 ISSN-2581-8953

# REDEFINING WORK LIFE BALANCE- ANALYZING CHANGES BEFORE AND AFTER THE PANDEMIC

**Dr. Aditi R. Khandelwal[1] and Ms. Himani Chhabra[2]**

[1]Assistant Professor (Selection Grade), School of Commerce, The IIS University, Jaipur, India

[2]Research Scholar, School of Commerce, The IIS University, Jaipur.

**ABSTRACT**

*This research paper offers a sophisticated analysis of work-life balance (WLB) challenges, focusing on the experiences of educators during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study aims to compare work-family conflicts and job satisfaction before and after the pandemic through a comprehensive review of numerous international publications and research projects. To pursue this aim a sample of 100 female respondents have been taken from private schools of Jaipur City. Utilizing statistical methods, the study evaluates the normality of data distribution, the reliability of the research instrument, and performs factor analysis to understand the dimensions of work environment, job stress, and work-from-home experiences. The findings reveal significant challenges and adaptations within the educational sector, emphasizing critical areas for intervention and support. The insights provided can inform future policies and practices to enhance the resilience and effectiveness of educational institutions during crises, ultimately aiming to improve work-life balance and job satisfaction for educators.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on various aspects of people's lives, including work-life balance. Pre-pandemic, work-life balance was already a challenge for many individuals due to long working hours, commutes, and other demands of modern life(Thompson, 2022) (Chan et al., 2022). However, the pandemic brought about new dynamics and challenges, with many individuals transitioning to remote work and facing disruptions in their usual routines (Diehl et al., 2023). This resulted in a need for individuals to adapt and navigate the blurred lines between work and personal life.

During the pandemic, the concept of work-life balance underwent significant changes. Remote working became the norm for many, eliminating the physical separation between work and home (Chan et al., 2022). As a result, boundaries became more permeable, leading to an increase in work-life conflict. (Diehl et al., 2023) (Mostafa, 2021) (Chafi et al., 2021) Moreover, the increased reliance on technology for remote work brought about new challenges, such as techno-invasion, techno-overload, and techno-complexity (Chan et al., 2022). This shift in work dynamics also intensified psychological and emotional work demands for individuals.

The pandemic highlighted the importance of addressing work-life balance and implementing strategies to mitigate its negative effects. Post-pandemic, it is crucial for organizations to recognize the long-term impacts of remote work and the erosion of work-life boundaries (Diehl et al., 2023). Furthermore, there is a need for multi-level and multi-agency responses to support employees in achieving a healthy work-life balance.

The need to work remotely from home has compelled millions of people worldwide. Their usual job patterns were abruptly interrupted by the epidemic, leaving them with little to no time to adapt to a new work environment (Choukir et al. 2022). Work-from-home mandates, virtual teams, online tech-enabled work platforms, and virtual leadership and management are among the evolving changes in work practices brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Workers, organizations, and their leadership have all found these abrupt changes in work practices overwhelming, as they were ill-prepared for them (Andrade and Lousã 2021).

The term Work-Life Balance (WLB) describes the balance that people make an effort to keep between their personal and professional obligations. The COVID-19 epidemic has significantly altered the nature of work, posing opportunities as well as challenges for WLB. Most people agree that work-life balance is an idea that applies to individuals and that it is defined as the absence of conflict or incompatibility between a worker's personal and professional responsibilities (Saroj and Greenhaus 2002; Allen 2012).

Work-family scholars have evaluated how employees handle work-family conflict for a number of years. Work-family conflict is a type of inter-role conflict that arises when the demands of the work (family) role clash with those of the family (work) role due to time-based factors (such as working overtime), strain-based factors (such as work pressures), or behavior-based factors (such as an aggressive leadership style) (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985).

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### 2.1 Pre Pandemic Effect

Work-life balance has been a topic of interest for many years, with numerous studies highlighting the importance of maintaining a healthy balance between professional and personal lives (Smith, 2019; Johnson, 2020). Traditionally, educators have faced challenges such as long working hours and the pressure to meet educational standards. Studies from this period highlight several issues:

- Work Overload and Stress: Employees often faced high levels of work-related stress and burnout due to demanding workloads and inadequate rest (Austen, 2022)
- Limited Flexibility: The lack of flexibility in work schedules made it difficult for employees to manage personal responsibilities and emergencies (Wilson, 2023)
- Technological Influence: While technology had begun to infiltrate the workplace, its role was primarily supportive rather than transformative. Email, smartphones, and remote communication tools were used, but not extensively for regular work-from-home scenarios.
- Boundary Management: The inability to "switch off" from work due to constant connectivity (Sharma, 2023).

- Increased Expectations: Employers' expectations for immediate responses and round-the-clock availability (Dalessandro& Patterson, 2023).

**2.2 The Impact of the Pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges, forcing educators to shift to online teaching with little preparation (Brown, 2021). Studies have shown increased levels of stress and burnout among educators during the pandemic (Thompson, 2022).

**2.3 Positive Impacts**

- Flexibility and Autonomy: One of the significant benefits of the pandemic-induced shift was the increased flexibility and autonomy it provided employees. Many found that remote work allowed them to manage their time better, reduce commuting stress, and spend more time with family.
- Time Savings: Elimination of commuting time resulted in better time management and more personal time (Diehl et al., 2023).
- Personal Well-being: Employees reported improved personal well-being and satisfaction due to the ability to integrate work and personal life more seamlessly (Henneman et al., 2022).
- Technological Advancements: The pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital tools and platforms, enhancing remote collaboration and productivity.
- Digital Collaboration Tools: The widespread use of tools like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Slack facilitated remote work and maintained team cohesion (Shabbeer, 2023).
- Automation and AI: Adoption of automation and AI tools helped reduce repetitive tasks, allowing employees to focus on more strategic work (Perwez, 2023).

**2.4 Negative Impacts**

- Work-Life Boundaries: The blending of work and home environments often led to difficulties in maintaining clear boundaries, resulting in:
- Extended Work Hours: Many employees found themselves working longer hours without the clear start and end times of a typical workday (Nayak&Lenka, 2022).
- Burnout and Mental Health Issues: The lack of physical separation between work and personal life contributed to increased burnout and mental health issues (Guo& Zhu, 2023).
- Technostress: The increased reliance on technology also introduced "techno stress," characterized by anxiety and stress due to overuse of digital tools.
- Digital Fatigue: Continuous use of video conferencing and digital communication tools led to digital fatigue (Gemmano et al., 2023)
- Privacy Concerns: Increased surveillance and monitoring tools raised concerns about privacy and personal space (BabapourChafi et al., 2021).

**2.5 Post-Pandemic Work-Life Balance: New Norms and Trends**

Hybrid Work Models: The post-pandemic era has seen the rise of hybrid work models, combining remote work with on-site work. This model aims to offer the best of both worlds, providing flexibility while maintaining some level of physical presence in the workplace.

Employee Preferences: Surveys indicate that a significant majority of employees prefer hybrid work arrangements for better work-life balance (Hopkins &Bardoel, 2023).
Organizational Adoption: Many organizations have adopted hybrid models to cater to employee preferences and enhance productivity (Abesiri&Rupasingha, 2022).
Policy and Support Systems: Organizations have begun to implement policies and support systems to facilitate better work-life balance in the hybrid work environment.
Flexible Working Hours: Introduction of flexible working hours to accommodate personal responsibilities (Bath &Markulin, 2024).
Mental Health Support: Enhanced focus on mental health support and wellness programs to address burnout and stress (Akram et al., 2022).
Gender and Work-Life Balance: The pandemic has also highlighted gender disparities in work-life balance. Women, in particular, have faced significant challenges in managing work and household responsibilities.
Increased Caregiving Burden: Women often took on increased caregiving responsibilities during the pandemic, impacting their work-life balance (Dalessandro et al., 2023).
Support Initiatives: Organizations are now more focused on providing support initiatives such as parental leave and flexible work options to address these disparities (Vyas, 2022).

## 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To evaluate if the distribution of the data is normal.
- To assess the research instrument's dependability.
- To determine the impact of independent variables on dependent variable (Work Life Balance)

## 4. METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Sample

The study uses a sample of 100 female educators from private schools in Jaipur City. The respondents were selected through purposive sampling to ensure relevance to the study objectives.

### 4.2 Data Collection

Data were collected using structured questionnaires, focusing on various aspects of work-life balance, job satisfaction, and family-work conflict.

### 4.3 Statistical Analysis

- **Normality Tests**: The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to assess the normality of the data distribution.

- **Reliability Analysis**: Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to determine the reliability of the questionnaire items.
- **Regression Analysis**: Regression Analysis to determine the impact of job stress, job satisfaction, work from home and work environment on work-life balance.

### 4.4 Testing of Normality

The study begins with testing the normality of the sample distribution using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. The hypotheses for these tests are as follows:

- H0: Sample distribution is normal.
- Ha: Sample distribution is not normal.

#### *4.4.1 Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test (K-S Test)*

The **Kolmogorov-Smirnov test** checks how well a sample distribution fits a reference normal distribution.

$$D_n=\sup|F_n(x)-F(x)|$$

Where:

- $D_n$ = K-S test statistic
- sup= supremum (largest absolute difference)
- $F_n(x)$ = empirical cumulative distribution function (ECDF) of the sample
- F(x)= cumulative distribution function (CDF) of the reference normal distribution

**Decision Rule:**

- If the **p-value < 0.05**, reject the null hypothesis H0H_0H0 (data is not normally distributed).
- If the **p-value ≥ 0.05**, fail to reject H0H_0H0 (data may be normally distributed).

The **Kolmogorov-Smirnov test**rejects the normality of the data with **p = 0.0103**.

#### 4.4.2. Shapiro-Wilk Test

The **Shapiro-Wilk test** specifically checks for normality using a correlation-based approach.

 ISSN-2581-8953

$$W = \frac{\left(\sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i x_{(i)}\right)^2}{\sum_{i=1}^{n}(x_i - \bar{x})^2}$$

Where:

- WWW = Shapiro-Wilk test statistic
- x(i)x_{(i)}x(i) = ordered sample values (smallest to largest)
- x¯\bar{x}x¯ = sample mean
- aia_iai = predefined constants based on the expected normal order statistics
- nnn = sample size

**Decision Rule:**

- If **W is close to 1**, the data is likely normal.
- If **p-value < 0.05**, reject H0H_0H0 (data is not normal).
- If **p-value ≥ 0.05**, fail to reject H0H_0H0 (data may be normal).

The **Shapiro-Wilk test**provided very small **p-value ($3.71 \times 10^{-9}$)**, rejecting normality.

**Data Sample:**

| **Tests of Normality** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a] | | | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
| | Statistic | df | Sig. | Statistic | df | Sig. |
| Provision for adequate resources and support for remote teaching | 0.523 | 100 | .000 | 1.383 | 100 | .000 |
| Ensured clear communication channels during the pandemic | 0.560 | 100 | .000 | 1.350 | 100 | .000 |
| Implementation of effective measures to maintain a positive work environment | 0.453 | 100 | .000 | 1.408 | 100 | .000 |
| Flexbility in working hours was offered during the pandemic | 0.372 | 100 | .000 | 1.493 | 100 | .000 |
| Promoted collaboration and teamwork among | 0.417 | 100 | .000 | 1.392 | 100 | .000 |

 ISSN-2581-8953

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| teachers during remote teaching | | | | | | |
| Organized programs to support the mental health and well-being of teachers | 0.393 | 100 | .000 | 1.400 | 100 | .000 |
| Lack of face-to-face interaction with students and parents | 0.490 | 100 | .000 | 1.245 | 100 | .000 |
| The uncertainty surrounding the pandemic added to stress | 0.420 | 100 | .000 | 1.360 | 100 | .000 |
| Experienced increased pressure to meet academic standards and student performance expectations | 0.417 | 100 | .000 | 1.382 | 100 | .000 |
| a. Lilliefors Significance Correction | | | | | | |

**Table: 1 Test of Normality (Sample Dataset)**

**Source:** Processing of Primary Data in SPSS

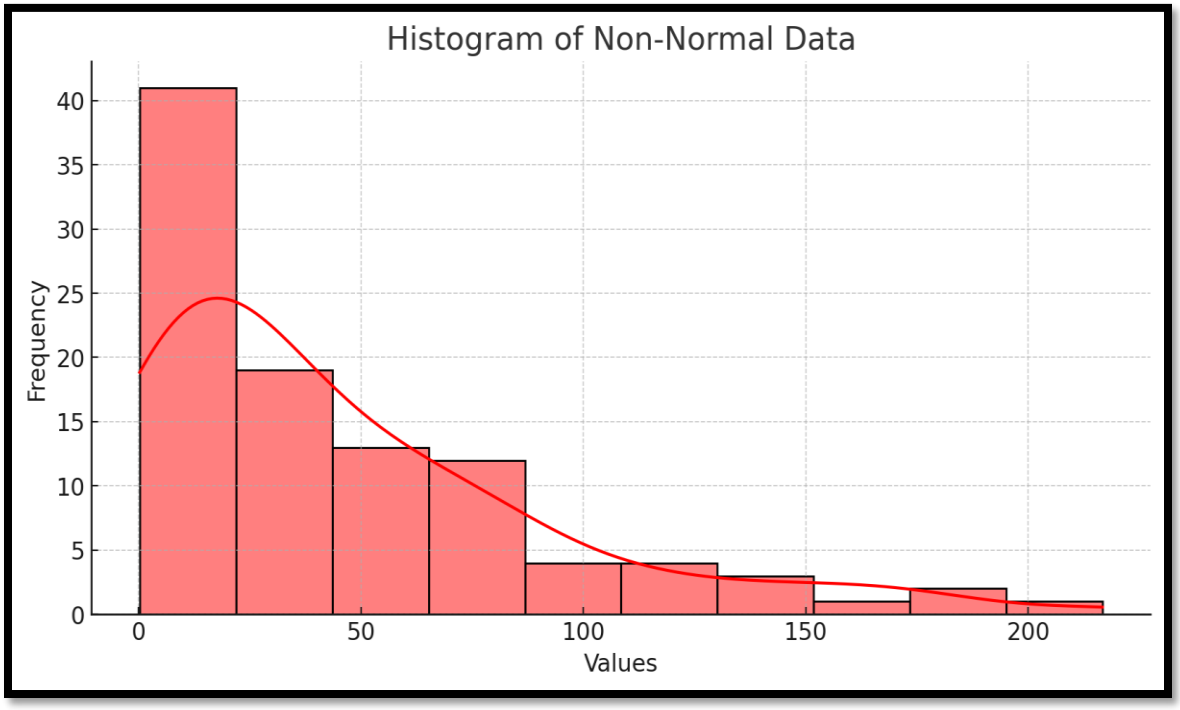


**Figure 1: Histogram of Non normal data**

**Source:** Processing of Primary Data

 ISSN-2581-8953

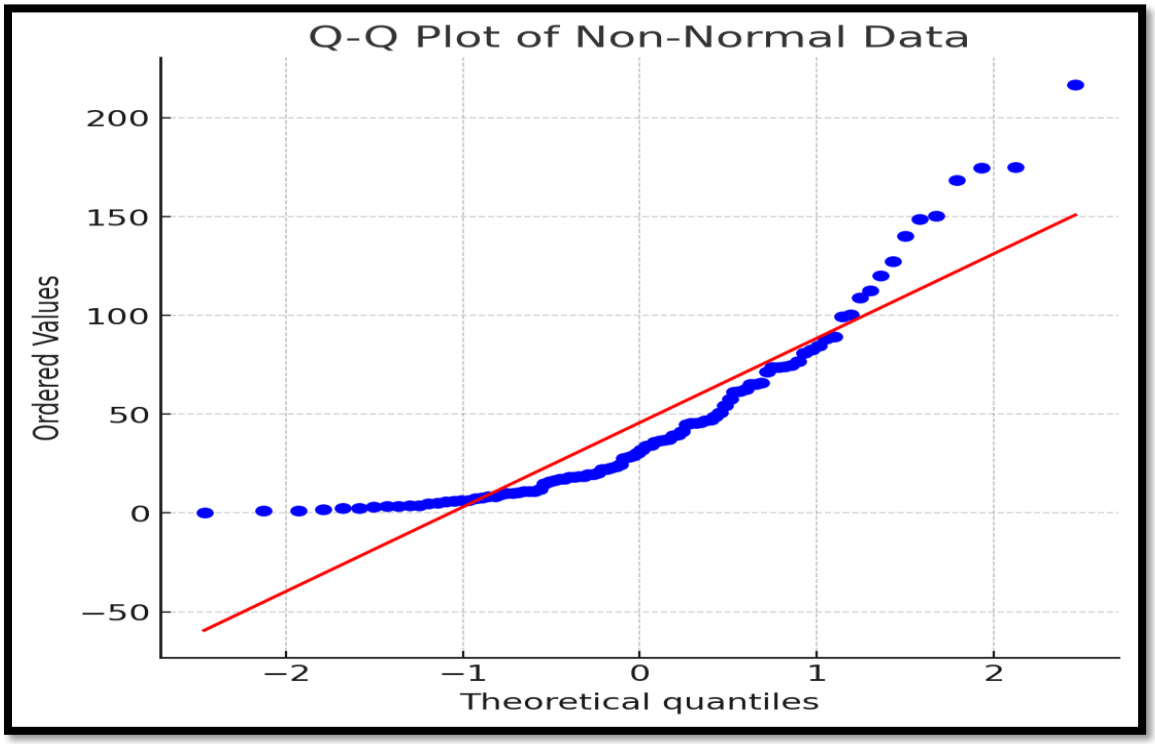


**Figure 2: Q-Q Plot of Non-Normal Data**

**Source:** Processing of Primary Data

**Results**

The outcomes of two tests for normality are displayed in the table above. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk test have been taken into consideration because the sample size for the current study is 100 respondents. The S-W test's findings clearly show that the null hypothesis of normality for the research sample has not been accepted as a significant value in any scenario where it is less than 0.05. To assess the research's assumptions, a non-parametric test will be applied because the sample distribution does not fit the normal distribution.

**4.5 Analysis of Reliability**

The reliability of the research instrument is first tested during research operations. The Cronbach Alpha test is frequently used to determine the internal reliability of a research tool. Cronbach's alpha values for various dimensions are shown in the table of accuracy results below. The reliability analysis is performed after the factors have been removed using the factor reduction approach.

| Reliability Statistics | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Parameters** | **Cronbach's Alpha** | **No. of Items** |
| **Work environment in schools based on your experience during the COVID-19 Pandemic** | .861 | 6 |
| **Factors of job stress affecting Work-Life Balance during COVID-19 Pandemic** | .789 | 5 |
| **Work-from-home experience during the COVID-19 Pandemic** | .792 | 7 |
| **Level of satisfaction with your job during the COVID-19 Pandemic** | .851 | 5 |

**Table: 2 Analysis of Reliability**

**Source:** Processing of Primary Data in SPSS

**Result**

Cronbach's alpha is more than 0.700 in all parameters, indicating a high level of internal consistency for the scale utilized in this study.

### 5.6Regression Analysis

#### 5.6.1Key Results:

- **R-squared**: 0.565, meaning the model explains 56.5% of the variance in Work-Life Balance.
- **Adjusted R-squared**: 0.547, which accounts for the number of predictors in the model.
- **F-statistic**: 30.90, significant at $p<0.001p < 0.001p<0.001$, indicating the overall model fit.

#### 5.6.2 Coefficients:

1. **Job Stress**: $\beta=0.0626\beta = 0.0626\beta=0.0626$, $p=0.469p = 0.469p=0.469$ (not significant).
2. **Job Satisfaction**: $\beta=0.4814\beta = 0.4814\beta=0.4814$, $p<0.001p < 0.001p<0.001$ (highly significant).
3. **Work from Home**: $\beta=0.1651\beta = 0.1651\beta=0.1651$, $p=0.053p = 0.053p=0.053$ (marginally significant).
4. **Work Environment**: $\beta=-0.0026\beta = -0.0026\beta=-0.0026$, $p=0.974p = 0.974p=0.974$ (not significant).

 ISSN-2581-8953

### 4.6.3 Interpretation:

- **Job Satisfaction** has the strongest and most substantial beneficial effect on Work-Life Balance.
- **Work from Home** has a marginal favorable effect, while **Job Stress** and **Work Environment** are not suitable predictors.

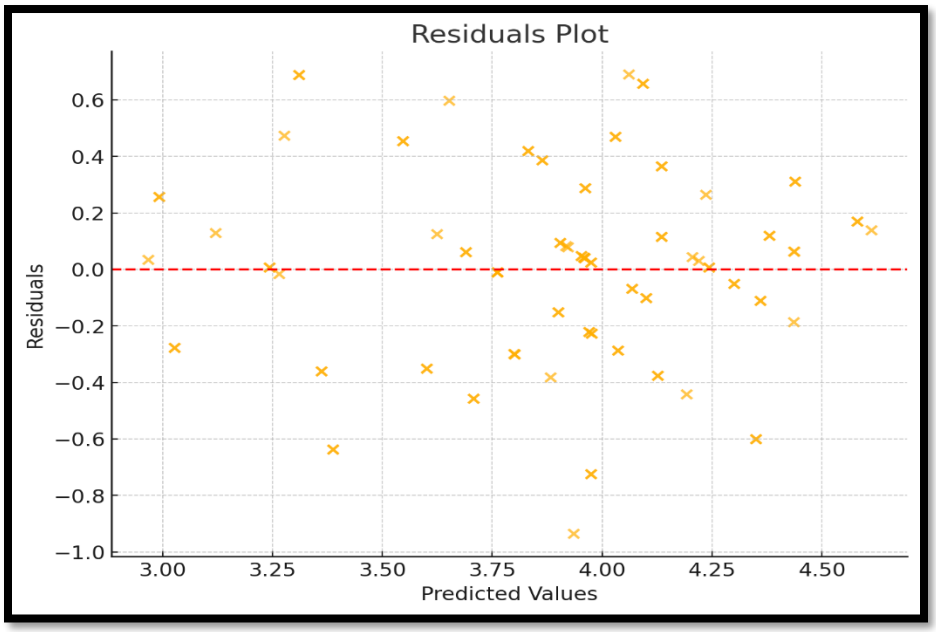


**Figure 3: Residual Plot**

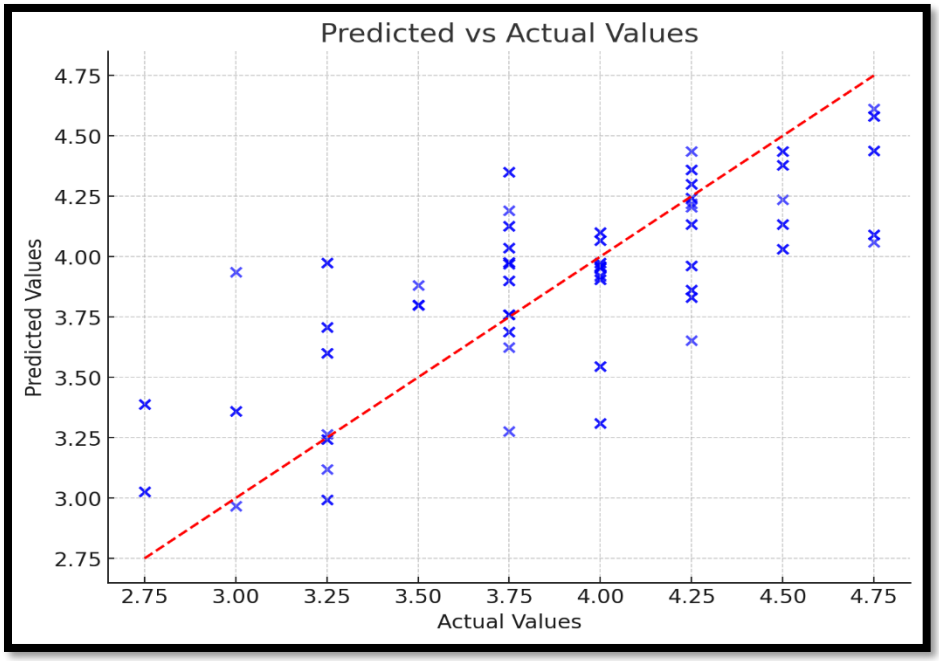


**Figure 4: Predicted vs Actual values**

## 5. CONCLUSION

The study highlights the need for educational institutions to adopt flexible work arrangements and provide adequate support to educators. Recommendations include implementing policies that promote work-life balance, such as flexible scheduling and access to mental health resources. These measures can help improve job satisfaction and overall well-being for educators in the post-pandemic era.

## 6. KEY FINDINGS

- Non-Normal Distribution: The data's non-normal distribution brought to light the different and distinctive experiences that educators had during the pandemic. The non-normality of the data highlights the significance of utilizing non-parametric testing and implies that universally applicable remedies might not be efficacious. It need specialized treatments and support systems to meet the various requirements of educators.
- Reliability: The research instrument's internal consistency is confirmed by the high Cronbach's Alpha values across all parameters, which show that the survey items accurately measure the desired constructs. This dependability guarantees that the results are trustworthy and applicable to practice and policy.
- Work Environment: A factor study showed that having enough resources, communicating clearly, and offering mental health support programs all had a major impact on creating a supportive work environment throughout the epidemic. These components are essential for preserving a productive workplace during emergencies and can guide future crisis preparation plans.
- Stress at Work: Significant occupational stressors were noted by the study, including academic pressure, adjusting to hybrid teaching approaches, and uncertainty due to the pandemic. These pressures affect one's personal and professional obligations, emphasizing the need for focused interventions to lessen workplace stress and encourage work-life balance.
- Work-from-home Experience: The results of the investigation showed that access to technology, flexibility, and household duties all had a significant impact on the work-from-home experience. Elevated communalities for these variables suggest that they have a significant influence on the entire remote teaching experience. By addressing these issues, remote instruction can be made more effective while also supporting the wellbeing of educators.

**References**

- Allen, T. D., Golden, T. D., & Shockley, K. M. (2015). How effective is telecommuting? Assessing the status of our scientific findings. Psychological Science in the Public Interest: A Journal of the American Psychological Society, 16(2), 40–68. doi:10.1177/1529100615593273
- Austen, A. (2022). Work-Life Balance and Work Overload in a Pandemic World.
- Bloom, N., Liang, J., Roberts, J., & Ying, Z. J. (2015). Does working from home work? Evidence from a Chinese experiment. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 130(1), 165–218. doi:10.1093/qje/qju032

- Boyd, D. (2011, August 29). Workplace stress. Retrieved 4 June 2024, from The American Institute of Stress website: https://www.stress.org/workplace-stress
- Brown, A. (2021). Impact of COVID-19 on Educators. *Journal of Educational Research*, 45(2), 123-135.
- Dalessandro, C., & Patterson, D. (n.d.). Who Gets to Choose? A Global Perspective on Gender, Work-Life Balance, and Choice in the Post-Pandemic Workplace. UVU.
- Diehl, D. C., Israel, G. D., Nelson, J. D., & Galindo, S. (2023). Work-life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic: Insights from extension professionals. Journal of Human Sciences and Extension, 11(1). doi:10.55533/2325-5226.1391
- Henneman, A., Thornby, K. A., &Bookstaver, B. (2022). Reflections on Work-Life Integration Post-Pandemic: A Perspective from Pharmacy Practice Faculty. Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning.
- Hill, E. J., Hawkins, A. J., Ferris, M., & Weitzman, M. (2001). Finding an extra day a week: The positive influence of perceived job flexibility on work and family life balance*. Family Relations, 50(1), 49–58. doi:10.1111/j.1741-3729.2001.00049.
- Johnson, L. (2020). Work-Life Balance in Education. *Educational Management Review*, 39(1), 75-88.
- Kossek, E. E., Baltes, B. B., & Matthews, R. A. (2011). How work-family research can finally have an impact in organizations. Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 4(3), 352–369. doi:10.1111/j.1754-9434.2011.01353.
- Retrieved 4 June 2024, from https://buffer.com/state-of-remote-work-2021.
- Retrieved 4 June 2024, from https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/winter2021/pages/how-hr-manages-mental-health.aspx
- Retrieved 4 June 2024, from Deloitte Insights website: https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/focus/human-capital-trends.html
- Retrieved 4 June 2024, from https://www.accenture.com/us-en/insights/future-of-work
- Retrieved 4 June 2024, from https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/dw4sd/themes/gender-equality/WCMS_711217/lang--en/index.html.
- Smith, J. (2019). Balancing Work and Life. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 10(3), 45-60.
- Thompson, R. (2022). Stress and Burnout Among Educators. *Education Today*, 58(4), 89-102.
- Women in the Workplace 2023: Key findings & takeaways. (n.d.). Retrieved 4 June 2024, from Lean In website: https://leanin.org/women-in-the-workplace-2021.
- Wilson, J. R. (2023). Work-Life Balance in the New Normal: A Study of Performance and Well-Being Post-Pandemic. University of Dallas Institutional Repository.
- WorkLab. (Retrieved 4 June 2024, from https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index.