

Work-Life Balance, Burnout, and Organizational Commitment Among Higher Education Faculty: A Systematic Review Toward a Conceptual Structural Equation Model

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Abstract. Work-life balance become a growing concern in higher education, where faculty face increasing workloads, blurred work-home boundaries, and their consequences for well-being, commitment, and retention. This study systematically reviewed literature published between 2022 and 2025 examining the relationship among work-life balance, burnout, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and faculty well-being, drawing on both international and Philippine higher education contexts. Anchored on the Job Demands-Resources (Jd-R) model and Social Exchange Theory (SET), the review synthesized findings across demographic factors (age, gender, marital status, rank, employment type, and tenure), dimensions of faculty well-being (physical, mental, emotional, and social), work-life balance factors linked to burnout (workload distribution, job resources, scheduling, and role/boundary management), and the dimensions of organizational commitment (effective, continuance, and normative). The review indicates that heavier workload, weaker institutional support, and poorly managed role boundaries are consistently associated with higher burnout and lower well-being while adequate job resources, supportive scheduling, and effective commitment are associated with stronger job satisfaction and retention intentions. Demographic factors such as age, tenure, and employment type moderate these relationships in ways that carry direct implications for differentiated institutional policy. Building on this synthesis, the study proposes a conceptual structural equation model linking work-life balance factors, burnout, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and faculty well-being, intended to guide future empirical validation and to inform higher education institutions seeking a more sustainable approach to academic workforce management.

Introduction

Work-life balance has become one of the more pressing concerns in higher education workforce management, as faculty members increasingly juggle teaching, research, administrative duties, and personal responsibilities under conditions of rising institutional demand. Poor work-life balance has been linked to burnout, diminished organizational commitment, and reduced job satisfaction - outcomes that, compounded, threaten the well-being and retention of academic staff. Lantsoght (2025) frames balance not merely as an individual coping challenge but as an institutional responsibility, arguing that universities that fail to address structural sources of overload risk long-term erosion of faculty engagement. Ramachandaran, Yusoff, and Ahmad (2024) similarly emphasize that resource-poor institutional environments compound the personal costs of an unbalanced workload, while Dewangan and Goswami (2025) note that broader gaps in quality-of-work-life research make it difficult for institutions to design well-targeted interventions.

These pressures are especially salient in the Philippine higher education context, where faculty frequently carry combined teaching, research, and extension loads alongside administrative responsibilities, often with limited institutional support systems. Understanding how work-life balance interacts with burnout, organizational commitment, and faculty well-being

is therefore not simply of academic interest but a practical concern for institutions seeking to sustain a healthy, committed academic workforce. This study systematically reviewed literature published between 2022 and 2025 - spanning both international and Philippine higher education settings - examining these relationships along four fronts: the demographic factors associated with faculty well-being and commitment; the dimensions of faculty well-being itself; the work-life balance factors most closely linked to burnout; and the dimensions of organizational commitment linked to job satisfaction. Building on this synthesis, the study proposes a conceptual structural equation model intended to guide future empirical validation and inform institutional policy toward more sustainable academic workforce management.

Statement of the Problem

This study reviewed the literature to answer the following questions: (1) What demographic factors (age, gender, marital status, rank/designation, employment type, and tenure of service) are associated with faculty well-being, burnout, and organizational commitment in higher education? (2) What are the key dimensions of faculty well-being (physical, mental, emotional, and social) as reported in the reviewed literature? (3) What work-life balance factors (workload distribution, job resources, scheduling, and role/boundary management) are most closely associated with faculty burnout? (4) What dimensions of organizational commitment (affective, continuance, and normative) are associated with faculty job satisfaction? (5) What conceptual structural equation model can be proposed, based on the synthesis of these findings, to guide future empirical research on work-life balance, burnout, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and faculty well-being in higher education?

Significance of the Study

The findings are intended to benefit several groups. Higher education administrators and human resource officers may use the synthesis to design more targeted work-life balance policies, workload distribution practices, and support systems responsive to faculty needs. Faculty members may gain a clearer picture of the factors shown to affect well-being, burnout, and commitment, supporting more informed self-advocacy and career planning. Curriculum and policy planners may draw on the proposed conceptual model to guide institutional research agendas and evidence-based policymaking around academic workforce sustainability. Future researchers may use the proposed conceptual structural equation model as a basis for empirical validation across diverse higher education settings, extending and refining the relationships identified in this review.

Theoretical Framework

This review is anchored on two complementary theories. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Schaufeli & Taris, 2022; Sanz-Vergel, Rodriguez-Muñoz, & Nielsen, 2023) holds that every occupation carries both demands - aspects of the job requiring sustained physical or psychological effort - and resources that help employees meet those demands, achieve goals, and manage strain. High job demands unmatched by adequate resources tend to result in burnout, while sufficient resources tend to foster engagement, motivation, and well-being; in the present review, this model anchors the analysis of work-life balance factors (workload distribution, job resources, scheduling, and role/boundary management) and their relationship to faculty burnout and well-being. Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Ahmad, Khan, & Malik, 2022; Kumar & Shailaja, 2023; Davlembayeva & Alamanos, 2025) complements this by framing the employment relationship as a reciprocal exchange: when institutions provide fair treatment, support, and recognition, employees tend to reciprocate with stronger commitment, loyalty, and satisfaction. In this review, SET anchors the analysis of organizational commitment (affective, continuance, and normative) and its relationship to faculty job satisfaction. Used together, JD-R and SET offer a coherent lens for understanding how structural and relational aspects of academic work jointly shape faculty well-being and retention (Figure 1).

Conceptual Framework

Building on this theoretical grounding, the review synthesized its findings into a conceptual structural equation model (Figure 1) linking two parallel pathways. In the first pathway, anchored on the JD-R model, work-life balance factors - workload distribution, job resources, scheduling, and role/boundary management - are treated as predictors of faculty burnout, which in turn is expected to shape faculty well-being across its physical, mental, emotional, and social dimensions. In the second pathway, anchored on SET, organizational commitment - affective, continuance, and normative - is treated as a predictor of faculty job satisfaction. The model further proposes a cross-path linking burnout to job satisfaction, consistent with reviewed findings that burnout erodes not only well-being but also satisfaction and commitment, and links faculty well-being and job satisfaction jointly to the broader outcome of sustainable academic workforce management. This conceptual model is offered as a basis for future empirical validation using structural equation modeling (Kline, 2023) rather than as a tested causal claim.

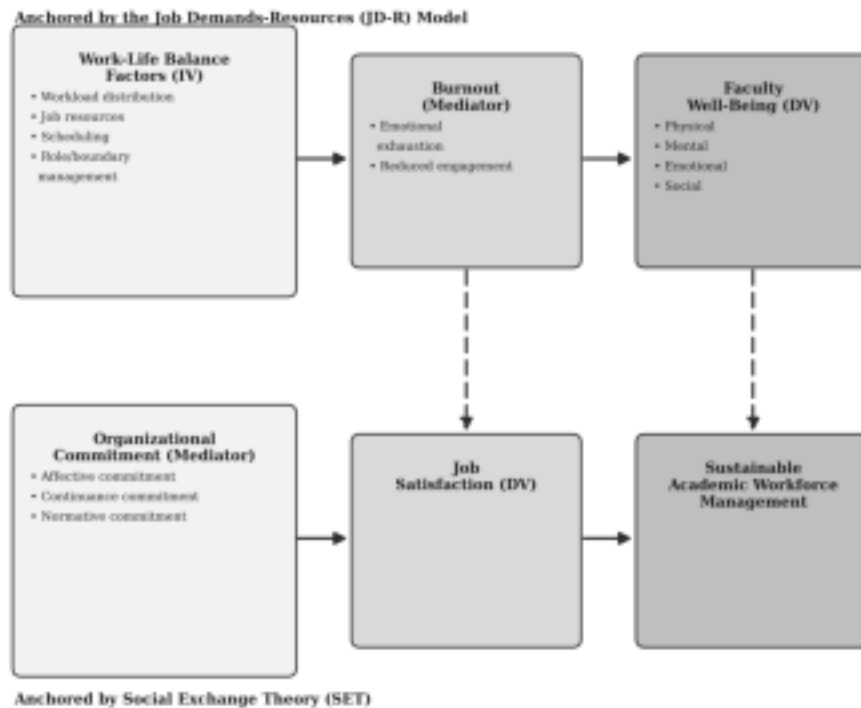


Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Structural Equation Model of Work-Life Balance, Burnout, Organizational Commitment, Job Satisfaction, and Faculty Well-Being

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a systematic literature review design, integrated with conceptual structural equation modeling, to synthesize existing research on work-life balance, burnout, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and faculty well-being in higher education. The systematic review approach allowed for a structured, transparent, and replicable identification, evaluation, and synthesis of relevant studies, while the conceptual modeling component allowed the reviewed relationships to be organized into a coherent, testable framework for future empirical validation.

Search Strategy and Sources

The review drew on peer-reviewed journal articles, institutional studies, and relevant theoretical literature published between 2022 and 2025, spanning both international and Philippine higher education contexts. Search terms combined the core constructs of the study - work-life balance, burnout, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and faculty well-being - with relevant demographic and institutional qualifiers (e.g., faculty age, rank, tenure, employment type). Priority was given to studies published in indexed journals and to sources directly examining higher education or comparable knowledge-work settings.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Studies were included if they examined at least one of the core constructs (work-life balance, burnout, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, or faculty well-being) among higher education faculty or comparable professional populations, were published between 2022 and 2025, and were available in English. Studies were excluded if they focused exclusively on non-academic or unrelated occupational populations without clear relevance to higher education, or if they were not peer-reviewed or otherwise lacked sufficient methodological detail to assess relevance and credibility.

Data Extraction and Synthesis

Relevant findings were extracted from each source and organized thematically according to the study's four review questions: demographic factors, dimensions of faculty well-being, work-life balance factors associated with burnout, and dimensions of organizational commitment associated with job satisfaction. Findings were synthesized narratively, with particular attention to points of convergence and divergence between international and Philippine higher education contexts, and to how consistently each relationship was reported across sources. The narrative synthesis was subsequently used to construct the conceptual structural equation model presented in Figure 1, following recommended practice for developing testable conceptual models prior to full-scale structural equation modeling (Kline, 2023).

Ethical Considerations

As a literature-based review rather than a study involving human participants, this research did not require participant recruitment or informed consent. The review nonetheless observed standard ethical practice for scholarly synthesis: all sources were accurately represented and properly attributed, care was taken not to misrepresent or overstate the findings of the original studies, and the review's own proposed conceptual model is presented explicitly as a synthesis-based proposition requiring future empirical validation rather than as an established causal finding.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Factors Associated with Faculty Well-Being and Commitment

Across the reviewed literature, several demographic factors were consistently associated with faculty well-being, burnout, and organizational commitment. Age showed a fairly consistent pattern: younger faculty tended to report higher burnout and lower resilience, while older, more experienced faculty reported greater emotional regulation and coping capacity, a pattern observed in both international settings (Evans & Mitchell, 2023) and Philippine higher education institutions (Cadena, Santos, & Reyes, 2025; Reyes & Cruz, 2023). Gender differences also emerged, with female faculty more likely to report role conflict linked to combined domestic and academic responsibilities, both internationally (Nahas, Choudhry, & Al-Fahad, 2024) and locally (Santos & Ramos, 2024). Marital status was similarly relevant: married faculty, particularly those with young children, reported greater difficulty maintaining work-life balance than single faculty, a pattern reported both internationally (Alves, Ferreira, & Costa, 2024) and in the Philippines (Villanueva & Bautista, 2025).

Rank or designation was linked to differing burnout profiles: faculty in senior or administrative roles reported burnout tied more to role overload and decision-making pressure, while junior faculty reported burnout tied more to performance anxiety and unfamiliarity with institutional expectations (Fernandez & Ramos, 2023; Garcia & Martinez, 2025). Employment type mattered as well, with contractual or part-time faculty generally reporting greater job insecurity and correspondingly lower organizational commitment than their permanent counterparts (Kim & Lee, 2024; Dela Cruz & Villanueva, 2024). Tenure of service showed a related but distinct pattern, with early-career faculty (fewer years of service) more vulnerable to burnout while longer-tenured faculty demonstrated greater resilience, alongside a countervailing risk of accumulated fatigue over time (Brown & Hughes, 2023; Batugal, 2023). Taken together, these demographic patterns suggest that work-life balance interventions are unlikely to be equally effective across all faculty groups, and that institutions may benefit from differentiating support strategies by career stage, employment status, and family circumstances rather than applying uniform policies.

Dimensions of Faculty Well-Being

The reviewed literature converged on four interrelated dimensions of faculty well-being. Physical well-being was consistently linked to the sedentary, high-pressure nature of academic work, with reviewed studies pointing to structured wellness initiatives, ergonomic support, and manageable workloads as protective factors against physical strain. Mental well-being was closely tied to workload intensity, role clarity, and institutional culture, with faculty in more supportive, communicative environments reporting lower psychological strain than those in more demanding or ambiguous role structures. Emotional well-being was linked to institutional recognition, feedback, and a sense of being valued, with faculty who perceived their contributions as acknowledged reporting stronger emotional resilience. Social well-being, finally, was tied to collegiality, peer support networks, and a sense of belonging within the department or institution, with isolation and weak collegial ties emerging as recurring risk factors across the reviewed studies. Considered together, these four dimensions point to well-being as a multidimensional outcome that institutional policy needs to address holistically - through physical infrastructure and wellness support, manageable and clearly defined workloads, a culture of recognition, and deliberate efforts to build collegial community - rather than through any single intervention in isolation.

Work-Life Balance Factors Associated with Burnout

Four work-life balance factors emerged consistently across the reviewed literature as predictors of faculty burnout. Workload distribution was the most frequently cited factor, with an uneven or excessive distribution of teaching, research, and administrative tasks strongly associated with emotional exhaustion and depersonalization - the core dimensions of burnout identified across both international and Philippine studies. Job resources - encompassing institutional support, access to materials and technology, administrative assistance, and opportunities for professional growth - functioned as a protective factor, with better-resourced faculty reporting significantly lower burnout even under comparably heavy workloads, consistent with the JD-R model's central premise that adequate resources buffer the effects of high job demands. Scheduling flexibility, including options such as flexible teaching hours, remote work arrangements, and predictable timetabling, was associated with lower burnout and better perceived work-life balance, while rigid or unpredictable scheduling was associated with higher reported strain. Role or boundary management - the degree to which faculty could maintain clear boundaries between work and personal life, particularly around after-hours communication and administrative encroachment on personal time - emerged as an increasingly salient factor, with poor boundary management linked to chronic stress and eventual burnout even among faculty who did not report excessive raw workload. Together, these findings suggest that burnout in academic settings is driven less by workload volume alone than by the interaction between demands and the resources, flexibility, and boundaries available to manage them - directly reflecting the JD-R model's demands-resources balance.

Dimensions of Organizational Commitment Associated with Job Satisfaction

The reviewed literature examined organizational commitment along the three dimensions established in the broader organizational behavior literature. Affective commitment - an employee's emotional attachment to and identification with the institution - was the dimension most consistently and strongly associated with job satisfaction, with faculty reporting genuine enthusiasm for their institution's mission also reporting the highest satisfaction and lowest turnover intention, consistent with Social Exchange Theory's premise that positive institutional treatment is reciprocated with stronger emotional investment. Continuance commitment - commitment driven by the perceived costs of leaving, such as accumulated benefits or the scarcity of comparable alternatives - showed a more ambiguous relationship with satisfaction, since faculty who remained primarily for lack of alternatives did not necessarily report higher satisfaction despite planning to stay. Normative commitment - a sense of obligation to remain with the institution - showed a weaker but still generally positive relationship with satisfaction, particularly among faculty who felt a strong sense of duty tied to institutional loyalty or gratitude for early career support. Taken together, these findings suggest that institutions seeking to strengthen both retention and satisfaction should prioritize building affective commitment through genuine institutional support and recognition, since commitment sustained mainly by necessity or obligation appears less likely to translate into the satisfaction and engagement that support long-term faculty well-being.

Toward a Conceptual Structural Equation Model

Synthesizing these findings, this review proposes the conceptual structural equation model shown in Figure 1, linking two theoretically anchored pathways. In the JD-R-anchored pathway, work-life balance factors (workload distribution, job resources, scheduling, and role/boundary management) are proposed as predictors of faculty burnout, which in turn predicts faculty well-being across its physical, mental, emotional, and social dimensions. In the SET-anchored pathway, organizational commitment (affective, continuance, and normative) is proposed as a predictor of job satisfaction. A cross-path links burnout to job satisfaction, reflecting the reviewed literature's consistent finding that burnout erodes satisfaction and commitment even when analyzed through a separate theoretical lens, and both faculty well-being and job satisfaction are modeled as jointly contributing to the broader outcome of sustainable academic workforce management. This model is offered as a synthesis-based proposition: it organizes the review's findings into a coherent, testable structure but requires future empirical validation using quantitative structural equation modeling (Kline, 2023) before its proposed pathways can be treated as confirmed relationships.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This systematic review indicates that faculty well-being, burnout, and organizational commitment in higher education are shaped by an interacting set of demographic, structural, and relational factors rather than any single determinant. Demographic factors - age, gender, marital status, rank, employment type, and tenure - moderate how faculty experience work-life balance and its consequences, suggesting that institutional interventions are unlikely to succeed as one-size-fits-all policies. Faculty well-being itself is multidimensional, spanning physical, mental, emotional, and social domains that each respond to different institutional levers. Among work-life balance factors, workload distribution, job resources, scheduling, and role/boundary management consistently predict burnout, consistent with the JD-R model's premise that resources buffer the effects of demands; and among dimensions of organizational commitment, affective commitment shows the

strongest and most consistent association with job satisfaction, consistent with Social Exchange Theory's premise that institutions that invest in faculty are more likely to receive genuine commitment in return.

These conclusions carry direct implications for higher education administrators and policymakers: workload policies that account for individual faculty circumstances, sustained investment in job resources and flexible scheduling, clearer norms around after-hours boundaries, and a deliberate institutional focus on building affective - rather than merely continuance-based - commitment are all likely to yield more durable improvements in faculty well-being and retention than generic wellness programming alone. The conceptual structural equation model proposed in this review offers a starting point for future empirical work: researchers are encouraged to test its proposed pathways using quantitative structural equation modeling across diverse higher education settings, and to examine whether the relationships identified here hold consistently across institutional types, disciplines, and national contexts. Such validation would allow the model to move from a synthesis-based proposition toward an evidence-based framework that higher education institutions can use with greater confidence in designing sustainable academic workforce policy.

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Competing Interests Statement

The author declares that he has no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this article.

Data Availability Statement

As a systematic literature review, this study did not generate new primary data. The full list of sources reviewed and the data extraction summary supporting this synthesis are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.