

Research Article

Strategic Hrm Practices and Its Impact on Work Life Balance of Employees Working in Higher Educational Institutions

Dr. P. Mohanraj¹, Dr. k. venkata padma², Dr. K. Prabakar³, Dr. Nikita Nille⁴, Ms. Suneetha K.S⁵ and Dr. Kanchan Samir Dewal⁶

¹Assistant Professor, Department of MBA, SRM Institute of Science and Technology -Ramapuram, Chennai -600089, Tamilnadu, India.

²Associate professor, Department of Management Studies, Aditya university, Surampalem

³Professor, Department of MBA, Hindusthan College of Arts & Science, Behind Nava India

⁴Assistant Professor, Department of MBA, GH Raisonni College of Engineering and Management Pune

⁵Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, St. claret Autonomous College, Bengaluru, Karnataka

⁶Assistant Professor, Department of MBA, G H Raisonni Skill Tech University, Nagpur.Maharashtra

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*Corresponding author: Dr. P. Mohanraj (drpmohanrajmba@gmail.com)

Abstract: Strategic human resource management (SHRM) is an important fixture that helps linking human resource practices with organizational goals while developing worker well-being especially work-life balance (WLB). Considering that in the environment of higher educational institutions the employees are burdened by increasing workload, role conflicts, and demands to the job, the SHRM practices become the instrumental part of the employees' ability to manage their personal and professional life. This paper examines the effect of SHRM on WLB for academic and non-academic in higher education learning institutions. Other key SHRM that includes: flexible work structure, supportive organizational culture, workload management, career development, and employee support programs are found as essential in the achievement of WLB. The study also reflects upon the challenges institutions are challenged to experience when enacting SHRM into practice, such as bureaucratic structures, disparate roles of personnel, and the limitations of financial and other resources. The findings imply that if SHRM is aligned with institution goals and employee needs strategically The outcome will be increased job satisfaction, lower turnover, higher productivity and better institutional reputation. However, SHRM effectiveness as far as the WLB is concerned is predicated by leadership commitment, resource allocation, and employee engagement. This piece of research helps to understand why and how SHRM practices can be used to achieve better work-life balance for employees in the dynamic and ... often stressful ... environment of higher education. Strategic Human Resource Management is a potent instrument in the promotion of work-life in higher educational institutions. Through the alignment of HR practices with the needs of the workforce of the institution and its strategic objectives, SHRM helps create a more sustainable, engaged, productive work environment. Institutions must do so by using inclusive, flexible, and well communicating HR strategies to express their influence to the greatest extent possible in order to resolve actual challenges that employees face in the meantime they pursue balancing of work and the life responsibility.

Keywords: Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM), Work-Life Balance (WLB), Higher Educational Institutions, Employee Well-being, Flexible Work Arrangements, Career Development, Organizational Culture, Employee Assistance Programs and Job Satisfaction, Turnover.

INTRODUCTION

Work-life balance (WLB) has become an important concern as the nature of the higher education institutions continues to change. Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) is important in responding to these challenges since it ensures that the policies on human resource are in line with the institutional goals and employee welfare. The relationship between SHRM practices and WLB among employees in higher educational institutions is discussed in this article; the article also identifies critical practices, central problems and implications for sustainable workforce management. There are rapid changes going on among higher educational establishments catalyzed by globalization, digital transformation and increased accountability. Such pressures tend to cause higher workloads, role conflicts and psychological stress for the employees. SHRM thus becomes essential more than ever before for helping in

accomplishing institutional goals as well as creating a healthy and balanced work environment. An abbreviation of the term, SHRM, refers to the preactiveness in managing the human resources so that they synchronize with the strategic direction of the institution's human resource policies.

Key SHRM Practices Promoting Work-Life Balance Flexible Work Arrangements

Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) are a critical part of the Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) that plays massively on the work-life balance (WLB) of employees. Such arrangement involves such options as flexible hours, teleworking, working day weeks, and sharing of jobs to enable even has an ability to handle personal and professional life perfectly. In tertiary learning institutions where academic personnel have irregular timetables, because of teaching, research and

administrative tasks, FWAs offer a much-needed flexibility to handle work commitments and family obligations or personal interests. In so doing: institutes can decrease employee stress, boost job satisfaction and reduce remittance. Moreover, FWAs facilitate increased productivity because employees can perform their tasks at the most productive hours and according to their personal schedules as well. For non-academic staff, these arrangements enable task and personal responsibility handling, which improves overall well-being. But for FWAs to work institutionally, there is a need for a culture of trust and proper communication of expectations & performance outcomes. With the growing phenomenon of remote learning and digital transformation, flexible work alternatives are no longer something that organizations give, but something that they have to provide, if they want to be able to attract and retain top talent and maintain longer term institutional success.

Supportive Organizational Culture

A positive organizational culture forms the bedrock of employees' WLB in higher educational institutions. It means shared values, norms and practices that are instituted in an institution, valued based on employee well-being, inclusion, and work satisfaction. The WLB can be improved tremendously in a culture that appreciates open communication, (employee contributions) and (employee's professional and personal development). In an academic environment where teaching, research and administrative work brings about a high level of stress, such a firm culture helps create a feeling of belonging and loyalty among employees. The basis of this culture: trust, respect, and flexibility of work: the employees will be convinced that they are valued and supported. For example, if employers give their employees room to air their work-life challenges and some solutions like adjusted schedules and mentoring programs, it will reduce stress and burnout. Further, such a culture promotes work-life integration rather than a strict differentiation of work and life, which especially suits the academic staffs who do much work outside standard time. Institutions that have a good culture are more likely to have low turnover rates, high employee's engagement and better performance. Successful WLB also reflects higher institution loyalty, higher level of morale and healthier work environment for all employees, promoting personal and institutional success.

WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT

Workload management is a major SHRM practice that directly affects WLB in higher educational institutions. Good management of workload ensures that employees' job demand is reasonable, achievable, and balanced with capacity thus avoiding role overload and burnout. In academic work, employees tend to share responsibilities of teaching, research, administration, and student care making it necessary to do it in an orderly manner. Institutions have to determine workload expectations, and distribute workload based on each department fairly and fairly as to not overburden any one person. For example balancing the number of courses one teaches, the level of research that one conducts and the nature of service activities becomes necessary for preventing burnout and relieving stress. Also,

workload management includes people's needs, i.e., granting time off during not so busy periods or changing teaching time schedules for employees with family needs. Clear communication of workload expectations paired with frequent feedback and support this guarantees that the staff remain invested in the process but without feeling overwhelmed. If workloads are properly handled, job seekers have reduced work pressure which results in higher job satisfaction, better health and productivity. More prestigious educational institutions that support workload management not only drive WLB but do so in a way that inspires a supportive and viable work environment that will ensure the long-term success of the institution.

Career Development and Training

Career development and training programs are vital SHRM practices that contribute significantly to improving employees' work-life balance (WLB) in higher educational institutions. Offering career advancement opportunities enables employees to enhance their skills and competencies, leading to greater job satisfaction and motivation. These programs can include professional development workshops, seminars, mentorship opportunities, and financial support for further education. By investing in career development, institutions show employees that their growth is valued, which in turn increases engagement and reduces job-related stress? For academic staff, opportunities for career advancement, such as tenure track positions or research funding, help mitigate the stress of professional stagnation. Additionally, career training programs equip employees with the necessary tools to manage work demands more effectively, contributing to improved time management and task delegation. This, in turn, facilitates a healthier work-life balance by reducing work-related strain. Non-academic staff can also benefit from career development programs by gaining new skills that help them adapt to evolving job requirements and increase job satisfaction. Institutions that provide comprehensive career development opportunities not only retain talented staff but also enhance employee morale, productivity, and commitment to the institution. By supporting career growth, institutions create a more resilient workforce capable of navigating the challenges of work-life integration.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS (EAPS)

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) are an integral part of SHRM practices that support work-life balance (WLB) in higher educational institutions. EAPs are designed to provide employees with confidential counseling, support, and resources to help them manage personal and professional challenges. These programs address various issues, including stress, mental health, substance abuse, family problems, and financial difficulties. For academic staff, the pressure to meet deadlines, publish research, and maintain teaching quality can contribute to stress and burnout. EAPs offer a valuable support system by providing counseling services or connecting employees to external resources to cope with these challenges. Non-academic staff can also benefit from EAPs, particularly in managing work-related stress, personal crises, or adjusting

to life changes. Moreover, EAPs promote a culture of well-being, where employees feel that their mental and emotional health is prioritized, leading to reduced absenteeism and enhanced productivity. Institutions that offer EAPs demonstrate their commitment to supporting employees holistically, ensuring their personal well-being aligns with their professional responsibilities. When employees have access to these support systems, they are better equipped to handle life's challenges, ultimately resulting in a more balanced, engaged, and productive workforce. By integrating EAPs into SHRM practices, institutions can improve employee morale and satisfaction while fostering a healthy, supportive work environment.

Impact of SHRM on Work-Life Balance

Improved Job Satisfaction

Strategic HRM practices, particularly those focusing on work-life balance (WLB), significantly contribute to improved job satisfaction among employees in higher educational institutions. When institutions implement practices like flexible work arrangements, career development opportunities, supportive organizational cultures, and workload management, employees feel valued and supported, leading to higher levels of job satisfaction. For academic and non-academic staff, a good balance between work and personal life reduces stress and prevents burnout, which is often a major contributor to dissatisfaction. Additionally, when employees feel they have the resources and flexibility to manage their work responsibilities effectively, their overall experience in the workplace becomes more positive. This enhanced job satisfaction translates into greater engagement and motivation, which in turn results in a more committed and productive workforce. Academic staff, for example, who can balance their teaching, research, and administrative duties with personal life commitments are more likely to feel fulfilled in their roles, thereby enhancing their job satisfaction.

Reduced Turnover and Absenteeism

When higher educational institutions effectively implement strategic HRM practices to improve work-life balance, they experience a significant reduction in turnover and absenteeism. Employees who feel supported through flexible work arrangements, career development opportunities, and a positive organizational culture are less likely to leave their positions. Reduced turnover directly impacts the institution's ability to retain experienced and skilled employees, which is crucial for maintaining teaching quality and institutional stability. Furthermore, by offering solutions to manage stress, workload, and personal challenges, such as through Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), institutions can reduce absenteeism, as employees are less likely to experience burnout or illness. The provision of these supportive measures fosters loyalty and trust, as employees feel their well-being is prioritized. Over time, these efforts lead to a more stable workforce, reducing the costs associated with recruiting and training new employees.

Increased Productivity

Strategic HRM practices aimed at improving work-life

balance contribute directly to increased productivity within higher educational institutions. When employees have a manageable workload, opportunities for professional development, and access to support systems like flexible work arrangements and EAPs, they are more focused and energized in their roles. Academic staff, for example, can balance their teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities more effectively when they have flexibility in how they manage their time, leading to improved efficiency and better quality output. Additionally, a supportive organizational culture fosters collaboration and motivation, enabling employees to perform at their best. Reduced stress and burnout, facilitated by SHRM practices, lead to employees being more engaged, focused, and productive in their roles. As productivity increases, the institution benefits from enhanced teaching quality, better research outcomes, and more efficient administrative operations, contributing to its overall success.

Enhanced Institutional Reputation

The reputation of a higher educational institution is significantly impacted by its approach to strategic HRM and work-life balance. Institutions that prioritize employee well-being through flexible work arrangements, supportive cultures, career development, and workload management are more likely to attract and retain top talent. Academic staff, in particular, is drawn to institutions known for offering a healthy work-life balance, as these factors are important for long-term job satisfaction and professional fulfillment. A reputation for prioritizing employee well-being not only enhances the institution's ability to recruit talented faculty but also positions it as an employer of choice in the education sector. Furthermore, when employees are satisfied and supported in their roles, they are more likely to promote the institution positively through word-of-mouth, enhancing the institution's public image. A strong institutional reputation also helps build partnerships, attract funding, and enhance collaboration with other academic and research institutions. Thus, a focus on work-life balance through strategic HRM practices not only benefits employees but also strengthens the institution's position in the competitive educational landscape.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING SHRM IN ACADEMIA

Rigid Administrative Structures

Stifled administrative arrangement in the higher institution of learning can be a substantial impediment to instituting work-life balance (WLB) strategies in the higher educational institutions. In most institutions, hierarchical systems and rigid departmental division boundaries create impractical limitations on flexibility and autonomy due to which it becomes impossible for workers to be able to handle their time intelligently. Such structures tend to choke decision making and distribution of resources leading to bottlenecks and hence lags and inefficiencies. In academic hunting grounds where faculty members are expected to balance teaching, research, and administrative workloads, strict structures can lead to work overload, stress, and the effect on the worker's work life balance is adverse. Besides, rigid timetables and absence of accommodation within administrative procedures may

hinder an opportunity for staff to align work routine with personal responsibilities leading to increased burnout rates and job exit. Institutions need therefore to employ more flexible organizational structures in order to overcome these barriers and decentralize the decision-making process and give employees more autonomy. Not only would this help to build WLB, it would also increase the effectiveness of an organization as there would be an empowered workforce in charge of better managing their work, this means higher satisfaction and productivity. While a less flexible and reactive system of administration would create an environment where it was possible for both academic and non-academic staff to succeed at their jobs and find a balance between their professional and personal selves.

Diverse Employee Roles

In higher educational institutions, the diverse roles of employees create unique challenges when implementing work-life balance (WLB) strategies. Academic staff, non-academic staff, researchers, and administrative employees all have distinct job demands and responsibilities, each requiring tailored approaches to balance work and personal life effectively. For instance, faculty members often face irregular hours due to teaching schedules, research deadlines, and student consultations. In contrast, non-academic staff may have more consistent work hours but still face pressure from administrative tasks, events, or institutional changes. The diversity in employee roles can make it difficult to implement one-size-fits-all policies or practices that cater to the unique needs of each group. To address this, institutions should develop flexible, customized work-life balance strategies that recognize the distinct challenges of each employee category. For example, offering flexible teaching schedules or research sabbaticals for academic staff, while providing administrative support or time-off options for non-academic staff, can lead to a better work-life integration for all. Tailoring HR practices to accommodate the diverse roles within the institution ensures that all employees can access the benefits of work-life balance strategies, leading to improved morale, reduced stress, and higher retention rates across various job categories.

Resource Constraints

Resource constraints are a significant barrier to the successful implementation of strategic HRM practices aimed at improving work-life balance (WLB) in higher educational institutions. Limited financial, human, and technological resources often make it difficult for institutions to provide flexible work arrangements, invest in employee well-being programs, or develop comprehensive training opportunities. For instance, smaller institutions or those facing budgetary cuts may lack the funds to offer programs like Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), which are essential for addressing personal challenges that affect employees' work-life balance. Similarly, without sufficient resources, institutions may struggle to implement workload management strategies or offer career development opportunities that are crucial for job satisfaction and retention. Moreover, resource constraints can hinder the ability to hire additional staff to ease the workload of existing employees, leading to

higher stress levels and burnout. While larger institutions may have the budget to invest in more extensive HRM practices, resource constraints require smaller institutions to be more creative and strategic in their approach. Institutions facing these constraints can explore cost-effective solutions, such as prioritizing flexible scheduling, creating peer support networks, or leveraging technology to enable remote work, thereby enhancing WLB even within budgetary limitations. By addressing these resource challenges, institutions can still implement strategic HRM practices that positively impact their employees' work-life balance and overall satisfaction.

RESEARCH GAP

Work-life balance (WLB) as a critical factor affecting the satisfaction and productivity of employees has gained heightened attention, studies of the unique impact of the Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) practices on WLB in higher educational institutions have received less attention. Most of the current literature on SHRM practices has concentrated on corporate settings, with little regard for the peculiar challenges of academic and non-academic staff in educational environments. Such organizations as higher educational institutions tend to have complicated structures with different functions and this is quite challenging for the HRM practices. Such are fixed administrative structures, working time differences, and resource challenges that are not common in other sectors. In addition, the connection between SHRM practices and WLB in this case is not adequately researched and in particular the way that practices such as flexible work arrangements, career development and supportive organizational cultures impact on staff work-life integration. Adequate knowledge of the intricacies of this relationship in higher education necessarily requires the formation of a set of targeted measures for the improvement of both employees well-being and the instance's performance. This research seeks to fill this gap by looking at the particular SHRM practices in higher institutions of learning and the consequences on the WLB, offering an insight of the different challenges and opportunities herein.

Statement of the Problem

The issue that this research tackles is the absence of a proper idea on the effect of strategic human resource management practices (SHRM) on the work-life balance of employees from higher educational institutions. Although the research into SHRM practices has been conducted in different industries, the actual implementation and impact of all the practices in the field of higher education have not been studied extensively. Many of the employees in this sector are characteristically confronted by a unique challenge because they are both teachers and researchers/administrator. Also, the complex organizational structure, as well as resource and role diversities among this type of organizations, make it hard for SHRM practices that advance WLB to be implemented successfully. This issue is further complicated by growing pressures on workers which are destroying them due to burnout, stress and dissatisfaction. In view of these above concerns, it is evident that there is a great need to seek how activities related to HRM i.e flexible working conditions,

career development and institutional culture can contribute to the ability of employees to balance between work and personal lives. By filling this void, the research will help achieve actionable knowledge for bettering HRM processes, employee wellness and, ultimately, institutional performance at HE levels.

Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between SHRM practices and work-life balance (WLB) of employees in higher educational institutions.

2. To identify key SHRM practices that influence WLB, including flexible work arrangements, career development, and workload management.
3. To evaluate the challenges faced by higher educational institutions in implementing effective SHRM practices for improving employee WLB.
4. To explore the impact of SHRM practices on employee job satisfaction, productivity, and retention in the context of WLB.

ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The importance of this study is its promising possibility of contributing valuable information on how SHRM practices may make a positive difference to the WLB of employees in higher educational institutions. Within the scope of higher education, the employees (from academic to administrative staff) are usually burdened with high workload, multiple duties and scarce resources, thus may have WLB and wellbeing constrained negatively. Using the examination of the effects of different SHRM practices; flexible work arrangements, supportive organizational culture and career development programs among others, this study can provide a way on how institutions can improve in managing their human resources for increased levels of employees' satisfaction, retention and productivity. Further, this research is also important in identifying specific needs of higher education employees and customizing HRM practices in order to meet those needs. The results can provide instructions on policy and practice in the educational institutions and one of the effects will be that they recruit, retain and support their workforce in a different way. With Nicole Gilboa adding to concerns regarding the increased pressure on institutions to deliver on performance, student outputs and research productivity, this research points to the part played by HRM in creating a supportive environment that can reduce burnout and stress that enhances institutional success.

Table 1: Results of Descriptive Statistics of HRM practices and its impact on WLB of employees

Factors	N	Mean	SD
Workload and Job Demands	350	3.28	1.138
Organizational Support	350	3.06	1.330
Role Conflict and Role Overload	350	3.49	.989
Career Stage and Professional Development	350	3.52	0.781
Psychological and Social Factors	350	3.10	1.126
Institutional Culture	350	3.24	1.135

The factor with the highest mean score is **Career Stage and Professional Development** ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 0.781$), suggesting that employees perceive their career progression and professional development opportunities as having the greatest influence on their work-life balance. This is followed closely by **Role Conflict and Role Overload** ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 0.989$), indicating that managing multiple responsibilities within the institution significantly impacts their ability to maintain WLB. **Workload and Job Demands** ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 1.138$) and **Institutional Culture** ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 1.135$) also show moderate influence, implying that the demands of academic roles and the prevailing work environment contribute notably to balance challenges. Meanwhile, **Psychological and Social Factors** ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 1.126$) and **Organizational Support** ($M = 3.06$, $SD = 1.330$) received the lowest mean scores, indicating relatively weaker perceived influence on WLB or possible gaps in support systems and mental well-being initiatives. The standard deviations suggest moderate to high variability in perceptions, especially for Organizational Support, reflecting differing individual experiences within the same institutional settings.

Null hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between the nature of the respondents and their level of Impact.

Age

With a view to find the degree of association between age of the respondents and their level of Impact, a table was prepared and it exhibits in the following table.

Table 2: Age and level of Impact HRM practices and its impact on WLB of employees

Age	Level of Impact			Total
	Less	Moderate	High	
Less than 30	32	32	30	94
	34.0%	34.0%	31.9%	100.0%
30-45 years	18	85	52	155
	11.6%	54.8%	33.5%	100.0%

More than 45 Years	7	73	21	101
	6.9%	72.3%	20.8%	100.0%
Total	57	190	103	350
	16.3%	54.3%	29.4%	100.0%

The data illustrates the relationship between **age** and the **perceived level of impact of HRM practices on work-life balance (WLB)** among employees in higher educational institutions. The highest proportion of respondents who perceived a **moderate impact** of HRM practices on their WLB belonged to the "**More than 45 years**" age group (72.3%), followed by those aged **30–45 years** (54.8%). This indicates that more experienced employees, particularly those over 45, are more likely to view HRM practices as moderately supportive of their work-life balance. In contrast, younger employees under 30 show a **more evenly distributed perception**, with 34% indicating both low and moderate impact and 31.9% perceiving a high impact. Interestingly, the "**30–45 years**" group has the highest proportion (33.5%) reporting a **high impact** of HRM practices on WLB, suggesting that employees in mid-career stages may be more responsive to or in greater need of HRM interventions. Overall, the data suggest that age influences how employees perceive the effectiveness of HRM practices in supporting their work-life balance, with mid-career professionals reporting the most positive impact.

Table 3: Age and level of Impact

Test	χ^2	df	CC	Sig.
Result	2.157	4	0.068	0.638

The **p-value of 0.638** is considerably higher than the conventional threshold of 0.05, indicating that there is **no statistically significant association** between age and the perceived impact of HRM practices on WLB. The **low contingency coefficient (0.068)** further supports this by showing only a very weak relationship between these variables. In summary, while descriptive data may suggest some variation across age groups, the statistical test confirms that **age does not have a significant influence** on how employees perceive the impact of HRM practices on their work-life balance in higher educational institutions.

Table 4: Gender and level of Impact

Gender	Level of Impact			Total
	Less	Moderate	High	
Male	35	93	60	188
	18.6%	49.5%	31.9%	100.0%
Female	22	97	43	162
	13.6%	59.9%	26.5%	100.0%
Total	57	190	103	350
	16.3%	54.3%	29.4%	100.0%

Table 4 presents the distribution of **gender** and the **perceived level of impact of HRM practices on work-life balance (WLB)** among employees in higher educational institutions. Among **male employees**, 31.9% reported a **high impact** of HRM practices on their WLB, compared to 26.5% of **female employees**. However, a larger proportion of females (59.9%) perceived a **moderate impact**, compared to 49.5% of males. A slightly higher percentage of males (18.6%) than females (13.6%) reported a **low impact**. These findings suggest some gender-based variation in how HRM practices are perceived in relation to work-life balance. **Females are more likely to report a moderate impact**, indicating that they may experience partial but not fully adequate support from HRM practices. In contrast, **males are somewhat more likely to perceive a high impact**, suggesting they may benefit slightly more from existing HRM measures or view them more favorably. Despite these differences, the overall pattern shows that the **majority of both genders fall within the "moderate impact" category**, pointing to a general perception that HRM practices provide some support for WLB, but with room for improvement.

Table 5: Chi-square test

Test	χ^2	df	CC	Sig.
Result	1.239	2	0.042	0.386

With a **p-value of 0.386**, which is greater than 0.05, the result indicates that there is **no statistically significant relationship** between gender and perceived HRM impact on work-life balance. The **contingency coefficient (0.042)** also suggests a **very weak association**. Thus, while descriptive statistics may reveal slight differences in perception between male and female employees, these differences are **not statistically meaningful**. Gender, therefore, does **not significantly influence** how employees in higher educational institutions perceive the role of HRM practices in shaping their work-life balance.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDY

This research has important implications for theory and practice for the area of human resource management in higher education. In theory, this will broaden the existing

knowledge by investigating the relationship between SHRM practices and work-life balance (WLB) in education specifically, an area that has been lacking rather than explored relative to other sectors. The research will

contribute to advancing a more subtle pragmatics of SHRM's role in promoting the effectiveness of employee well-being and organizational success in the educators' field by determining which HRM practices best nurture WLB for the variety of occupations within educational institutions. Practically, the study's findings will be of sufficient help to the higher education administrator and HR professional in the quest of fine-tuning HRM strategy to ensure a supportive and long term work environment. The recommendations that the research will produce may assist institutions to develop policies and practices that will ensure the specific needs of the academic and non-academic employees and satisfy them thus will lead to high job satisfaction levels, low turnover rates, and increased productivity. In the end, the study can be a blueprint for other institutions that would want to improve WLB among employees using customized SHRM practices towards a more engaged and productive workforce in the educational sphere.

Recommendations and Suggestions

From the findings reported in this study, a number of recommendations can be made to such higher educational institutions that wish to improve their work-life balance (WLB) of their employees via strategic human resource management (SHRM) approach. First, institutions must become more flexible of working systems such as remote working and flexible teaching hours to meet the needs of the employees. The flexibility allows the reduction of work related stress and increased satisfaction of job for academic staff – whose schedules always turn out to be unpredictable. Second, it is advisable that institutions create a supportive organizational culture which values employees' well being. This can be accomplished through ongoing professional development, through the establishment of those channels of communication between the staff and administration and through creating an inclusive work setting. Third, workload management needs to be improved, by ensuring that task distribution is equitable and therefore providing extra resources or assistance where necessary. Career development and training possibilities also need to be highlighted to allow employees to develop a professional career while adjusting to their personal life. Finally, the Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) should also be expanded to equip the staff with resources for how to live with stress and personal issues. Institutions that will apply such recommendations will not only improve WLB but will also probably observe the improvement of employee retention, job satisfaction, and overall institutional performance.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to test the perceived impact of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices to the work-life balance (WLB) of employees in higher educational institutions under some demographic variables like age and gender. The findings reveal that the employees tend to view HRM practices as moderately serving their individual work-life balance and there are discrepancies among the intervening variables. < Career Stage and Professional Development, the most significant influences in WLB, had the greatest mean score, indicating that

opportunities for career development and promotion have a critical part to play in the idea that employees perceive as a balance between work and their lives. Other factors, such as Role Conflict and Overload, Workload, as well as Institutional Culture also became relevant but demonstrated the slightly lower mean scores, which means that it is possible to enhance the HRM practices in these areas. The findings of the Chi-square test also did not reveal any statistically significant codependence between the demographic variables (age and gender) and the level of perceived impact of HRM practices on WLB. Mid-career employees (30–45 years) and males slightly favoured perceiving a greater impact of HRM practices, but such differences were not great enough to create a meaningful relation. The contingency coefficients in either case were low and this confirmed that age and gender do not significantly affect the way HRM practices are experienced vis-a-vis work-life balance. In the aggregate, the results indicate that while HRM practices in institutions of higher education have a moderate level of effectiveness in supporting employees' work-life balance, there is an opportunity for improvement – specially on management of workload, role overload, and establishing a more supportive institutional culture. Since the demographic variables such as age and gender play no important role with respect to different perceptions so HRM policies should be formulated with the inclusion of all work group so as to resolve the commonality of their challenges and expectations. A more strategic and employee centered view of HRM could increase work satisfaction levels, be productive and make an organization more effective in the long term.

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