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## Work-Life Balance and Emotional Wellbeing of Married Female Teachers in Uyo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

*This study investigated the relationship between work-life balance and emotional well-being of married female teachers in public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. The sample included 200 married female teachers selected through multi-stage sampling. Data was collected using a researcher-developed instrument named "Work-Life Balance and Emotional Wellbeing Questionnaire" (WLBEWQ). The instrument was subjected to content validity by three experts who rated items for relevance using the Content Validity Index (CVI > 0.80). Data was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) for testing the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. Results revealed significant positive correlations between time management ( $r = 0.45, p < 0.01$ ), job flexibility ( $r = 0.38, p < 0.01$ ), and spousal support ( $r = 0.52, p < 0.01$ ) with*

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*emotional well-being, leading to rejection of all null hypotheses. Findings suggest that efficient time allocation, supportive spousal relationships, and flexible job conditions are crucial for improving the emotional wellbeing of married female teachers. The study concludes that work-life balance components are vital to teachers' emotional well-being in this Nigerian educational context and recommends targeted interventions such as time management workshops, flexible policy advocacy, and family-inclusive support programmes to mitigate stress and burnout.*

**Keywords:** Work-life balance, emotional well-being, married female teachers

## Introduction

Teaching is a deeply relational and emotionally intense profession. Educators, especially in secondary schools, are required not only to impart knowledge but also to manage classroom dynamics, mentor students, and engage with parents and communities. These tasks demand cognitive, social, and emotional labour, making teaching more than simply a “job”. In developing contexts like Nigeria, teachers often contend with overcrowded classrooms, poor infrastructure, and limited institutional support. Such conditions intensify the emotional workload, increasing stress, role strain, and potential burnout.

From a theoretical standpoint, the **Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model** helps to explain how the teaching profession's demands, such as emotional job demands and workload, can strain a teacher's well-being unless buffered by sufficient resources such as social support or institutional flexibility (Heluaci and Eker, 2021). Research conducted in other contexts shows that trust in colleagues and emotion-regulation strategies (like cognitive reappraisal) mediate the effect of emotional demands on teacher well-being (Arina and Izhak 2025).

Emotional wellbeing can influence teaching through multiple, mutually reinforcing pathways. Teachers' mood and stress levels shape classroom climate and student relationships; effective emotion regulation supports classroom management, adaptive instruction and socio-emotional support for pupils; and prolonged emotional strain predicts higher absenteeism, reduced instructional quality and burnout.

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Intervention research also shows that social-emotional training and programmes which strengthen teachers' emotion regulation improve both teachers' wellbeing and classroom outcomes (Ukaegbu and Ekpenyong, 2025). Building on Ukaegbu's findings and on contemporary international literature, the study treats work-life balance both as an antecedent of emotional wellbeing and as a mediator of how school conditions translate into classroom practice and teacher retention.

For female teachers, and particularly those who are married, these professional demands intersect with significant familial responsibilities. The concept of *emotional well-being* among such teachers refers to their capacity to maintain psychological balance, such as happiness, life satisfaction, effective stress management, and positive interpersonal relationships, despite the stresses of both home and school life. Emotional well-being is vital: teachers who are emotionally healthy are more likely to be effective in the classroom, resilient, and engaged, whereas those who struggle emotionally may experience burnout, decreased job satisfaction, and impaired performance. The stress of balancing professional responsibilities and family life can affect their emotional wellbeing. Female teachers often serve as carers and role models, and when family conflicts arise, they may experience a drop in their emotional wellbeing. This can lead to burnout, anxiety, and even depression (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2018). Furthermore, emotional distress can hinder their ability to perform at their best in the classroom, reduce job satisfaction, and even lead to absenteeism (Huang and Shi, 2016).

Work-life balance denotes the degree to which an individual is able to reconcile the demands of paid work with those of personal and family life in a way that preserves health, satisfaction, and functioning in both domains. Work-life balance is multidimensional, incorporating objective conditions, subjective perceptions, satisfaction with role distribution, behavioural strategies, time allocation, and boundary management. Achieving work-life balance matters for teachers because the profession involves not only formal instructional duties but also sustained emotional labour, administrative tasks, and out-of-hours responsibilities such as marking, lesson planning, and parent contact. Poor work-life balance increases role conflict and emotional strain; conversely, greater balance supports teacher retention, effective classroom practice, and psychological resilience. The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model and Conservation of Resources (COR) theory help explain these processes: Excessive demands, such as high workload and emotional labour, deplete resources and harm well-being, while resources, time control, flexible arrangements, and social support buffer stress and promote recovery.

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For married female teachers, this study conceptualises work-life balance through three proximal and policy-relevant dimensions: time-management skills, job flexibility, and spousal support. Each dimension operates at a different level – individual, organisational, and interpersonal – yet they interact to determine emotional outcomes.

Time management refers to the set of cognitive and behavioural strategies a person uses to plan, prioritise, schedule and monitor how time is used across competing roles. For teachers, time management includes techniques such as block scheduling for lesson preparation, prioritising tasks, delegating domestic tasks where possible, and using brief recovery practices between lessons. Effective time management reduces *time-based* role conflict, lowers perceived overload, and increases perceived mastery and control, all of which support emotional well-being. Empirical studies of educators have associated stronger time management behaviours with lower stress, higher job satisfaction and improved teaching performance. Practically, training in time use (e.g., planning templates, limit-setting, efficient marking strategies) has been proposed as a low-cost intervention to improve teachers' emotional well-being (Bruner, 2019, as cited in Olivo, 2021).

Job flexibility denotes the extent to which the employing organisation permits temporal or locational adjustments that allow employees to accommodate family needs. In the school context, flexibility can mean staggered start/finish times, official allowances for completing non-contact work at home, provision for part-time roles or job-sharing, and formalised leave policies for family events or emergencies. Flexible arrangements operate by increasing autonomy and perceived control, thereby reducing strain-based conflict and promoting recovery. A growing international literature covering teachers and other professionals links flexible working arrangements to reduced stress, improved sleep and higher wellbeing; moreover, hybrid/higher-autonomy models have been associated with improved retention, especially among women with caregiving responsibilities. However, the effectiveness of flexibility depends on implementation fidelity (managerial support, workload expectations), so flexibility without workload adjustment can simply shift stress. (Dian *et al.*, 2024)

Spousal support comprises emotional, instrumental, and cognitive/negotiation support. Social support theory argues that such support buffers the effects of stressors by providing tangible assistance and by modifying appraisals of demands. For married female teachers, spousal cooperation in domestic tasks, childcare arrangements, and

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conflict resolution lowers the home burden and reduces negative spillover into work hours; it also promotes positive crossover (partner well-being reinforcing the teacher's well-being). Several empirical investigations across cultures show that higher perceived spousal support is associated with lower work-family conflict and better mental health among working women.

## Statement of the Problem

The mental well-being of teachers has become an increasingly significant concern in contemporary educational discourse, given the critical role educators play in shaping future generations globally. Specifically in Uyo Local Government Area, teachers face numerous challenges that adversely affect their mental and emotional health, including high workloads, insufficient resources, pressures to meet educational standards, and huge family burdens, amongst others. These stressors have, however, led to burnout, anxiety, and depression among teachers. In recent years, there has been a growing body of research focusing on the importance of work-life balance in promoting mental health among professionals; however, there has been a gap in research work focusing on the subject matter within the context of Uyo Local Government Area. Therefore, this work sought to investigate the relationship between work-life balance and emotional well-being among married female teachers in Uyo Local Government Area. It will explore work-life balance techniques such as time management, job flexibility and spousal support.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between work-life balance and emotional well-being of married female teachers in the Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the study aims to examine the relationship between:

1. Time management skills and the emotional well-being of married female teachers.
2. Job flexibility and the emotional well-being of married female teachers.
3. Spousal support and the emotional well-being of married female teachers.

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## Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the relationship between time management skills and the emotional well-being of married female teachers?
2. What is the relationship between job flexibility and the emotional well-being of married female teachers?
3. What is the relationship between spousal support and the emotional well-being of married female teachers?

## Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between time management skills and the emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in Uyo Local Government Area.
2. There is no significant relationship between job flexibility and the emotional well-being of married female teachers in Uyo Local Government Area.
3. There is no significant relationship between spousal support and the emotional well-being of married female teachers in Uyo Local Government Area.

## Theoretical Framework

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, developed by Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner and Schaufeli (2001), posits that occupational wellbeing results from the interplay between job demands (aspects that require sustained effort and can lead to strain, such as heavy workloads or role conflicts) and job resources (elements that facilitate goal achievement and buffer stress, like flexibility, support, and autonomy). In the teaching context, demands might include extended hours and emotional labour with students, while resources encompass spousal support and time management tools. The model delineates two processes: a health impairment pathway where high demands lead to burnout and diminished wellbeing, and a motivational pathway where resources promote engagement and resilience.

This theory's significance to the current study lies in its applicability to the dual-role challenges faced by married female teachers, offering a structured explanation for how work-life imbalances (as demands) erode emotional wellbeing and how sub-

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variables like job flexibility (as resources) can mitigate this. Unlike more narrow theories, such as Spillover Theory, which focuses solely on domain transfers, JD-R's dual-process approach accommodates the multifaceted nature of wellbeing in Uyo's context, where cultural demands amplify professional strains. Its empirical validation in teacher burnout studies justifies its use, enabling the research to predict interventions like resource enhancement for improved outcomes, thus bridging theoretical insight with practical relevance for local policy.

## Empirical Review

Recent studies have highlighted the importance of work-life balance and its impact on the emotional wellbeing of married female teachers.

Kawie (2025) carried out a study titled "Time Management and Work-Life Balance of Teacher-Coaches". The purpose was to evaluate the time management skills of teacher-coaches and their relationship to work-life balance and emotional well-being. The research design was a descriptive design. The study population consisted of 43 teacher-coaches selected through stratified random sampling. Data collection instruments included validated questionnaires on time management and work-life balance. Data analysis involved means, t-tests, and Pearson correlations. Findings revealed that teacher-coaches demonstrated strong time planning and positive time management attitudes, with a significant positive correlation between time management skills and work-life balance. It was recommended that school administrators prioritise programmes improving time management to enhance the emotional well-being of teacher-coaches.

Ukaegbu and Ekpenyong (2025) investigated the relationship between family conflict resolution strategies and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools in the Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Three research questions and three corresponding hypotheses guided the study. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 1,074 married female teachers in fourteen public junior secondary schools in the Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The multi-stage sampling technique was used to select a sample of 200 married female teachers used for the study. Two researcher-made instruments entitled "Family Conflict Resolution Strategies Questionnaire" (FCRSQ) and "Emotional Wellbeing Questionnaire for Married Female

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Teachers” (EWQMFT) were used for data collection. The instruments were face validated, while the internal consistency reliability of the instruments was established, and reliability coefficients of 0.73 and 0.70 were obtained for FCRSQ and EWQFMT, respectively. Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics were used to answer the research questions and also test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 alpha level of significance. Results showed that there is a significant positive relationship between spousal communication strategies, spousal negotiation strategies, support-seeking behaviours and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools in the Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. Based on the findings of the study, three recommendations were made, among which is that schools in Akwa Ibom State should offer regular training programmes for married female teachers that focus on improving communication and negotiation strategies with their spouses.

Smith (2024) conducted a study titled "The Role of Spousal Support in Psychological Well-Being Among Working Adults", applicable to teachers balancing workloads and family roles. The purpose was to determine how perceived spousal support impacts emotional well-being and stress reduction. A quantitative correlational design involved approximately 350 working adults in dual-earner households, including teachers. Instruments included the Spousal Support Scale and Psychological Well-Being Scale. Data analysis used Pearson correlation and mediation analysis. Findings revealed that spousal support was strongly positively correlated with emotional well-being and resilience, reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety, and mediated the effects of work stress on emotional health. The research emphasised spousal support as a key resource enhancing teachers' emotional well-being.

Alazi1, Uzakah, and Beracah (2025) conducted a study on the relationship between managing work-life balance and married teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Specifically, it focused on four key components of work-life balance: leave policies, co-worker support, workload management, and organisational culture. A mixed-method research design was employed, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A structured 16-item questionnaire titled Managing Work-Life Balance and Married Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (MWLBMTJQP), designed on a five-point Likert scale, was validated by two experts in educational management and administered to 250 married teachers. Additionally, 20 school administrators (principals and vice principals) participated in focus group discussions and in-depth interviews to provide qualitative

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insights. Reliability was established using the test-retest method, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.81. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used for data analysis, while the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was employed for hypothesis testing. The findings revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between managing leave policies, co-worker support, workload management, and organisational culture and married teachers' job performance. The study concludes that effective work-life balance management is essential for enhancing teaching efficiency and achieving improved educational outcomes. It recommends that policymakers and school administrators implement and sustain work-life balance policies to foster a supportive and high-performing work environment for teachers.

The reviewed studies suggest that married female teachers' emotional wellbeing is influenced by multiple factors, including time management, family conflict resolution, and spousal support. Therefore, it is essential to consider these factors when developing strategies to promote work-life balance and emotional wellbeing among married female teachers.

## Research Method

This study adopted a correlational research design. A sample size of approximately 200 married female teachers was selected for this study from a population of 1,200 individuals, spread across 17 public secondary schools (Akwa Ibom State Secondary Education Board, 2025), using a multi-stage sampling technique. In the first stage, the Uyo Local Government Area was divided into clusters based on geographic zones or school districts. From these clusters, a simple random sampling method was used to select 10 schools from each zone. In the second stage, within the selected schools, married female teachers were stratified according to teaching levels (primary and secondary). Finally, a random sample of teachers was drawn proportionally from each stratum to ensure adequate representation across the different school types and teaching levels.

The instrument for data collection in this study is a structured questionnaire titled the "Work-Life Balance and Emotional Wellbeing Questionnaire" (WLBEWQ). To establish validity, content validity was assessed through expert review by three educational psychologists and sociologists, who rated items for relevance using the Content Validity Index (CVI > 0.80). Face validity was confirmed via pilot feedback. Construct validity was ensured by aligning items with theoretical constructs from the

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JD-R Model. For reliability, Cronbach's alpha was calculated during piloting, targeting values above 0.70 for internal consistency (e.g., 0.82 for work-life balance subscales, 0.85 for emotional wellbeing). Data was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) for testing the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

## Results:

**Hypothesis 1** There is no significant relationship between time management skills and the emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in Uyo Local Government Area.

**Table 1: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation of the relationship between time management and emotional well-being of female teachers in Uyo local government area.**

Variables	n	r-value	p-value	Remark
Time Management Skills (X)	200	0.45	<0.01	Significant positive relationship
Emotional Well-Being (Y)				

In Table 1, the correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.45$ ) indicates a moderate positive relationship between time management skills and emotional well-being among married female teachers in Uyo Local Government Area. This means that as teachers' time management skills improve, their emotional well-being tends to increase significantly. The p-value ( $<0.01$ ) confirms that this relationship is statistically significant, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis for this variable. Thus, there is a significant relationship between time management skills and the emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in Uyo Local Government Area.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between job flexibility and the emotional well-being of married female teachers in Uyo Local Government Area.

**Table 2: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation of the relationship between job flexibility and emotional well-being of female teachers in Uyo local Government Area.**

Variables	n	r-value	p-value	Remark
Job Flexibility (X) Emotional Well-Being (Y)	200	0.38	<0.01	Significant positive relationship

In Table 2, the correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.38$ ) shows a moderate positive association between job flexibility and emotional well-being. Married female teachers experiencing more flexible work arrangements also report improved emotional well-being. The significance ( $p < 0.01$ ) confirms that job flexibility meaningfully impacts teachers' emotional health, warranting rejection of the null hypothesis. Thus, there is a significant relationship between job flexibility and the emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in Uyo Local Government Area.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant relationship between spousal support and the emotional well-being of married female teachers in Uyo Local Government Area.

**Table 3: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation of the relationship between spousal support and emotional well-being of female teachers in Uyo Local Government Area.**

Variables	n	r-value	p-value	Remark
Spousal Support (X) Emotional Well-Being (Y)	200	0.52	<0.01	Significant positive relationship

In Table 3, the correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.52$ ) indicates a moderate to strong positive correlation between spousal support and emotional well-being. Married female teachers perceiving higher spousal support tend to have better emotional health. The p-

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value ( $<0.01$ ) verifies that this relationship is statistically significant, thus rejecting the null hypothesis. Thus, there is a significant relationship between spousal support and the emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in Uyo Local Government Area.

## Discussion of Findings

The result of hypothesis one shows that there is a significant relationship between time management skills and the emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in Uyo Local Government Area. This finding aligns closely with Kawie (2025), who found a significant positive correlation between time management and work-life balance among teacher-coaches. Kawie reported that strong time planning and positive attitudes towards time management contribute substantially to emotional well-being by reducing stress and improving balance between professional and personal responsibilities. These empirical results reaffirm that effective time management is critical for teachers' emotional health, supporting recommendations for programmes to enhance teachers' time management capabilities.

The result of hypothesis two shows that there is a significant relationship between job flexibility and the emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in Uyo Local Government Area. This result is consistent with Hu et al. (2020), who demonstrated that greater job flexibility among public school teachers correlates with lower burnout and anxiety and better job satisfaction. Flexible work arrangements alleviate occupational strain and enhance mental health resilience. This supports the argument that administrative policies promoting flexibility can significantly bolster teachers' emotional well-being.

The result of hypothesis three shows that there is a significant relationship between spousal support and the emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in Uyo Local Government Area. This finding aligns with Smith (2024), who similarly found spousal support to be strongly correlated with psychological well-being and resilience among working adults, including teachers. Spousal support reduces depression and anxiety symptoms and mediates work stress effects on emotional health. The qualitative findings by Geertshuis et al. (2025) further emphasise that spousal emotional support is indispensable for managing stress and sustaining emotional balance, enabling success in both work and family roles.

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## Conclusion

This study established significant positive relationships between the key variables of work-life balance, namely time management skills, job flexibility, and spousal support, and the emotional well-being of married female teachers in Uyo Local Government Area. Specifically, teachers with better time management skills reported improved emotional health, highlighting the importance of planning and prioritising work tasks. Job flexibility was also shown to reduce emotional strain and burnout, emphasising the value of adaptable work arrangements in enhancing teacher well-being. Furthermore, spousal support emerged as a crucial social resource that strengthens resilience and reduces symptoms of depression and anxiety. Collectively, these findings underscore the vital role of both personal and organisational resources in fostering the psychological health and work-life balance of teachers, aligning with existing empirical evidence in educational and occupational research.

## Counselling Implications

The study's findings have significant counselling implications for married female teachers in Uyo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

- i. **Time Management Skills Training:** Counsellors can design training programmes that enhance teachers' time management competencies, helping them prioritise tasks, manage stress, and promote emotional wellbeing.
- ii. **Job Flexibility Counselling:** Counsellors can work with school administrators to develop flexible work policies, providing teachers with adaptable work arrangements that reduce emotional strain and burnout.
- iii. **Spousal Support Counselling:** Counsellors can offer family-inclusive programmes, such as counselling services, workshops, and support groups, to strengthen spousal support systems and promote emotional wellbeing.
- iv. **Stress Management:** Counsellors can help teachers develop coping strategies and stress management techniques, reducing the negative impact of work-related stress on emotional wellbeing.
- v. **Work-Life Balance Coaching:** Counsellors can provide coaching services, helping teachers set boundaries, prioritise self-care, and maintain a healthy work-life balance.

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By addressing these areas, counsellors can promote the emotional wellbeing and work-life balance of married female teachers, ultimately enhancing their overall quality of life.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. School administrators should organise targeted training and workshops to enhance teachers' time management competencies. Such programmes will equip married female teachers with effective planning and organisational skills, helping to reduce stress and promote emotional well-being.
2. Educational authorities and school management should develop and implement flexible work policies, including flexible scheduling and task-shifting options. By allowing teachers to better balance their professional and family roles, these measures can significantly improve teachers' emotional health and job satisfaction.
3. Schools and educational agencies should encourage family-inclusive programmes that strengthen spousal support systems. This could involve counselling services, family workshops, and community support groups aimed at enhancing communication and emotional assistance within teachers' family environments, ultimately benefitting their psychological well-being.

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## APPENDIX

### WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING QUESTIONNAIRE (WLBEWQ)

**Instruction:** Please, indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the items

by ticking (✓) against any of the response options below.

**SA** = Strongly Agree

**A** = Agree

**D** = Disagree

**SD** = Strongly Disagree

s/n	Time Management Skills	SA	A	D	SD
1	I effectively plan my daily teaching and personal activities to avoid feeling overwhelmed.				
2	I set clear priorities that help me manage my workload successfully.				
3	I allocate sufficient time for lesson preparation and personal relaxation.				
4	I use a schedule or planner to organize my work and personal tasks.				
5	I feel that managing my time well improves my emotional balance and reduces stress.				
	<b>Job Flexibility</b>				
1	My teaching job provides enough flexibility to balance work and family responsibilities.				
2	I can adjust my teaching hours to accommodate family needs without difficulty.				
3	Flexible work arrangements help me manage stress and maintain my emotional well-being.				

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4	I often have control over when and where I complete some of my teaching-related tasks.				
5	Greater job flexibility increases my satisfaction with my teaching role and emotional health.				

	<b>Spousal Support</b>				
1	My spouse supports me emotionally when I face stress from my teaching job.				
2	I can openly discuss work -related challenges with my spouse.				
3	My spouse helps me balance my teaching responsibilities and family life.				
4	Emotional support from my spouse improves my overall emotional well-being.				
5	I feel less overwhelmed with my teaching work because my spouse provides practical help.				
	<b>Emotional Well-Being</b>				
1	I generally feel emotionally balanced despite the demands of my teaching job.				
2	I am able to manage feelings of stress and anxiety effectively in my daily life.				
3	I maintain a positive outlook about my professional and personal life balance.				
4	I feel satisfied with my emotional health and well-being as a married female teacher.				
5	My emotional well -being positively influences my performance as a teacher and wife.				