

A Literature Review on Work Family Balance among Married and Childbearing Female Teachers in Chinese Universities

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Abstract: This literature review discusses the current situation and ways in which married and childbearing female teachers in Chinese universities balance work and family. Due to the increasing number of women entering the workforce, people are paying more attention to the issues of work and family, as well as the concept of how to balance these two fields. Although multiple studies have explored the issue of work family balance for female practitioners, the results of these studies cannot be directly applied to married and childbearing female teachers in Chinese universities. Because female practitioners from different countries, regions, and professions face vastly different work family issues. Now, it is necessary to specifically analyze the issue of work family balance among married and childbearing female teachers in Chinese universities. The results show that married and childbearing female teachers in Chinese universities not only face numerous obstacles in their work, but also need to cope with various challenges in their families, as they shoulder dual careers. Adopting flexible work schedules, support from colleagues/superiors, and government coordination and promotion can alleviate the pressure brought by their dual identities.

Keywords: Chinese universities; married with children; female teachers; work family balance

1. Introduction

Work and family are seen as two of the most significant facets of adulthood [1–4]. Everyone is impacted by work family balance challenges, regardless of gender, age, occupation, or educational background, albeit the extent and results differ [5, 6]. The research on work family balance can be traced back to the 1970s [7], originating from the Western world [1,8]. It is a response to the difficulties in managing work and family life [9]. A person's view of how well their roles in work and family align is known as work family balance [6,7,10], and it is also an art of effectively managing work and family domains, involving how much time a person invests in work and family [4,11,12]. The goal of investing time is not to achieve equal time between home and work, but to allocate time that is suitable for a specific individual or family [9]. However, conflicts often arise in work and family due to the incompatibility between individual work and family roles [13–15]. Greenhaus and Beutell [16] first proposed that there are generally three types of work family conflicts, namely time based conflicts, stress based conflicts, and behavior based conflicts. Time based conflict refers to an individual's inability to allocate enough time for their role, resulting in an inability to balance the time allocation between different roles

appropriately [17]. For instance, erratic work schedules, excessive workloads, and irregular overtime might cut into family time; If a child encounters health problems, individuals may not be able to complete the writing of an emergency report [18]. Stress based conflicts is caused by work-related factors such as long hours and inflexible work schedules, which lead to fatigue and tension. The role that individuals play in the workplace hinders their ability to take on family responsibilities [5]. When a behavior pattern required by one role is incompatible with the behavior pattern required by another, such as when a father in the military enforces military discipline at home or a mother in the classroom treats her child like a student, this is referred to as behavior-based conflict [19-26]. It is difficult to achieve a perfect balance [15], and once these two areas are not coordinated, the well-being of individuals and families will be affected [2,5,8,9,27]. In many instances, conflicts arising from balancing work and family responsibilities can cause dissatisfaction, stress, and negatively impact emotional and physical well-being, ultimately leading to diminished job performance, reduced employee productivity, and disillusionment [13,28]. The research on work family balance is so rich that some people claim that this field already has mature characteristics [7].

The issue of work family balance among married and childbearing female teachers in Chinese universities has emerged from this mature research field. The struggle of women in managing work and family seems to be a universal and global issue [5, 29]. Women who have children may face more challenges in finding a good balance between work and family [30]. The majority of current research is centered on female teachers, with married female teachers who have children potentially experiencing conflicts between work and family more frequently [2,5]. It has always been widely believed that teaching is a traditional profession primarily pursued by women [2,5,13,29], compared to other industries, female teachers have more advantages and privileges [10,31]. However, work life balance in the teaching profession remains the biggest challenge facing the world [31–36], especially for married teachers with children and teachers who need to take care of elderly parents [34]. Therefore, it is very important to examine the experiences of married and childbearing female teachers in Chinese universities [7, 34]. On the one hand, due to the increase in living costs and progress in social awareness, the proportion of female employees has been on the rise [15,27,29,34], dual income families have replaced traditional family systems [10,37–40], bringing various social and demographic changes to China [14]. On the one hand, according to statistical data, the proportion of female faculty in higher education has remained at around 50% of the total faculty in recent years [41]. If higher education institutions want to have stronger international competitiveness, they must make the most of the talent pool of female teachers [31]. On the one hand, married women with children encounter greater work-family conflict than single working women due to the additional responsibilities of being wives and mothers, which result in less time for fulfilling their professional obligations [12]. The phrase “women hold up half the sky” fully illustrates that more and more Chinese women are entering the workforce and achieving outstanding results [29, 34]. However, due to the influence of traditional Chinese culture, even if they have received the same education as their husbands, Chinese women consciously or unconsciously prioritize their family responsibilities over their careers [9,29,34]. When professional women try to balance family and work while taking care of their children, they inevitably experience role conflicts [2,9,29,34]. Moreover, working women who go out to earn money do not alleviate their responsibilities in household chores and family duties [10,12,13]. Compared to non-working mothers, most working women face immense pressure in finding a balance between work and family responsibilities, as they struggle to do so [37]. Although multiple studies have explored the issue of work family balance for female practitioners, the results of these studies cannot be directly applied to married and childbearing female teachers in Chinese universities [9]. Because female practitioners from different countries, regions, and professions face vastly different work family issues [9]. The work life balance issue of married and childbearing female teachers in Chinese universities deserves urgent attention, and there is very limited research on this group [1, 14]. Although our literature search has revealed many mysteries related to the work family conflict or balance of teachers, we have not encountered any research specifically examining the work family balance of married and childbearing female teachers in Chinese universities, making this study the first research that may potentially contribute to the advancement of this field.

This time, the author will conduct a comprehensive literature review on the work family balance of married

and childbearing female teachers in Chinese universities. A comprehensive literature review is a unique form of research that can create new knowledge for the topic being reviewed [42]. Reviewing literature can not only help us gain a deeper understanding of this topic through previous research, but also enable us to discover new problems on the basis of clear thinking. Considering this, the author found that the target of this study is the first attempt. Firstly, we will extensively search for relevant literature. Secondly, we will attempt to explore the work family balance of married and childbearing female teachers in Chinese universities using existing frameworks of mature research. Finally, we will also discuss the gaps in the literature to better assist married and childbearing Chinese female university teachers in achieving work family balance [7].

2. Methods

2.1. Search Process

Firstly, we identify the applicable key terms, including work family balance, work family conflict, Chinese universities, female teachers, and married with children. Secondly, we use these key terms to search for relevant electronic databases, including Google Scholar and the E-library of the author’s university. Quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis, and mixed analysis are all within our scope of consideration. The search is restricted to papers and studies published in English in peer-reviewed journals [7].

To ensure that the literature obtained is up-to-date, we have limited the time span for searching literature to the 10-year period from 2014 to 2024. When we entered the key term ‘Work family balance of marriage and child bearing female teachers in universities in China’ on Google Scholar, a total of 17,700 search results appeared. However, not all of these 17,700 search results are what we need. We carefully excluded the following options: the research subjects are not university teachers, but others such as healthcare and social service providers, female doctors, female bank employees, etc; The research topic is not work family balance, but other factors such as academic life the phenomenon of leftover women and career pursuit, etc.

2.2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The research must meet the following criteria in order to be included in this literature review. The research subject can only be married and childbearing female teachers who teach in university institutions within China. Male teachers who do not teach in universities within China, as well as unmarried and childless female teachers who teach in universities within China, were not included in this study [7]. At the same time, due to the limited literature on the work life balance of married and childbearing female teachers in Chinese universities, in order to obtain richer and more comprehensive research progress and achievements on this topic worldwide, we have also appropriately retained some literature related to work life balance of female teachers in other countries and regions as reference and inspiration (the results as shown in Table 1).

Table 1. Author, Research design, Participants and Main conclusions.

Author	Research Design	Participants	Main Conclusions
Akram (2020) [1]	Correlational research design, quantitative research.	410 female teachers in universities of Punjab.	Results showed that job demands and social support were significantly related with the work-family conflict, and the work-family conflict was significant correlated with mental health.
Akuamoah-Boateng (2020) [27]	Quantitative research.	32 female staff at the College of Distance Education, University of Cape Coast, Ghana.	The findings of the study revealed that female staff of CoDE is not able to balance work, family and personal due to situational roles and their busy work schedules. The study also show that the university does not support female staff with policies and programmes that would assist them in this regard. The urgent need for the university toenact institutional policies and to show commitment in establishing a work-family friendly environment was recommended.

Table 1. Cont.

Author	Research Design	Participants	Main Conclusions
Al-Alawi et al. (2021) [31]	Quantitative research.	93 full-time female Saudi teachers in the public education sector.	The results show that work-life balance and job satisfaction have a positive and highly significant effect on employee performance, while work-family conflict has a positive but not significant effect. However, family work conflict has a significant negative impact on employee performance.
Atteh et al. (2020) [13]	An overview.		As the teaching profession becomes increasingly attractive to the younger generation of women, it is important to gain insight into the impact of conflict between female teachers' work and family life and their job satisfaction in school.
Barik (2017) [10]	Quantitative research.	168 married female teachers from both private and government schools of Raipur.	The study highlights the problems faced by women teachers who are concerned about the workload and its impact on their health. There was no statistical difference in work-life conflict between married female teachers in private and public schools. They try to balance work and life on their own.
Ben-Uri et al. (2021) [43]	Quantitative research.	247 teachers in Switzerland and Israel, and women represented more than 70% of the sample.	The analysis revealed differences between Israeli and Swiss teachers in terms of the importance attributed to their roles in life and their attitudes towards conflict and promotion. The results provide new insights into the role of cultural factors in shaping teachers' attitudes toward the integration of family and work.
Farooqui & Alwi (2023) [29]	Quantitative research.	60 female schoolteachers working in both public and private educational institutions in Karachi, Pakistan.	The results show that there are significant correlations among family characteristics, work-family conflict and career development of female teachers.
Hossain et al. (2019) [14]	Survey, using standardized measures.	650 female teacher of educational institutions in Barishal division.	The main purpose of this study is to examine the factors influencing the work-life balance of female teachers. It shows that there is relationship between co-worker support, work overload, job engagement and work family balance.
Iqbal et al. (2023) [5]	Cross-sectional research design.	300 female school teachers in rural and urban areas in the Government sector in Pakistan.	The results revealed that age, ethnicity, marital status, number of children, and family system were remarkable to prognosticate of work-family interference among female school teachers. Moreover, the interference of work to family and from family to work was higher in the married young adult females having a greater number of children and living in the urban area as compared to unmarried and living in rural areas. Contextual factors significantly influence work-family interference.
Kara et al. (2021) [2]	Qualitative case study.	17 female teachers who are married and have children in Turkey.	According to the findings, the work-family conflict experienced by female teachers who were married and had children working at home during the epidemic was divided into three themes: time-based conflict, stress-based conflict and behavior-based conflict. Most female teachers who work from home say they do not have access to administrative support in the distance education process. On the other hand, the study found that female teachers work at home in the process of emotional fatigue, job satisfaction decline, high stress, low motivation, there is a balance between family and work.
Kashif & Rehman (2020) [15]	Correlational research design, quantitative research.	450 female teachers of public and private universities in Lahore City.	The results show that there is a significant negative correlation between work-family conflict and job satisfaction of female university teachers.

Table 1. Cont.

Author	Research Design	Participants	Main Conclusions
Khan et al. (2018) [12]	Descriptive and cross-sectional adopting survey questionnaire methodology.	295 female teachers from fifteen FEF girls' degree colleges across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.	The results of the survey show that teachers face different degrees of work conflict family interference due to various demographic factors, which has a negative impact on their work performance.
Laaboudi (2021) [34]	Qualitative reserach.	14 married female English teachers from different academic levels and from different regions in Morocco.	The conclusion is that in order to achieve work/life balance, policies need to be developed to create a supportive work environment, "time flexibility" and "operational flexibility".
Mulazim et al. (2022) [37]	Quantitative research.	400 female secondary school teachers in district Nankana Sahib.	The results show that work-family conflict has a positive and significant effect on the job satisfaction and life satisfaction of middle school female teachers. Work-family conflict is a consistent prerequisite for job satisfaction.
Pham et al. (2023) [44]	Qualitative case study.	two female language teachers Ms. Mai and Ms. Trang.	The results of this study reiterate the reasons for the underrepresentation of female scholars in research fields and the constraints on their participation in research. Women researchers are entangled in a variety of cultures, societies, institutions and family obligations and need to focus on addressing these issues and the challenges of fulfilling their different roles.
Purwanto (2020) [39]	Correlational research design, quantitative research.	1045 female employees in Indonesia.	The results of the analyses reported that work-family conflict is negatively and significantly influenced the job satisfaction. Work-family conflict is not significantly influenced directly on the female employee performance. But, work-family conflict has significantly indirectly influenced on performance through job satisfaction variable. Besides that, job satisfaction is positively and significantly influenced employee performance.
Shirmohammadi et al. (2022) [45]	An overview.		This paper provides a timely contribution to our understanding of remote work that has become more common since the outbreak of COVID-19. It synthesizes the literature on post-pandemic research work and life balance and telecommuting and compares it with pre-pandemic reviews to gain a more nuanced understanding of telecommuting contingencies in crisis settings. As a result, we have expanded our understanding of the work-life balance experience of remote workers and provided a new perspective for the human resources development community, these perspectives can play a key role in supporting the well-being of remote workers.
Su & Jiang (2023) [3]	Quantitative research.	422 female university teachers in China.	The results showed that: Work-family conflict, family-work conflict and job burnout could negatively predict job satisfaction, while perceived organizational support could positively predict job satisfaction; Job burnout played a partial mediating role in the process of work-family conflict and family-work conflict affecting job satisfaction; Perceived organizational support plays a moderating role in the relationship among bi-directional work- family conflict.

Table 1. Cont.

Author	Research Design	Participants	Main Conclusions
Tamunomiebi & Oyibo (2020) [4]	An overview.		In Nigeria, there are systemic obstacles to the implementation of work-life balance policies, such as political, economic and social challenges arising from the failure of leadership, which are a major source of work-life conflict, these include corruption, weak institutions that lack the capacity to monitor and enforce employment standards, high unemployment, poverty, inflation and many other problems.
Wood et al. (2020) [42]	An overview.		It identify and synthesize the findings of 37 articles empirically investigating the relationship between work-life balance and work engagement. The findings showed the various antecedents, mediators, and moderators that depict the relationships between work engagement and work-life balance. Furthermore, it provide insight into human resource development scholarship regarding how to clarify the direction of causality between two concepts, which has been largely left inconclusive.
Žnidaršič & Marič (2021) [6]	Quantitative research.	164 higher education lecturers and 95 were women.	The findings show that an increase in work-life balance positively relates to life and work satisfaction and that life satisfaction leads to an increase in work engagement. Work-life balance can strengthen teachers' work engagement by respecting employees as actors in other roles and supporting work-family balance in the form of family-friendly policies and practices, and thereby contributes to the area of employee's behaviour and improves the teacher's productivity.

3. Factors Affecting the Work Family Balance of Married and Childbearing Female Teachers in Chinese Universities

The data from this literature review provides us with a clearer understanding of the work family balance of married and childbearing female teachers in Chinese universities. Previous studies have shown that career, family, and social responsibilities are important components of female teachers' daily lives, and they hardly have enough time to rest [34]. Multiple identities have brought heavy burdens and psychological pressure to female teachers [5, 37], this makes their lives prone to imbalance and affects their physical and mental health [2,34]. Due to the conflict between teachers' work and family, it is likely to affect their students [2]. The reality is that married and childbearing female teachers in Chinese universities not only face numerous obstacles in their work, but also need to cope with various challenges in their families. They shoulder dual careers [34]. Although it is impossible to measure work-family balance precisely because people's perceptions can be influenced by their personal circumstances, Barik [10] disclosed that employees must draw a clear line between their personal and professional lives and be certain that the line is in the right place in order to create a harmony that reflects their priorities. People can be more productive, focused, and better equipped to handle the demands of today's quickly evolving workplace when they feel in charge of their work family balance.

The balance between work and family is influenced by various factors at different levels, including individuals, organizations, and governments [2,6,45]. Work family balance has many positive impacts on both individuals and organizations. From a personal standpoint, it can lessen stress and improve workers' general health and wellbeing [3,4,37]; From an organizational standpoint, it may have an impact on staff retention rates, performance, productivity, work satisfaction, organizational commitment, and efficiency [3,6,31,39]. Laaboudi [34] suggests that the interaction between personal variables such as gender, age, marital status, and organizational variables such as work conditions and school structure may lead to job burnout among female teachers. According to reports, this burnout has a greater impact on the academic performance of female teachers than male teachers, and married and

childbearing female teachers have significantly higher levels of job burnout.

Compared to female workers in other countries, Chinese female employees have taken more diverse measures to maintain work family balance, such as some married women choosing to focus on their careers by delaying their childbearing age. The most common coping measures used by mothers to alleviate work family conflicts are relying on the support of elderly family members, outsourcing household chores [10], or developing more flexible schedules to compensate for additional work [31]. However, a small number of male employees also demand that their spouses resign and become full-time housewives. For this group of women, the only option to avoid work family conflict is to withdraw from social life.

3.1. Demographic Factors Affecting the Work Family Balance of Married and Childbearing Female Teachers in Chinese Universities

Previous studies have revealed antecedents that can easily lead to work family conflicts, including uncontrollable students, oversized classes, troublesome colleagues, unsupported family members, and excessive work pressure. Compared to male instructors, female teachers are significantly more affected by these antecedents [12,29]. According to the literature review, this study identified and considered the following demographic factors that affect the work family balance of married and childbearing female teachers in Chinese universities.

Firstly, family structure and support from family members. Research has shown that in joint families, female teachers who enjoy the support of their spouses will greatly reduce work family conflicts, as their spouses provide assistance in taking care of children and the elderly. However, family structure and size are also a double-edged sword [12,29]. The results of another study showed that work family conflict is more pronounced in the joint family system than in the nuclear family system [29,46]. Unfortunately, there are still a few regions in China where patriarchal ideology persists. The wife is responsible for all household chores and children's needs, while the husband is another child who needs to be taken care of [34,44]. This situation is really "adding insult to injury", as female teachers not only fail to receive support from their partners, but also have to spend more time and energy taking care of another "child". Next is the children that need to be raised at home [2,47]. The younger the children, the more children there are, and the more work family balance problems female teachers face [5]. The link between female teachers' employment and family has become strained since they must devote a lot of time to caring for small children [12]. Next is the duration and stability of teaching work. Long term irregular work arrangements can disrupt the rhythm of family life. Excessive teaching hours leave female teachers with insufficient time and energy to fulfill their family responsibilities. On the contrary, if female teachers are given relatively fixed and appropriate teaching hours, occasional leisure and vacation, compared to other professions, female teachers can manage both work and family areas very smoothly [12]. Finally, the teacher's educational background and age. The literature shows contradictory results regarding the relationship between the educational background and work family balance of female teachers. Highly educated and experienced female teachers have more financial freedom, but they also have higher demands for time and energy. Some studies have found that age is a stressor that has a very negative impact on the job performance of female teachers [12]. According to a study by Al-Alawi et al. [31] on female teachers in Saudi Arabia, young teachers tend to be less satisfied with their work life balance compared to older teachers because they target various milestones in their private lives, such as obtaining economic security through investments.

3.2. Organizational Factors Affecting the Work Family Balance of Married and Childbearing Female Teachers in Chinese Universities

Support from colleagues/superiors. The conclusions of researchers regarding the impact of colleague/superior support on the work family balance of female teachers are inconsistent. Some researchers believe that support from colleagues/superiors has a positive promoting effect on the work family balance of female teachers [1,3,4,13,37,48]; Some studies suggest that colleague /superiors support have no significant impact on the work family balance of female teachers [14]. Some scholars suggest that managers with the following behaviors should be added within the organization: clear job expectations, able to develop effective plans to complete work, able to provide constructive feedback when employees do not meet performance goals, asking

subordinates for their opinions before making decisions, and having realistic expectations for the amount of work that can be completed within a given time. Such managers are able to provide both physical and psychological support to employees, which has an irreplaceable significance in promoting work family balance for female teachers. Similarly, strong emotional support occurs when a manager or supervisor becomes compassionate and expresses concern about potential challenges an employee may face.

Work dedication. Previous studies have suggested a significant relationship between job dedication and work family balance among female teachers [49-51], and it has a positive impact [52]. Because highly dedicated employees are often full of vitality, focus, and dedication [42], this can enhance their work family balance [14]. Recently, some scholars have found that the spirit of focus and dedication can generate a large amount of “flow” in people, which is so enjoyable that people simply do it for the sake of doing it [42]. However, some scholars argue that despite efforts to improve employee engagement, engaged employees are more productive, but they often ignore the work family balance and work life satisfaction on the major impact of work engagement [6]. Coincidentally, job dedication was initially introduced as the opposite of occupational burnout, which occurs due to a lack of work family balance [42]. Due to the significant contributions made by teachers in cultivating, educating, and developing the new generation, their work life and work environment are strategic issues for achieving teacher excellence [6]. Organizational support for work family balance is related to the individual’s sense of being valued and respected within the organization, which in turn enhances the individual’s commitment to work [6].

Workload. Researchers have a relatively consistent view of the impact of workload on the work family balance of female teachers. The researchers believe that workload is an important negative factor among the many factors that affect the work family balance of female teachers [14,37]. Excessive workload has become a serious problem for dual income families, as the high demand for longer working hours has become the norm [13,29]. When multiple requirements exceed available resources in terms of quality and quantity, there may be a situation of excessive workload [13]. Nowadays, it is difficult for people to achieve their ideal working life because they work longer and harder than before. Although the average teaching time for female university teachers in China is about 8 – 16 classes per week, the preparation in advance, urgent administrative tasks assigned by the college, and additional invigilation tasks added on weekends have already consumed most of their time and energy that could have been spent at home [31,34,37,43]. Researchers have shown that the stress caused by long working hours and heavy workloads can lead to feelings of helplessness, thereby disrupting work family balance [1,31,34,39]. Ogechi and Nwaeke [38] also found in their study in Nigeria that one of the main reasons for work family conflicts among oil industry employees in the Niger Delta region is prolonged working hours.

3.3. Government Factors Affecting the Work Family Balance of Married and Childbearing Female Teachers in Chinese Universities

The influence of government factors is mainly reflected in the macro aspect. The government’s support and implementation of appropriate labor laws are necessary for organizations to introduce and implement family friendly measures. The government has created more or less favorable conditions for employees’ work family balance through its policies and measures [6]. The current support measures of the Chinese government include equal employment opportunities for men and women, flexible work forms, maternity and paternity leave for employees, care for family members under care, vacation and childcare, etc. Compared to before, the support measures of the Chinese government have made significant progress and improvement, but the level of implementation seems insufficient. This is mainly due to the unprecedented progress in the current economy and technology, which has led many Chinese people to worry that if they are too relaxed, their positions will be lost. Therefore, if the government takes the lead in enforcing these policies through legislation, authorizing employees to have corresponding rights, raising organizational awareness of protecting employee rights, and ensuring management support for these demands, resistance will be much smaller [4].

4. Measures to Promote Work Family Balance among Married and Childbearing Female Teachers in Chinese Universities

Several studies have shown that adopting flexible work schedules can promote work family balance among married and childbearing female teachers in Chinese universities [1,4,10,27,29,42]. Flexible working hours are closely related to the richness of work family, as it allows employees to choose favorable times to work effectively [53]. Two forms of flexibility are particularly important, namely the ability to change work schedules to meet personal or family obligations and the ability to interrupt working days to resolve personal or family problems before returning to work. Other flexibility measures that are crucial for alleviating work family conflicts include the ability to take leave when needed, the ability to come home on time to cook for family members, and the ability to take paid leave to handle childcare or elderly care issues. In addition to these, virtual work, on-site reliance on nursing centers, and strong supervision and support are also powerful measures to improve their work family balance [13]. Consistent with this, Laaboudi [34] believes that higher education institutions should meet three characteristics to establish a family friendly work environment, including time flexibility, operational flexibility, and organizational leadership's understanding of the importance of family needs. Flexible working hours help promote work life balance and happiness among employees, as it reduces conflicts, stress, and tension between work and life [54]. Of course, achieving such flexibility is not easy, especially for "private universities" that aim for profit. This vision requires unanimous recognition from the entire society. At this point, the government needs to step in to promote and strengthen this recognition. The government can not only introduce relevant laws and regulations to encourage this flexibility, but also strive to promote a consistent family friendly work environment culture throughout society such as supporting remote work when necessary [45]. In order to establish a family friendly work environment, policy makers should reconsider labor laws to make them more favorable to women, better adapt to their realities, empower them, and help them thrive. Starting from both "hardware" and "software" aspects at the same time will achieve good results. Research has shown that a friendly and supportive work environment can achieve work family balance, reduce role conflicts in families, improve job satisfaction, and promote synergy between work and family [10,34].

The support of colleagues/superiors is considered important for promoting work family balance [4]. Especially superiors or department heads should provide an encouraging working environment. They should create an atmosphere where female teachers do not hesitate to communicate with them [1]. At the same time, the relevant departments of Chinese universities can regularly consult female teachers to understand the policy support they feel, find out the problems in the implementation of the policy and solve them in time, so as to enhance teachers' sense of organizational support, in order to ease the contradictions between work and family, improve their job satisfaction, mobilize their enthusiasm for work, to make more contributions to the cause of education [3]. According to Suifan et al. [55], management support is a key informal work family balance practice that refers to the extent to which managers support and appreciate subordinates on issues of personal and family life. The support of management is expected to greatly improve employee satisfaction [56]. In addition, the improvement of work ability can help female teachers resist stress and depression, and help them to solve the difficulties caused by work stress [3]. Therefore, Chinese universities should actively hold regular training sessions to promote the personal growth of female teachers and enhance their teaching and research capabilities [57]. Chinese universities in a position to do so can also organize regular teacher gatherings and group outings, such as hiking trips, encourage female teachers to actively participate in activities, promote mutual understanding between female teachers and colleagues, and help female teachers relieve pressure, relax their body and mind [58]. In this era of technological advancement and intensified globalization, people have become increasingly concerned about how individuals can achieve excellent results in their work while trying to live a satisfactory personal life [4]. This literature review has practical significance for both human resources professionals and work organization leaders, as it emphasizes the personal, organizational, and government factors that affect the work family balance of married and childbearing female teachers in Chinese universities. The policies and practices of balancing work and family have created a so-called "win-win" situation for employees and organizations. Therefore, a key issue for organizations should be how to promote the improvement of employees' individual role performance, thereby avoiding conflicts between roles. Fewer role

conflicts mean employees are healthier and more satisfied, resulting in greater dedication and creativity. As an old saying goes, “A happy worker is a hard worker”. When educators feel happy and satisfied, they will impart higher quality education.

5. Conclusions

This literature review reviews the work family balance of married and childbearing female teachers in Chinese universities from 2014 to 2024, revealing how they struggled between work and family responsibilities. Teachers are undoubtedly the backbone of modern society, as they shape the future of the country. Female teachers, especially the builders of modern society, are worthy of respect because they have given birth to girls and boys and raised them at home and school. Teaching is a profession that requires a lot of patience and empathy, and women who are more sympathetic and caring are the perfect candidates for this profession. However, this profession also requires female teachers to keep their knowledge up-to-date in order to meet the constantly evolving social demands. However, the high demands of the profession have not reduced the dedication of female teachers to family responsibilities. They walk on the tightrope between work and family, and can easily become imbalanced if they are not careful. Organizations and governments have to acknowledge the concerns of female teachers about work family balance. Such concerns require appropriate handling and follow-up, so that there will be no hesitation in the future. This study is very helpful for female teachers who face difficulties in family work conflicts at work, and it is also beneficial for organizations and society as a whole.

6. Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

For the development of our country, promoting work family balance among married and childbearing female teachers in universities is crucial for our future, which requires both individual and organizational strategies to reduce the conflicts they face. Qualitative research can be carried out as a follow-up study, preferably obtaining the perspectives of superiors or department heads, through which they can help female teachers overcome work family conflicts at the university level [1]. Another direction for further research could be cross-cultural analysis. In this literature review, we focus on married and childbearing female teachers in Chinese universities. Future research can explore the work family balance issues of other teacher groups in Chinese universities, as well as expand it to multiple regions and countries for a cross-cultural comprehensive analysis. We also strongly recommend further research on this topic in other industries, comparing it across regions, countries, small and medium-sized enterprises, and large organizations to see the differences. In addition, longitudinal studies are recommended to provide a more in-depth analysis of the evolution of work family balance over time. Although longitudinal studies require more time and effort to complete, the resulting costs are higher. However, it is definitely worth the investment to get more accurate and comprehensive results.

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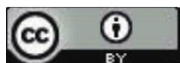
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