

Leadership, Work-Life Balance, and Wellbeing in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

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Abstract: Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are increasingly recognizing the importance of leadership, work-life balance (WLB), and employee wellbeing in achieving institutional effectiveness. This paper explores the interrelationship between leadership styles, work-life balance, and wellbeing among academic and non-academic staff. Drawing on contemporary literature and theoretical frameworks such as the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, the study highlights how effective leadership fosters a supportive work environment that enhances work-life balance and overall wellbeing. The paper concludes with recommendations for policy and institutional practices to promote sustainable academic workplaces.

Keywords: Leadership, Work-Life Balance, Wellbeing, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

INTRODUCTION

HEIs operate in a highly demanding environment characterized by teaching, research, administrative responsibilities, and performance pressures. These demands often lead to stress, burnout, and poor work-life balance among faculty members.

Work-life balance has become a critical concern in academia due to increasing workloads and expectations. Research indicates that academic roles, often perceived as flexible, actually involve high levels of pressure due to continuous performance demands and student expectations .

Leadership plays a crucial role in shaping institutional culture, influencing both employee wellbeing and work-life balance. Effective leadership ensures that employees are supported, motivated, and engaged.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership in HEIs

Leadership in higher education significantly impacts employee engagement, job satisfaction, and wellbeing. Transformational and ethical leadership styles are particularly effective in fostering positive work environments.

- Leadership acts as a **mediating factor** that enhances the impact of organizational resources on employee wellbeing.
- Ethical leadership is positively associated with **wellbeing, work engagement, and innovation** in academic settings.
- Leadership practices influence how employees utilize work-life balance policies .

Thus, leadership is not only administrative but also psychological and relational in nature.

Works-Life Balance in HEIs

Work-life balance refers to the ability to manage professional responsibilities alongside personal life effectively.

- WLB has become a major area of concern in higher education globally.
- Academic staff often experience **role overload, time pressure, and blurred boundaries** between work and personal life.
- Studies show that better work-life balance leads to **higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment**.

In HEIs, challenges to WLB include:

- Administrative workload
- Research expectations
- Student-related responsibilities
- Lack of flexible policies

Wellbeing in Higher Education

Wellbeing encompasses psychological, emotional, and physical health.

- Work-life balance is strongly linked to **mental health and overall wellbeing** among academic staff .
- Emotional intelligence and self-efficacy, along with WLB, significantly predict **life satisfaction among faculty** .

Poor wellbeing outcomes in HEIs include:

- Burnout
- Stress and anxiety
- Reduced productivity
- Lower engagement

Interrelationship Between Leadership, WLB, and Wellbeing The relationship between these three variables is interconnected:

- Leadership influences **organizational policies and culture**, which directly affect WLB.
- Work-life balance acts as a **bridge between leadership and wellbeing**.
- Supportive leadership reduces job demands and enhances resources, improving wellbeing (JD-R model) .

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model The JD-R model explains how:

- **Job demands** (e.g., workload, stress) lead to burnout
- **Job resources** (e.g., leadership support, flexibility) enhance motivation and wellbeing

Leadership plays a key role in:

- Reducing job demands
- Increasing job resources
- Facilitating work-life balance

KEY ISSUES IN HEIS

High Workload and Role Conflict

Faculty members juggle multiple roles, leading to time constraints and stress.

Lack of Institutional Support

Limited policies on flexible working and inadequate support systems hinder WLB.

Gender Inequality

Women in academia often face additional challenges balancing family and career responsibilities

Leadership Gaps

Ineffective leadership can result in poor communication, lack of support, and low morale.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Leadership Development

- Promote transformational and ethical leadership styles
- Provide leadership training programs

Works-Life Balance Policies

- Flexible working hours
- Remote/hybrid teaching options
- Sabbaticals and leave policies

Wellbeing Initiatives

- Mental health support programs
- Stress management workshops
- Employee assistance programs

Organizational Culture

- Foster a supportive and inclusive environment
- Encourage open communication

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Integrate WLB into institutional strategy
- Strengthen HR policies focused on wellbeing
- Conduct regular wellbeing assessments
- Encourage participative leadership
- Promote gender-sensitive policies

CONCLUSION

Leadership, work-life balance, and wellbeing are deeply interconnected in HEIs. Effective leadership enhances work-life balance, which in turn improves employee wellbeing, job satisfaction, and institutional performance. As academic environments continue to evolve, HEIs must adopt holistic strategies that prioritize both organizational goals and employee wellbeing.

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Quiet Quitting in Higher Education: Examining Silent Disengagement Among Faculty Members

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Abstract: The phenomenon of “quiet quitting,” characterized by employees limiting their efforts to formally prescribed responsibilities while disengaging from discretionary contributions, has gained increasing attention across sectors, including higher education. Within academic institutions, faculty members play a critical role not only in teaching but also in research, mentoring, institutional development, and knowledge dissemination. However, rising workloads, role ambiguity, administrative pressures, and declining intrinsic motivation have contributed to a subtle yet significant form of disengagement among educators. Furthermore, the research investigates the impact of silent disengagement on institutional effectiveness, student outcomes and academic culture. The paper also highlights how quiet quitting may remain largely unnoticed due to its passive nature, making it a challenging issue for administrators to identify and address. Using a mixed-method approach, incorporating surveys and qualitative insights from faculty across various higher education institutions, the study provides empirical evidence on the prevalence and patterns of quiet quitting. It also examines demographic and contextual factors influencing disengagement, such as age, tenure status, discipline and institutional type. The findings suggest that younger faculty and those in precarious employment conditions may be more prone to silent disengagement due to uncertainty and lack of institutional support. In conclusion, quiet quitting in higher education represents a critical challenge that requires proactive attention from institutional leaders. By understanding the factors driving silent disengagement and implementing targeted strategies, higher education institutions can re-engage faculty, enhance job satisfaction, and ensure sustainable academic excellence. This study contributes to the emerging discourse on employee disengagement by contextualizing quiet quitting within the academic environment and offering practical insights for policy and practice.

Keywords: Quiet Quitting, Faculty Disengagement, Higher Education, Job Demands-Resources Model, Organizational Commitment

INTRODUCTION TO QUIET QUITTING

Quiet quitting has emerged as a contemporary workplace phenomenon that reflects a shift in how employees perceive their roles, responsibilities, and relationship with work. Contrary to its literal meaning, quiet quitting does not imply that individuals leave their jobs; rather, it refers to a psychological withdrawal in which employees limit their efforts strictly to what is formally required, avoiding additional responsibilities, discretionary effort, or emotional investment. In the context of higher education, this phenomenon is increasingly gaining attention as faculty members navigate evolving institutional demands, changing student expectations, and mounting administrative pressures.