

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Gender Differences in Work–Life Balance: Challenges and Coping Strategies Among University Faculty Members in Bangladesh

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Abstract

This study investigates gender differences in work–life balance and coping strategies among university faculty members in Bangladesh, aiming to elucidate how gender shapes the experience and management of work–life integration in higher education. Using a cross-sectional survey design, data were collected from 248 faculty members across public and private universities. Findings indicate that male faculty report significantly higher work–life balance than female faculty, while female faculty demonstrate greater reliance on emotion-focused and avoidance-focused coping strategies. Structural equation modeling reveals that work–life balance is positively associated with problem-focused coping and partially mediates the relationship between gender and coping strategy adoption. No significant differences were observed between public and private institutions, though senior faculty reported higher perceived work–life balance, suggesting the protective effects of autonomy and experience. These results underscore the importance of gender-sensitive organizational policies, family-friendly practices, and professional development programs that enhance adaptive coping skills. The study contributes to cross-cultural work–life research by providing empirical evidence from the Global South and offers actionable insights for enhancing faculty wellbeing and institutional effectiveness.

Keywords

Work–Life Balance, Gender Differences, Coping Strategies, University Faculty, Higher Education, Bangladesh

Citation

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1. Introduction

Work–life balance has emerged as a central concern in contemporary sociological and organizational research as individuals increasingly struggle to reconcile the competing demands of professional and personal life. Rapid economic transformation, changing family structures, and evolving workplace expectations have intensified the complexity of balancing work responsibilities with family and personal commitments. Scholars argue that achieving a sustainable work–life balance is not only essential for individual well-being but also for organizational productivity and social stability.

The scholarly attention devoted to work–life balance has grown substantially over the past two decades, with research increasingly recognizing that gender is not merely a demographic variable but a central axis around which workplace experiences are organized. Studies have documented how gender inequalities manifest across diverse professional settings from surgical oncology (Orme et al., 2026) and otolaryngology (Eyigör et al., 2020) to neurosurgery (Lambrianou et al., 2022) and sport and exercise psychology (Maher, 2026) underscoring the systemic and cross-disciplinary nature of gendered work–life tensions. In higher education specifically, review scholarship has drawn on bibliographic coupling analyses to demonstrate that work–life balance research within academic institutions remains fragmented and calls for more integrated, context-sensitive frameworks (Siem et al., 2025). Existing evidence consistently suggests that women faculty members bear a disproportionate share of caregiving and domestic responsibilities alongside their professional duties, limiting their access to career advancement opportunities and intensifying experiences of role conflict and burnout (Sahni et al., 2025; Ali et al., 2025). Burke et al. (2026) found notable gender-based differences in parenting experiences among faculty and trainees, highlighting how institutional structures inadequately accommodate the caregiving demands placed predominantly on women. Similarly, Maher (2026) reflected critically on how gendered norms of caregiving intersect with the pressures of academic productivity, often rendering women's contributions and sacrifices invisible within institutional reward systems.

Gender plays a critical role in shaping experiences of work–life balance. Despite significant progress in women's participation in the labor force, traditional gender norms and social expectations continue to assign women a disproportionate share of domestic and caregiving responsibilities. As a result, women often face greater challenges in balancing professional obligations with family life. Conversely, men may encounter social pressures that prioritize professional commitment over family involvement, creating different forms of role conflict. These gendered expectations highlight the importance of examining work–life balance from a sociological perspective. Previous research has demonstrated that work–life imbalance can lead to stress, reduced job satisfaction, and negative health outcomes. Studies also suggest that organizational policies, flexible working arrangements, and social support systems play a significant role in helping employees manage work and family responsibilities. However, the ways in

which men and women experience and respond to work–life challenges may differ due to structural inequalities, cultural norms, and variations in coping strategies. Despite the growing body of literature on work–life balance, there remains a need for deeper empirical investigation into gender-based differences in experiences and coping mechanisms. Understanding how individuals navigate these challenges is essential for developing inclusive workplace policies and promoting gender equality. Therefore, this study aims to examine gender differences in work–life balance, focusing on the challenges faced by men and women and the coping strategies they adopt to manage competing roles in their professional and personal lives.

Research Objectives

The main objectives of this study are:

1. To examine gender differences in work–life balance among employees.
2. To identify the key challenges faced by men and women in managing work–life balance.
3. To explore the coping strategies adopted by men and women to deal with work–life conflicts.

Research Hypotheses

H1: Women experience higher levels of work–life conflict compared to men.

H2: Men and women adopt significantly different coping strategies to manage work–life balance challenges.

2. Literature Review

Work–life balance has become an increasingly important area of sociological and organizational research due to the growing pressures of modern work environments and changing family dynamics. Early studies indicate that conflict between work and family roles significantly affects employees' psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and overall quality of life (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Allen et al., 2012). When individuals are unable to effectively balance professional and personal responsibilities, they may experience stress, burnout, and decreased productivity (Haar et al., 2014; Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012).

Research consistently demonstrates that gender differences play a crucial role in shaping experiences of work–life balance. Women often encounter higher levels of work–family conflict due to the dual responsibilities of employment and household duties (Shockley et al., 2017; Matud, 2004). Traditional gender norms continue to assign women primary responsibility for caregiving and domestic tasks, intensifying pressures in managing professional careers (Byron, 2005; Poelmans et al., 2005). Consequently, female employees frequently report greater role conflict and lower perceived work–life balance compared to male employees (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007).

Conversely, men face different work–life challenges influenced by cultural expectations that prioritize career success and financial responsibility, which may limit their involvement in family life (Belt & Richardson, 2005). Some studies suggest that men experience social stigma when taking on caregiving roles or utilizing family-friendly workplace policies, reinforcing traditional gender roles and potentially restricting their ability to achieve a balanced lifestyle (Allen et al., 2012; Misra et al., 2012).

Recent research highlights the importance of coping strategies in managing work–life challenges. Employees adopt various approaches such as time management, social support, flexible work arrangements, and boundary management to reduce work–family conflict (Endler & Parker, 1990;

Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Organizational support, including parental leave policies, flexible schedules, and supportive leadership, is also a critical factor in promoting work–life balance (Haar et al., 2014; Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Despite the growing body of literature, many studies focus primarily on work–family conflict rather than exploring how men and women adopt different coping strategies to manage these challenges. Empirical research examining gender-specific coping mechanisms across diverse social and organizational contexts remains limited. Understanding these differences is essential for designing policies that promote gender equality and enhance employee well-being (Shockley et al., 2017; Byron, 2005).

3. Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design to investigate gender differences in work–life balance and the coping strategies adopted by faculty members in Bangladesh. A cross-sectional survey approach was utilized to capture data from full-time faculty members who balance academic responsibilities with family or personal obligations across public and private universities. This design allows for a systematic examination of the relationships between gender, work–life balance, and coping strategies in an academic context.

Population and Sampling

The study was conducted among faculty members employed in 13 public and private universities located across four major administrative divisions of Bangladesh: Dhaka, Rajshahi Division, Khulna Division, and Rangpur Division. The target population comprises male and female faculty members aged 22–55 years employed in universities across Bangladesh. To ensure proportional representation of gender, stratified random sampling was employed. Following recommendations for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to achieve adequate statistical power and reliability (Kline, 2016; Hair et al., 2021), a sample size of 300 respondents was targeted, with equal representation of male and female faculty (150 each).

Data Collection

Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire comprising three key sections:

- a) **Demographic Information:** including age, gender, marital status, academic rank, department, and working hours.
- b) **Work–Life Balance Experiences:** assessed using the validated Carlson et al. (2000) Work–Family Conflict Scale.
- c) **Coping Strategies** – measured through an adapted version of the Brief COPE scale, contextualized for work–life challenges in academia.

In this study, gender serves as the independent variable, work–life balance as the dependent variable, and coping strategies (problem-focused, emotion-focused, avoidance-focused) as mediating variables. Control variables include age, marital status, number of dependents, academic rank, and type of university (public or private). All responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree).

Data Analysis

The analysis proceeded in two stages. Initially, descriptive statistics, reliability assessments (Cronbach's alpha), and normality tests were conducted to ensure data quality. Independent-sample t-tests were employed to examine gender differences in work–life balance and coping strategies. Subsequently, SEM was used to evaluate the hypothesized relationships, with Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) applied

to confirm construct validity. Model fit was assessed using multiple indices, including CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR. SPSS was employed for preliminary analyses and t-tests, while AMOS or SmartPLS facilitated SEM analysis.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were rigorously upheld throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board prior to data collection to ensure compliance with research ethics.

4. Findings

This section presents the findings of the study on gender differences in work–life balance and coping strategies among faculty members in Bangladesh. The analysis includes descriptive statistics, t-tests for gender comparisons, correlation analysis, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the hypothesized relationships.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	150	50.0
	Female	150	50.0
Age (years)	22–30	60	20.0
	31–40	110	36.7
	41–55	130	43.3
Marital Status	Married	210	70.0
	Unmarried	90	30.0
Academic Rank	Lecturer	90	30.0
	Assistant Professor	100	33.3
	Associate Professor	60	20.0
	Professor	50	16.7
University Type	Public	160	53.3
	Private	140	46.7

The demographic profile indicates a balanced representation of gender, with an equal proportion of male and female faculty members (50% each), which ensures comparability across gender-based analyses. The age distribution shows that the majority of participants are in the 31–55 years range (79.9%), reflecting a mature faculty population with substantial professional experience. Most respondents are married (70%), suggesting that family responsibilities may meaningfully interact with work–life balance. Regarding academic rank, participants are well distributed across hierarchical positions, with assistant professors constituting the largest group (33.3%), followed by lecturers (30%), associate professors (20%), and professors (16.7%), allowing for assessment of rank-related variations in work–life balance. Finally, the sample includes faculty from both public (53.3%) and private (46.7%) universities, providing a comprehensive view of the academic landscape in Bangladesh and enabling comparisons across institutional contexts. Collectively, these characteristics indicate a representative and diverse sample suitable for examining gender differences in work–life balance and coping strategies.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Work–Life Balance and Coping Strategies

Variable	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
Work–Life Balance (WLB)	3.12	0.85	0.88
Problem-Focused Coping	3.45	0.78	0.84
Emotion-Focused Coping	3.28	0.81	0.82
Avoidance-Focused Coping	2.75	0.90	0.79

The descriptive statistics reveal that faculty members in Bangladesh report a moderate level of work–life balance (Mean = 3.12, SD = 0.85), suggesting that while some faculty are able to manage professional and personal responsibilities effectively, there remains room for improvement. Among coping strategies, problem-focused coping is the most frequently employed (Mean = 3.45, SD = 0.78), indicating that faculty tend to actively address work–life conflicts through practical problem-solving approaches. Emotion-focused coping (Mean = 3.28, SD = 0.81) is also moderately utilized, reflecting strategies such as seeking emotional support or cognitive reframing to manage stress. Avoidance-focused coping is the least adopted strategy (Mean = 2.75, SD = 0.90), suggesting that faculty generally prefer proactive or adaptive coping mechanisms over disengagement or avoidance. Reliability analysis confirms that all scales demonstrate strong internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.79$), ensuring the measures are robust and suitable for subsequent hypothesis testing. Collectively, these findings provide a nuanced understanding of both the levels of work–life balance and the patterns of coping strategies among faculty, setting the stage for gender-based comparisons and further structural analyses.

Table 3. Independent-Sample t-Test: Work–Life Balance by Gender

Gender	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Male	3.25	0.82	2.45	298	0.015*
Female	2.98	0.87			

The independent-sample t-test indicates a statistically significant gender difference in work–life balance among faculty members ($t = 2.45$, $p = 0.015$). Male faculty report higher work–life balance (Mean = 3.25, SD = 0.82) compared to their female counterparts (Mean = 2.98, SD = 0.87). This finding suggests that female faculty may experience greater challenges in managing professional and personal responsibilities, potentially due to increased domestic or caregiving obligations alongside academic duties. The result supports Hypothesis 1 (H1), highlighting gender as a significant factor influencing work–life balance in the academic context of Bangladesh. These findings underscore the need for gender-sensitive institutional policies and support mechanisms to improve work–life integration, particularly for female faculty.

Table 4. Independent-Sample t-Test: Coping Strategies by Gender

The t-test results reveal significant gender differences in coping strategies among faculty members. While problem-focused coping does not differ significantly between male (Mean = 3.51, SD not shown) and female faculty (Mean = 3.39; $t = 1.57$, $p = 0.117$), notable differences are observed for emotion-focused and avoidance-focused coping. Female faculty report significantly higher use of emotion-focused coping (Mean = 3.44) compared to males (Mean = 3.12; $t = -2.78$, $p = 0.006$), indicating a greater reliance on strategies such as emotional regulation, seeking support, or cognitive reframing.

Coping Strategy	Male Mean	Female Mean	t	df	p-value
Problem-Focused	3.51	3.39	1.57	298	0.117
Emotion-Focused	3.12	3.44	-2.78*	298	0.006
Avoidance-Focused	2.60	2.90	-2.54*	298	0.012

Similarly, females exhibit higher avoidance-focused coping (Mean = 2.90) than males (Mean = 2.60; $t = -2.54$, $p = 0.012$), suggesting a tendency toward disengagement or postponement when managing work–life conflicts. These findings partially support Hypothesis 2 (H2), highlighting that gender influences the type of coping strategies adopted, with female faculty more likely to employ both emotion-focused and avoidance-focused approaches. The results underscore the importance of tailored interventions to enhance adaptive coping among female academics, thereby improving overall work–life balance.

Table 5. Pearson Correlation Between Work–Life Balance and Coping Strategies

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Work–Life Balance	1			
2. Problem-Focused Coping	0.45**	1		
3. Emotion-Focused Coping	-0.21**	0.30**	1	
4. Avoidance-Focused Coping	-0.32**	0.15*	0.41**	1

The Pearson correlation analysis reveals meaningful relationships between work–life balance and coping strategies among faculty members. Work–life balance is positively correlated with problem-focused coping ($r = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that faculty who report higher levels of balance are more likely to engage in proactive, solution-oriented strategies to manage work–life conflicts. Conversely, work–life balance shows negative correlations with emotion-focused coping ($r = -0.21$, $p < 0.01$) and avoidance-focused coping ($r = -0.32$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that faculty experiencing lower balance are more likely to rely on strategies such as emotional regulation, distraction, or disengagement. Among the coping strategies, problem-focused coping is positively associated with both emotion-focused ($r = 0.30$, $p < 0.01$) and avoidance-focused coping ($r = 0.15$, $p < 0.05$), while emotion-focused and avoidance-focused coping are strongly correlated ($r = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$). These results suggest a complex interplay among coping mechanisms, where adaptive and less adaptive strategies may co-occur depending on individual experiences of work–life balance. Overall, the findings emphasize that promoting problem-focused coping could enhance faculty work–life balance, while excessive reliance on emotion-focused or avoidance-focused strategies may undermine it.

Table 6. Measurement Model: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Construct	Factor Loadings	CR	AVE
Work–Life Balance	0.71–0.88	0.89	0.62
Problem-Focused Coping	0.68–0.82	0.85	0.57
Emotion-Focused Coping	0.65–0.80	0.83	0.55
Avoidance-Focused Coping	0.61–0.78	0.79	0.50

The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) demonstrates that all constructs exhibit satisfactory measurement properties, confirming the reliability and validity of the scales used in this study. Factor loadings for each construct range from 0.61 to 0.88, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.60, indicating that each item adequately represents its respective latent construct (Hair et al., 2021). Composite reliability (CR) values range from 0.79 to 0.89, reflecting strong internal consistency across all constructs. Additionally, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceed the 0.50 benchmark for all constructs, confirming adequate convergent validity. Collectively, these results indicate that the measurement model is robust and suitable for subsequent structural analyses, ensuring that the latent constructs of work–life balance and coping strategies are measured reliably and validly within the context of faculty members in Bangladesh.

Table 7. Structural Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Recommended Value	Observed Value
CFI	≥ 0.90	0.94
TLI	≥ 0.90	0.92
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.057
SRMR	≤ 0.08	0.045

The structural model demonstrates excellent fit to the data, as indicated by multiple goodness-of-fit indices. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI = 0.94) and Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI = 0.92) exceed the recommended threshold of 0.90, indicating that the model provides a good approximation of the observed covariance structure. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA = 0.057) and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR = 0.045) are well below the cutoff values of 0.08, suggesting minimal discrepancy between the hypothesized model and the observed data. Collectively, these indices confirm that the structural model is robust, reliable, and suitable for evaluating the hypothesized relationships among gender, work–life balance, and coping strategies among faculty members in Bangladesh. The strong model fit provides confidence in interpreting the subsequent path coefficients and mediation effects.

Table 8. SEM Path Coefficients

Path	β	SE	t-value	p-value
Gender → Work–Life Balance	0.22	0.08	2.75	0.006*
Work–Life Balance → Problem-Focused Coping	0.41	0.07	5.86	0.001*
Work–Life Balance → Emotion-Focused Coping	-0.28	0.06	-4.67	0.001*
Work–Life Balance → Avoidance-Focused Coping	-0.32	0.07	-4.57	0.001*

The SEM path analysis reveals significant relationships among gender, work–life balance, and coping strategies. Gender has a positive and significant effect on work–life balance ($\beta = 0.22$, $t = 2.75$, $p = 0.006$), indicating that male faculty members experience higher work–life balance compared to females. Work–life balance positively predicts problem-focused coping ($\beta = 0.41$, $t = 5.86$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that faculty who achieve better balance are more likely to adopt proactive, solution-oriented strategies. Conversely, work–life balance negatively influences emotion-focused coping ($\beta = -0.28$, $t = -4.67$, $p < 0.001$) and avoidance-focused coping ($\beta = -0.32$, $t = -4.57$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that faculty with lower balance are more prone to rely on emotion regulation or disengagement strategies. These findings confirm that gender plays a crucial role in shaping work–life balance, which in turn significantly affects the type of coping strategies employed by faculty members. Overall, the results provide strong empirical support for the proposed hypotheses regarding the mediating role of coping strategies in the relationship between gender and work–life balance.

Table 9. Indirect Effects

Mediation Path	Indirect Effect	SE	t-value	p-value
Gender → Work–Life Balance → Problem-Focused	0.09	0.03	3.00	0.003*
Gender → Work–Life Balance → Emotion-Focused	-0.06	0.02	-3.00	0.003*

Gender → Work–Life Balance → Avoidance-Focused	-0.07	0.03	-2.33	0.020*
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The mediation analysis demonstrates that coping strategies partially mediate the relationship between gender and work–life balance among faculty members. Specifically, work–life balance significantly mediates the effect of gender on problem-focused coping (Indirect Effect = 0.09, $t = 3.00$, $p = 0.003$), indicating that male faculty's higher work–life balance contributes to greater adoption of proactive, problem-focused strategies. Similarly, work–life balance mediates the relationship between gender and both emotion-focused coping (Indirect Effect = -0.06, $t = -3.00$, $p = 0.003$) and avoidance-focused coping (Indirect Effect = -0.07, $t = -2.33$, $p = 0.020$), suggesting that female faculty, experiencing lower work–life balance, are more likely to employ emotion-focused and avoidance-focused coping. These results underscore the critical mediating role of work–life balance in shaping coping behaviors and highlight the importance of gender-sensitive institutional policies to promote adaptive coping strategies among faculty.

Table 10. Sector Differences (Public vs. Private Universities)

Variable	Public Mean	Private Mean	t	df	p-value
Work–Life Balance	3.05	3.20	-1.84	298	0.067
Problem-Focused Coping	3.41	3.50	-1.10	298	0.271
Emotion-Focused Coping	3.25	3.30	-0.48	298	0.632
Avoidance-Focused Coping	2.79	2.71	0.77	298	0.441

The independent-sample t-test results indicate that there are no statistically significant differences between faculty members in public and private universities in terms of work–life balance or coping strategies. Although private university faculty report slightly higher work–life balance (Mean = 3.20) than public university faculty (Mean = 3.05), this difference is not significant ($t = -1.84$, $p = 0.067$). Similarly, problem-focused coping ($t = -1.10$, $p = 0.271$), emotion-focused coping ($t = -0.48$, $p = 0.632$), and avoidance-focused coping ($t = 0.77$, $p = 0.441$) do not differ significantly across sectors. These findings suggest that institutional type (public vs. private) does not substantially influence work–life balance or coping behaviors among faculty members in Bangladesh. This underscores the pervasive influence of individual and gender-related factors over organizational context in shaping work–life balance outcomes.

Table 11. Work–Life Balance by Academic Rank

Academic Rank	Mean WLB	SD	F	p-value
Lecturer	3.05	0.81	2.85	0.038*
Assistant Professor	3.10	0.87		
Associate Professor	3.20	0.83		
Professor	3.25	0.88		

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicates a statistically significant difference in work–life balance across academic ranks ($F = 2.85$, $p = 0.038$). The results show a gradual increase in mean work–life balance from lecturers (Mean = 3.05, $SD = 0.81$) to professors (Mean = 3.25, $SD = 0.88$), suggesting that more senior faculty experience slightly higher levels of work–life balance. This trend may reflect the

influence of accumulated professional experience, greater autonomy, and enhanced institutional support available to higher-ranking faculty, which can facilitate better management of academic and personal responsibilities. These findings highlight the importance of considering academic rank when examining work–life balance and indicate potential areas for targeted support among junior faculty members.

5. Discussion

This study examined gender differences in work–life balance and coping strategies among faculty members in Bangladesh, advancing understanding of how gender shapes work–life integration in higher education contexts. Consistent with prior research in organizational and occupational health psychology, our findings indicated that male faculty report significantly higher work–life balance than female faculty (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Shockley et al., 2017). This result aligns with evidence that women often bear greater domestic and caregiving responsibilities alongside professional roles, which intensifies work–life conflict and reduces perceived balance (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Haar et al., 2014). The absence of gender differences in problem-focused coping contrasts somewhat with earlier studies suggesting that women are more likely to engage in emotion-oriented coping (Matud, 2004). However, our findings corroborate research in academic settings showing that when work demands are structurally defined (e.g., publication, service, teaching), both men and women adopt similar pragmatic strategies to manage tasks (Belt & Richardson, 2005). The significantly higher use of emotion-focused and avoidance-focused coping among female faculty suggests that women may be more reactive to stressors and more inclined to use internal regulation or disengagement when work–life pressures exceed manageable levels (Endler & Parker, 1990).

Correlation and SEM analyses demonstrated that work–life balance is positively associated with problem-focused coping and negatively associated with emotion-focused and avoidance-focused coping. These relationships echo theoretical assumptions from the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, which proposes that individuals who appraise stress as manageable are more likely to use active coping strategies, whereas those who perceive stress as overwhelming resort to less adaptive strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The mediation analysis further clarifies that work–life balance partially mediates the relationship between gender and coping strategy adoption. Thus, gender influences not only the experience of work–life balance but also the way faculty cope with that experience—a finding that extends extant research by highlighting the mechanisms through which gender differences manifest in coping processes (Byron, 2005; Allen et al., 2012). Interestingly, no significant differences were found between public and private university faculty in work–life balance or coping strategies, suggesting that institutional type may be less determinative than individual and role-related pressures in this context. This aligns with research showing that faculty roles, regardless of institutional governance, carry similar expectations around research, teaching, and service that shape stress and coping patterns (Misra et al., 2012). Additionally, the rank analysis revealed that more senior faculty report higher work–life balance, which may reflect greater job autonomy, experience, and accrued social capital that confer protective benefits against work–life conflict (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012).

Collectively, these findings contribute to the literature in several ways. First, the study provides empirical evidence from the Global South—an under-represented context in work–life research—

thereby enriching cross-cultural understanding of work–life dynamics (Poelmans et al., 2005). Second, by integrating gender, coping, and balance within a structural model, the research advances theoretical models of work–life interplay beyond descriptive accounts toward explanatory mechanisms. Third, it highlights the differential roles of coping strategies, suggesting that interventions must not only address structural inequality but also enhance adaptive coping to improve wellbeing. From a practical standpoint, these results underscore the importance of gender-sensitive organizational practices in universities. Institutions should consider family-friendly policies (e.g., flexible scheduling, workload adjustments, childcare support) that acknowledge the disproportionate domestic burdens on female faculty. Professional development programs that strengthen effective coping skills—particularly problem-focused strategies—could enhance faculty resilience and work–life balance. Mentoring and support networks, especially for junior and female faculty, may also mitigate reliance on avoidance or emotion-focused coping that correlates with poorer balance.

Despite its contributions, the study has limitations. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inference, and reliance on self-reported measures may introduce response biases. Future research could use longitudinal designs to examine how work–life balance and coping evolve over time and across career stages. Qualitative inquiry may also uncover contextual nuances behind the statistical patterns observed. In conclusion, this study demonstrates that gender significantly shapes work–life balance and coping strategies among faculty members, with implications for theory, policy, and practice. By elucidating the pathways linking gender, balance, and coping, it underscores the need for multifaceted interventions that address both structural constraints and individual coping resources to enhance faculty wellbeing and institutional effectiveness.

6. Conclusion

This study provides robust evidence that gender significantly shapes work–life balance and coping strategies among faculty members in Bangladesh. Male faculty report higher perceived work–life balance, while female faculty are more likely to use emotion-focused and avoidance-focused coping when facing work–life pressures. The findings highlight that coping strategies are not only influenced by individual characteristics but are also mediated by the experience of work–life balance, emphasizing the complex interplay between gender, stress, and coping in academic settings. No significant differences were observed between public and private university faculty, suggesting that institutional type is less influential than personal and role-related pressures. Senior faculty reported higher work–life balance, pointing to the protective effects of experience, autonomy, and social capital.

From a practical perspective, these results underscore the importance of gender-sensitive policies, family-friendly practices, and professional development programs that strengthen adaptive coping skills. Mentoring and support networks, particularly for junior and female faculty, can mitigate reliance on less adaptive coping strategies. Overall, the study extends theoretical understanding of work–life integration by elucidating the pathways linking gender, balance, and coping, and provides actionable insights for university administrators to enhance faculty well-being and organizational effectiveness. Future research using longitudinal and qualitative approaches could further clarify how these dynamics evolve across career stages and institutional contexts.

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