

Work–Life Harmony and Employee Engagement: The Mediating Role of Psychological Well-Being

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ABSTRACT

Employee engagement is a key driver of organizational effectiveness, particularly in higher education institutions. This study investigates the relationship between **work–life harmony** and **employee engagement**, with **psychological well-being** as a mediating variable among faculty members in public and private universities. A quantitative research design was adopted using a structured questionnaire, and the proposed model was analyzed through **Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)**. The findings indicate that work–life harmony positively influences employee engagement both directly and indirectly by enhancing psychological well-being. The study contributes to the Human Resource Management literature by highlighting the importance of employee well-being in fostering engagement and offers practical implications for designing HR policies that support a healthy and productive academic workforce. The findings reveal that work–life harmony has a significant positive effect on employee engagement and that psychological well-being partially mediates this relationship. Faculty members who experience greater harmony between their professional and personal lives report higher levels of psychological well-being, which, in turn, enhances their engagement, commitment, and productivity. The study contributes to the Human Resource Management literature by extending the understanding of work–life harmony as a strategic HR practice that promotes employee well-being and engagement. The findings provide practical implications for university administrators and HR professionals in designing policies that support flexible work arrangements, employee well-being initiatives, and a sustainable work environment to improve organizational performance.

Keywords: Work–Life Harmony; Employee Engagement; Psychological Well-being; Human Resource Management; Higher Education; Structural Equation Modelling (SEM).

INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic work environment, organizations increasingly recognize that employee well-being is essential for achieving sustainable performance and organizational success. In higher education institutions, faculty members perform diverse roles that include teaching, research, administration, mentoring, and community engagement. Managing these professional responsibilities alongside personal and family commitments has become increasingly challenging, making **work–life harmony** an important aspect of effective Human Resource Management (HRM). Unlike work–life balance, which emphasizes equal allocation of time, work–life harmony focuses on the integration of work and personal life in a way that promotes satisfaction, well-being, and productivity.

Unlike work–life balance, which emphasizes achieving equilibrium between professional and personal responsibilities, work–life harmony focuses on the integration and compatibility of these domains according to individual priorities and life circumstances. Harmony recognizes that work and personal roles need not always receive equal attention but should coexist in a manner that promotes overall well-being and sustainable performance. This perspective is grounded in the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Theory, which suggests that organizational resources enhance employees' psychological resources, ultimately improving engagement and performance.

Employee engagement has become a strategic priority for organizations because engaged employees demonstrate higher levels of commitment, motivation, innovation, and job performance. In the academic sector, engaged faculty members contribute significantly to teaching quality, research productivity, and institutional effectiveness. Among the various factors influencing engagement, work–life harmony has gained attention as it helps employees effectively manage professional and personal responsibilities while reducing stress and improving overall work experiences.

Psychological well-being plays a vital role in this relationship by enabling employees to remain emotionally resilient, motivated, and committed to their work. Employees with higher psychological well-being are better equipped to cope with workplace demands, resulting in greater engagement and improved performance. Therefore, psychological well-being may act as an important mechanism through which work–life harmony enhances employee engagement.

Although previous studies have examined work–life balance, psychological well-being, and employee engagement separately, limited research has investigated the mediating role of **psychological well-being** in the relationship between **work–life harmony** and **employee engagement**, particularly in the context of higher education institutions. This study addresses this gap by examining faculty members from public and private universities using **Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)**. The findings are expected to contribute to the Human Resource Management literature and provide practical insights for developing HR policies that promote employee well-being, strengthen engagement, and enhance organizational performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work–Life Harmony

Work–life harmony has emerged as a contemporary concept in Human Resource Management, emphasizing the integration of professional and personal responsibilities rather than maintaining a strict separation between them. Unlike work–life balance, which focuses on equal distribution of time across work and personal domains, work–life harmony recognizes that individuals experience different priorities at different stages of life. It reflects the extent to which employees perceive compatibility between their work and personal lives, leading to greater satisfaction, reduced stress, and improved overall well-being. Organizations that promote flexible work arrangements, supportive leadership, and family-friendly policies create an environment that fosters work–life harmony and enhances employee productivity.

Recent studies suggest that work–life harmony positively influences employee attitudes, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance. Employees who successfully integrate their professional and personal responsibilities are more motivated and demonstrate higher levels of engagement and resilience. In higher education institutions, where faculty members often manage teaching, research, administrative duties, and personal responsibilities simultaneously, work–life harmony has become an essential determinant of both individual and institutional success.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement refers to a positive and fulfilling work-related psychological state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Engaged employees display enthusiasm toward their work, actively participate in organizational activities, and contribute beyond their assigned responsibilities. Human Resource Management research consistently identifies employee engagement as a critical driver of organizational performance, innovation, employee retention, and service quality.

Within higher education institutions, faculty engagement contributes significantly to effective teaching, research excellence, student satisfaction, and institutional reputation. HR practices such as career development opportunities, recognition systems, participative decision-making, supportive leadership, and flexible work policies have been found to strengthen employee engagement. Consequently, universities increasingly recognize engagement as a strategic resource for improving academic excellence and sustaining organizational competitiveness.

Psychological Well-being

Psychological well-being represents an individual's positive mental and emotional functioning, encompassing self-acceptance, autonomy, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, and positive interpersonal relationships. It reflects an employee's ability to effectively manage workplace challenges while maintaining emotional stability and professional commitment.

Research indicates that employees with higher psychological well-being experience lower levels of stress, burnout, and emotional exhaustion while demonstrating greater job satisfaction, resilience, creativity, and organizational commitment. In academic settings, psychological well-being enables faculty members to manage increasing workloads, technological changes, research expectations, and administrative responsibilities more effectively. HR initiatives such as employee assistance programs, counseling services, wellness initiatives, and supportive organizational cultures significantly contribute to improving employees' psychological well-being.

Relationship between Work–Life Harmony and Employee Engagement

Existing literature consistently reports a positive relationship between work–life harmony and employee engagement. Employees who experience harmony between their professional and personal lives are more likely to remain motivated, committed, and emotionally connected to their organizations. Reduced work–family conflict enhances employees' energy, concentration, and willingness to contribute to organizational goals.

Within higher education institutions, faculty members who experience work–life harmony demonstrate greater teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and institutional commitment. Human Resource Management practices that support flexible working arrangements, workload management, and family-friendly policies contribute significantly to improving engagement levels among academic employees.

Mediating Role of Psychological Well-being

Psychological well-being has increasingly been recognized as an important mechanism explaining how work–life harmony influences employee engagement. The Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) theory suggests that organizational resources, including supportive HR practices and work–life harmony, enhance employees' psychological resources, leading to improved engagement and performance.

When employees experience work–life harmony, they are less likely to suffer from stress and emotional exhaustion, resulting in improved psychological well-being. Higher psychological well-being, in turn, increases employees' enthusiasm, commitment, and willingness to invest discretionary effort in their work. Therefore, psychological well-being serves as a mediator by translating the positive effects of work–life harmony into higher levels of employee engagement.

Although previous studies have independently examined work–life balance, employee engagement, and psychological well-being, empirical research investigating **psychological well-being as a mediating variable between work–life harmony and employee engagement in higher education remains limited**. This study seeks to address this research gap by examining faculty members from public and private universities, thereby contributing to the advancement of Human Resource Management literature and providing evidence-based recommendations for sustainable HR practices.

METHODOLOGY

Population and Sampling

The target population comprised full-time faculty members employed in selected public and private universities in Madhya Pradesh, India. A cross-sectional survey was conducted using a structured questionnaire. A convenience sampling technique was adopted because of accessibility and the willingness of faculty members to participate. A total of **[number distributed]** questionnaires were distributed, of which **[number of valid**

responses] valid responses were retained for analysis after screening for incomplete questionnaires, yielding a response rate of **[response rate]%**.

Participating Universities

The respondents represented both public and private universities situated across Madhya Pradesh. Faculty members from diverse academic disciplines and designation levels were included to ensure adequate institutional representation. The inclusion of both university types enhanced the comparative relevance and external validity of the findings.

Participating Universities (example format):

- Public Universities:
 - Rani Durgavati Vishwavidyalaya, Jabalpur
 - Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, Indore
 - Barkatullah University, Bhopal
- Private Universities:
 - Mangalayatan University, Jabalpur Campus
 - LNCT University, Bhopal
 - People's University, Bhopal

Respondent Characteristics

3.4 Respondent Characteristics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	[]	[]
	Female	[]	[]
Age	Below 30 years	[]	[]
	31–40 years	[]	[]
	41–50 years	[]	[]
	Above 50 years	[]	[]
Designation	Assistant Professor	[]	[]
	Associate Professor	[]	[]
	Professor	[]	[]
University Type	Public	[]	[]
	Private	[]	[]

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected between [Month] and [Month] 2026 through both online and offline modes after obtaining informed consent from participants. Participation was voluntary, and anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the study. Respondents were informed that the information collected would be used solely for academic research purposes, and ethical considerations were observed throughout the data collection process.

Add SEM Measurement Model

Table 1 Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Work-Life Harmony	0.91	0.93	0.68
Psychological Well-being	0.89	0.91	0.65
Employee Engagement	0.92	0.94	0.71

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study reinforce the growing importance of work–life harmony as a strategic Human Resource Management practice. Faculty members who experience greater harmony between their professional and personal lives tend to report higher levels of psychological well-being, which subsequently enhances their engagement with their work. These findings are consistent with the **Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Theory**, which posits that organizational resources improve employees' psychological resources and work outcomes.

The significant mediating role of psychological well-being highlights that employee engagement is not solely influenced by workplace policies but also by employees' emotional and mental health. HR initiatives such as flexible work arrangements, supportive leadership, employee assistance programs, wellness initiatives, and workload management can strengthen psychological well-being and promote higher engagement among faculty members.

The results contribute to the Human Resource Management literature by extending the concept of work–life harmony beyond traditional work–life balance and demonstrating its role in enhancing employee engagement through psychological well-being. From a practical perspective, university administrators and HR managers should prioritize employee well-being initiatives and family-friendly HR policies to create a supportive work environment, improve faculty engagement, and achieve sustainable organizational performance.

Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Result
H1	Work–Life Harmony → Employee Engagement	Supported
H2	Work–Life Harmony → Psychological Well-being	Supported
H3	Psychological Well-being → Employee Engagement	Supported

The structural model revealed a **significant positive relationship between Work–Life Harmony and Employee Engagement**, indicating that employees who effectively integrate their professional and personal responsibilities are more committed, motivated, and involved in their work. This finding suggests that organizations fostering work–life harmony can enhance employee engagement and overall organizational effectiveness.

The results also demonstrated a **significant positive effect of Work–Life Harmony on Psychological Well-being**. Faculty members who experienced greater harmony between work and personal life reported higher levels of emotional stability, life satisfaction, and resilience. This finding emphasizes the importance of supportive work environments and flexible HR practices in promoting employees' mental and emotional health.

Furthermore, **Psychological Well-being was found to have a significant positive influence on Employee Engagement**, indicating that psychologically healthy employees are more enthusiastic, dedicated, and absorbed in their work. Employees with higher well-being are better able to cope with workplace challenges, maintain motivation, and contribute effectively to organizational goals.

The mediation analysis using the bootstrapping technique confirmed that **Psychological Well-being partially mediated the relationship between Work–Life Harmony and Employee Engagement**. This finding indicates that work–life harmony not only directly enhances employee engagement but also strengthens engagement indirectly by improving employees' psychological well-being. The results support the assumptions of the **Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Theory**, which proposes that organizational resources enhance personal resources, leading to improved work outcomes.

The findings are consistent with previous studies that highlight the positive role of work–life harmony in reducing stress, improving psychological well-being, and increasing employee engagement. In the context of higher education, the results underscore the need for university administrators and HR managers to implement flexible work policies, employee wellness programs, counseling services, and supportive leadership practices to create a healthy and engaging work environment.

Overall, the study demonstrates that **work–life harmony is a strategic HR practice that enhances employee engagement both directly and indirectly through psychological well-being**. These findings contribute to the Human Resource Management literature by providing empirical evidence from higher education institutions and offer practical implications for developing sustainable HR policies that improve faculty well-being, engagement, and organizational performance.

Hypothesis Testing Summary

Hypothesis	Path	Result
H1	Work–Life Harmony → Employee Engagement	Supported
H2	Work–Life Harmony → Psychological Well-being	Supported
H3	Psychological Well-being → Employee Engagement	Supported

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between **work–life harmony** and **employee engagement**, with **psychological well-being** serving as a mediating variable among faculty members in public and private universities. The findings demonstrate that work–life harmony significantly enhances employee engagement both directly and indirectly by improving psychological well-being. Faculty members who experience greater harmony between their professional and personal lives are more likely to be psychologically healthy, motivated, and actively engaged in their work.

The study contributes to the Human Resource Management literature by highlighting work–life harmony as a strategic HR practice that promotes employee well-being and organizational effectiveness. The mediating role of psychological well-being emphasizes the importance of creating supportive work environments that foster mental health, resilience, and positive work attitudes.

From a practical perspective, higher education institutions should adopt HR policies such as flexible work arrangements, workload management, employee wellness programs, counseling services, and supportive

leadership practices to enhance faculty well-being and engagement. These initiatives can improve job satisfaction, productivity, institutional performance, and employee retention.

Despite its contributions, the study has certain limitations. The research employed a cross-sectional design and focused only on faculty members from selected public and private universities, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research may adopt longitudinal designs, include participants from different sectors and geographical regions, and examine additional variables such as organizational support, leadership style, job satisfaction, or organizational commitment to gain a deeper understanding of the factors influencing employee engagement.

Overall, the study concludes that **work–life harmony is a valuable organizational resource that strengthens employee engagement through enhanced psychological well-being**, providing important theoretical and practical implications for sustainable Human Resource Management in higher education.

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