile assignments and promotions.

3. **Institutional Support:**

- o 60% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with institutional support. Key areas of concern included a lack of mentorship programs, inadequate professional development opportunities, and insufficient support for research activities.

4. **Economic Factors:**

- o 50% of respondents cited inadequate compensation and limited research funding as significant factors influencing their decision to leave academia.

Recommendations

Recommendations Based on the findings of this study:

The following recommendations are proposed to reduce attrition among women faculty in higher education institutions in Mysore:

1. Flexible Work Arrangements: Institutions should implement policies that allow for flexible working hours and work-from-home options to help women balance their work and personal responsibilities.

2. Gender-Sensitive Policies: Comprehensive gender-sensitive policies must be established, including mentorship programs, career development workshops, and grievance redressal systems. Additionally, maternity leave and childcare facilities should be introduced to support women faculty.

3. Addressing Gender Discrimination: To reduce gender bias, institutions should ensure transparent and unbiased promotion and leadership processes. Women should be given equal opportunities for professional advancement and recognition.

4. Improved Financial Incentives: Institutions should offer competitive salaries, research grants, and financial support to attract and retain women faculty members.

5. Institutional Support and Training: Providing leadership training programs for women faculty and ensuring strong support networks, including peer mentorship, will help improve job satisfaction and retention.

Conclusion

This study offers a comprehensive overview of the factors contributing to high attrition rates of women faculty in higher education institutions in Mysore. By identifying key challenges—such as work-life balance issues, gender discrimination, and lack of institutional support—the research provides valuable insights into the structural changes needed to retain women faculty members. Implementing gender-sensitive policies, promoting career development, and enhancing institutional support will be crucial for creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for women in academia.

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