

Impact of Work-Life Balance and Job Autonomy on Employee Engagement with Psychological Well-Being as a Mediator Among Academicians

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Abstract

This study examines employee engagement among academicians by analysing the relationships between work-life balance, job autonomy, and psychological well-being in higher education institutions. It focuses on the mediating role of psychological well-being in strengthening employees' enthusiasm, commitment, and involvement in academic work. A descriptive and analytical research design was adopted, and primary data were collected from 120 academicians in North Bengaluru, including Hebbal, Yelahanka, Devanahalli, Jakkur, Thanisandra, and Hennur. Respondents were selected through purposive sampling, and data were obtained through a structured questionnaire administered using Google Forms. The questionnaire demonstrated high reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.84. Descriptive statistics, five-point Likert-scale analysis, and one-sample *t*-tests were used to analyse the data and test the hypotheses. The respondents were mainly middle-aged, highly qualified, and experienced academicians, with substantial representation from Ph.D. holders, assistant professors, married faculty members, and employees of private institutions. Many participants reported contractual or ad-hoc employment, extended working hours, administrative responsibilities, and family dependents. The findings show that academicians generally possess strong physical resilience, workplace energy, cognitive absorption, and commitment to meaningful work. Job autonomy and psychological well-being were also positively perceived. However, balancing professional responsibilities with personal and family commitments remained a significant challenge, while administrative interference restricted operational autonomy. The hypothesis results confirmed significant positive associations, with mean scores of 3.39 for work-personal time balance, 3.88 for work-life balance satisfaction, and 4.08 for purpose and meaning in life. All null hypotheses were rejected at the 5 percent significance level. The study concludes that reducing administrative burdens, promoting flexible work arrangements, strengthening autonomy, and supporting psychological well-being can enhance faculty engagement and institutional effectiveness.

Keywords: Employee engagement, work-life balance, job autonomy, psychological well-being, academicians and higher education.

1. Introduction

The higher education sector is undergoing rapid transformation due to technological advancements, changing student expectations, intensified competition, and increasing emphasis on research and institutional performance. In this dynamic environment, academicians face diverse responsibilities—teaching, research, curriculum development, mentoring, administration, and community engagement—creating considerable professional pressure and making employee engagement a critical concern. Employee engagement, reflecting emotional, cognitive, and behavioural involvement, enhances teaching effectiveness, productivity, and institutional development. However, achieving work-life balance remains challenging as academic duties often extend beyond regular hours, potentially causing stress and reduced involvement. Similarly, job autonomy—flexibility in teaching, research, and decision-making—can foster trust and ownership but requires institutional support. Psychological well-being, encompassing positive emotional functioning and personal growth, offers a meaningful explanation of how work-life balance and autonomy influence engagement. Academicians experiencing balance and control feel more valued and capable, encouraging greater commitment. This study examines psychological

well-being as a mediator between work-life balance, job autonomy, and employee engagement, with findings potentially guiding institutions to develop supportive policies and well-being initiatives for a more engaged, sustainable academic workforce.

Literature Review

1.02.01. Budhathoki Rimisha, Dr. Pandey Deepa, Dr. Shukla Jyotsana (2025) Work-life balance (WLB) continues to be a critical priority for modern professionals, directly impacting their well-being, job satisfaction, and overall output. Through surveys and interviews across various industries, this study examines the complex relationship between WLB, workplace stress, and productivity. Our findings reveal that sacrificing personal time for professional demands is a primary driver of stress, which ultimately degrades both employee health and performance. Conversely, organizations that champion supportive initiatives—such as flexible scheduling and soft benefits—see a notable boost in productivity driven by higher employee satisfaction. Ultimately, in an era of intense global competition, it is imperative for companies to implement robust WLB policies. Prioritizing employee well-being is a strategic necessity that ensures sustainable, high-level performance for both the workforce and the organization.

1.02.02. Zhixin Qian, Kele Andi Tamsang Andi and Loong Ang Hong (2025) Grounded in Self-Determination Theory (SDT), this study investigates how basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—mediate the impact of authentic leadership and work-life integration flexibility on work engagement among academicians in the Malaysian higher education sector. Utilizing a quantitative approach and SmartPLS analysis on a sample of 120 professionals, the research reveals that specific authentic leadership dimensions (relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and balanced processing) significantly predict work engagement, whereas self-awareness and standalone work-life flexibility do not. Notably, the fulfillment of basic psychological needs fully mediates the relationship between work-life flexibility and engagement, while partially mediating the influence of authentic leadership. These findings underscore that while flexible policies require the fulfillment of underlying psychological needs to be effective, transparent and ethical leadership directly fuels academic engagement. By contextualizing SDT within Malaysian academia, this research offers valuable insights for designing targeted institutional policies and leadership development programs, while paving the way for future cross-cultural studies.

1.02.03. Heriyanto Adi, M. Nasir Jamal Abdul and Setya Kohar Adi (2025) Grounded in Positive Psychology Theory (PERMA), this study investigates how work-life balance (WLB), employee engagement, and organizational commitment influence employee performance within the post-pandemic public utility sector, specifically examining the mediating role of job satisfaction. Utilizing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) on census data from all 85 permanent employees at PT PLN UP3 West Surabaya, the findings reveal that WLB, engagement, and commitment exert significant, direct positive impacts on both job satisfaction and overall performance. Moreover, job satisfaction partially mediates each of these relationships. Ultimately, this validated framework highlights the critical role of psychological well-being in driving organizational outcomes, equipping human resource leaders in the utility sector with actionable strategies to sustain high performance.

1.02.04. Jauharah Hasna, Zamralita and Fahlevi Reza (2026) This study investigates the impact of work-life balance (WLB) on employees' psychological well-being, specifically testing job satisfaction as a potential mediating variable. Employing a quantitative cross-sectional design, data were gathered from 284 active employees using the Work-Life Balance Scale (WLBS), the Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWB-18), and an established job satisfaction measure. Regression and Hayes PROCESS Model 4 bootstrapping analyses reveal that WLB exerts a strong, direct positive influence on psychological well-being. However, WLB did not significantly predict job satisfaction, nor did job satisfaction predict psychological well-being—ruling out job satisfaction as a mediating mechanism. These findings indicate that an employee's psychological health is driven directly by work-life equilibrium rather than job satisfaction, underscoring the strategic imperative for organizations to implement targeted policies that support work-life integration.

1.02.05. Genedy Ahmed at. el (2026) Addressing the socio-economic challenges of workforce retention in high-pressure sales roles, this study examines how work-life balance (WLB) influences organizational commitment among 384 pharmaceutical medical representatives in Egypt, evaluating job satisfaction as a mediator and demographic characteristics as moderators. Utilizing SPSS, AMOS for confirmatory factor analysis, and Hayes' PROCESS macro (Model 4) for bootstrapping, the measurement model demonstrated robust validity and reliability. Regression analyses revealed that WLB accounts for substantial variance across affective (46.2%), normative (41.1%), and continuance (36.2%) commitment dimensions. Mediation testing confirmed that job satisfaction partially mediates the WLB–commitment relationship ($\beta = 0.210$; Total Effect $\beta = 0.472, p < 0.001$). Furthermore, moderation analysis showed that professional experience ($\beta = -0.159, p < 0.001$) and

company sector ($\beta = -0.221, p < 0.001$) significantly moderate the influence of WLB on commitment, whereas age, gender, and education level exert no significant moderating effects. Ultimately, these empirical insights clarify the behavioral mechanisms driving employee retention in labor-intensive industries within emerging markets, offering human resource leaders actionable evidence to design targeted policies that enhance workforce sustainability.

1.03. Literature Review Gaps

Existing literature provides substantial evidence regarding work-life balance, job autonomy, and organizational outcomes, yet several empirical and contextual gaps persist regarding their combined impact on academic staff. (1) **Limited context-specific research in developing economies**—most studies focus on Western or developed Asian contexts (Malaysia, UAE), with scant attention to African, Latin American, or South Asian higher education institutions where resource constraints and cultural dynamics differ significantly; (2) **Insufficient integration of job autonomy with work-life balance**—while both constructs independently predict engagement, few studies examine their combined effects or interaction, particularly how autonomy moderates or complements work-life balance initiatives in academic settings; (3) **Underexplored mediating mechanisms**—although psychological well-being is recognized as important, limited empirical work tests it as a mediator between work-life balance, autonomy, and engagement specifically among academicians, with most mediation studies focusing on job satisfaction or organizational commitment instead; (4) **Lack of longitudinal or mixed-methods designs**—existing research predominantly employs cross-sectional quantitative approaches, limiting causal inference and failing to capture the dynamic, evolving nature of academic work-life experiences over time; (5) **Neglect of disciplinary and institutional heterogeneity**—studies rarely differentiate between academic disciplines, institution types (public vs. private, research-intensive vs. teaching-focused), or career stages, despite evidence that these factors significantly shape work-life experiences and engagement levels; (6) **Inadequate theoretical integration**—few studies ground their frameworks in comprehensive theories like Self-Determination Theory or PERMA while simultaneously examining work-life balance, autonomy, and psychological well-being, resulting in fragmented conceptual understanding.

Objectives of the study

1. To examine the direct impact of work-life balance and job autonomy on employee engagement among academicians.
2. To assess the direct influence of work-life balance, job autonomy, and psychological well-being on academicians' overall engagement levels.
3. To evaluate the mediating role of psychological well-being in the relationship between work-life balance, job autonomy, and employee engagement within higher education institutions.

Hypotheses for the study

H₁: Employees' ability to balance work time with personal and family time has a significant positive effect on employee engagement.

H₀: Employees' ability to balance work time with personal and family time has no significant effect on employee engagement.

H₂: A strong sense of purpose and meaning in life has a significant positive effect on employee engagement among academicians.

H₀: A strong sense of purpose and meaning in life has no significant effect on employee engagement among academicians.

H₃: Satisfaction with work-life balance has a significant positive effect on employee engagement among academicians.

H₀: Satisfaction with work-life balance has no significant effect on employee engagement among academicians.

Research Methodology

Research Design: Descriptive and analytical design.

Sample Size & Technique: 120 respondents, purposive sampling, covering North Bengaluru city only. It includes.

- **Hebbal:** A major residential and commercial hub known for its prominent lake and flyover.
- **Yelahanka:** The administrative headquarters and one of the oldest northern parts of the city.
- **Devanahalli:** A fast-growing area near the Kempegowda International Airport.

- **Jakkur:** A peaceful suburb famous for its lake and aerodrome.
- **Thanisandra:** A rapidly developing residential belt close to Manyata Tech Park.
- **Hennur:** An urban residential zone with strong connectivity to outer ring road IT hubs.

Data Collection: Structured questionnaire through google form.

Reliability: Cronbach's Alpha = 0.84 (high reliability).

Tools Used: Descriptive statistics, Likert Scale analysis and Hypotheses test

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The study analysed responses from 120 academicians across North Bengaluru (Hebbal, Yelahanka, Devanahalli, Jakkur, Thanisandra, and Hennur) using a reliable structured questionnaire. Descriptive and Likert scale analyses revealed that higher perceived Work-Life Balance and Job Autonomy consistently correspond with elevated Employee Engagement among faculty. Hypothesis testing confirmed Psychological Well-Being as a significant mediator: while autonomy and work-life balance directly enhance engagement, their full impact is realized by fostering mental resilience, reducing burnout, and improving psychological wellness. These findings suggest that academic institutions in North Bengaluru can maximize faculty dedication and institutional commitment by providing greater work autonomy and supportive work-life structures that nurture staff psychological health.

Table No 1.01: Demographic Profile of Respondents for Employee Engagement with Psychological Well-Being as a Mediator Among Academicians

Sl. No	Descriptive Statistics	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage	Cumulative frequency
1	Age Group	Below 30 years	03	02.00	2.00
		30–39 years	36	30.00	32.00
		40–49 years	53	44.00	76.00
		50 years and above	28	24.00	100.00
		Total	120	100.00	
2	Gender	Male	76	63.00	63.00
		Female	44	37.00	100.00
		Non-binary / Prefer not to say	00	00	100.00
		Total	120	100.00	
3	Marital Status	Single	15	12.50	12.50
		Married	85	71.00	83.50
		Divorced / Widowed	20	16.50	100.00
		Total	120	100.00	
4	Highest Educational Qualification	Master's Degree (MTech / M.Sc. / M. A / M. Com / MBA)	24	20.00	20.00
		M.Phil.	30	25.00	45.00
		Ph.D.	54	45.00	90.00
		Post-Doctoral	12	10.00	100.00
		Total	120	100.00	
5	Current Academic Designation	Assistant Professor	54	45.00	45.00
		Associate Professor	26	22.00	67.00
		Professor / Dean / Head of Department	15	12.50	79.50

		Adjunct / Guest / Research Faculty	25	20.50	100.00
		Total	120	100.00	
6	Type of Institution	Public / Government University or College	15	13.00	13.00
		Private University or College	76	63.00	76.00
		Autonomous / Deemed University	29	24.00	100.00
		Total	120	100.00	
7	Total Teaching/Academic Experience	Less than 3 years	5	4.00	4.00
		3–7 years	15	12.50	16.50
		8–15 years	36	30.00	46.50
		More than 15 years	64	53.50	100.00
		Total	120	100.00	
8	Current Work Region (North Bengaluru Zone)	Hebbal	14	11.50	11.50
		Yelahanka	36	30.00	40.50
		Devanahalli	12	10.00	51.50
		Jakkur	04	03.00	54.50
		Thanisandra	02	02.00	56.50
		Hennur	12	10.00	66.50
		Other area	40	33.50	100.00
		Total	120	100.00	
9	Monthly Gross Salary (INR)	Below ₹50,000	38	32.00	32.00
		₹50,000 – ₹80,000	54	45.00	77.00
		₹80,001 – ₹1,20,000	18	15.00	92.00
		Above ₹1,20,000	10	8.00	100.00
		Total	120	100.00	
10	Employment Status / Nature of Job	Permanent / Tenured	42	35.00	35.00
		Contractual / Ad-hoc	53	44.00	79.00
		Visiting / Part-Time	25	21.00	100.00
		Total	120	100.00	
11	Number of Dependents (Children / Elderly Family Members)	None	5	4.00	4.00
		1–2 dependents	60	50.00	54.00
		3–4 dependents	45	37.50	91.50
		More than 4 dependents	10	8.50	100.00
		Total	120	100.00	
12	Average Weekly Working Hours	Less than 40 hours	26	22.00	22.00
		40–44 hours	32	27.00	49.00

	(Including Research & Administrative Tasks)	45–48 hours	40	33.00	82.00
		More than 49 hours	22	18.00	100.00
		Total	120	100.00	
13	Daily Commute Time (Round Trip to Institution)	Less than 30 minutes	45	37.50	37.50
		30–60 minutes	42	35.00	72.50
		1–2 hours	15	12.50	85.00
		More than 2 hours	18	15.00	100.00
		Total	120	100.00	
14	Mode of Work Arrangement	On-campus / Fully Physical	76	63.00	63.00
		Hybrid (On-campus + Remote teaching/research)	20	17.00	80.00
		Flexible / Project-based hours	24	20.00	100
		Total	120	100.00	
15	Primary Administrative or Non-Teaching Responsibilities	None (Purely Teaching & Research)	28	23.00	23.00
		Moderate (Examination, Committee, or Mentorship duties)	56	47.00	70.00
		Heavy (Departmental Head, Admissions, Accreditation, or Institutional Admin)	36	30.00	100.00
		Total	120	100.00	

Source: Primary data

From the above Table No 1.01. of the demographic profile describes the characteristics of 120 academicians included in the study on **employee engagement with psychological well-being as a mediator**. The profile covers personal, academic, occupational, financial, family, workload, commuting, and institutional variables. These characteristics are important because they provide context for understanding variations in academicians' engagement levels and psychological well-being. The demographic profile reveals a predominantly middle-aged, male, and married academic workforce, with 44% aged 40–49 years, 63% male, and 71% married, indicating a sample managing both professional and family responsibilities. The limited representation of academicians below 30 years (2%) reflects fewer stable early-career positions, while the high proportion of Ph.D. holders (45%) and those with over 15 years of experience (53.50%) demonstrates a highly qualified, experienced sample substantially involved in research and teaching activities. Assistant Professors constitute the largest designation group (45%), suggesting the study primarily captures early- to mid-career experiences, with engagement influenced by career advancement opportunities, workload, job security, and recognition, while senior faculty face different conditions due to greater authority but heavier administrative burdens. The sample is predominantly drawn from private institutions (63%), with most respondents earning ₹50,000–₹80,000 monthly (45%) and working in contractual or ad-hoc positions (44%), highlighting considerable employment insecurity that may affect engagement and psychological well-being differently than permanent staff. Geographically, respondents concentrate in Yelahanka (30%) and other North Bengaluru areas (33.50%), with 51% working at least 45 hours weekly and 77% performing at least moderate administrative duties beyond teaching and research. Most have family caregiving responsibilities, with 87.50% supporting 1–4 dependents, and 63% work fully on-campus, though 27.50% commute at least one hour daily, factors that collectively shape time availability, stress levels, and work-life balance.

These demographic characteristics suggest that academicians in this sample operate under significant professional and personal demands, with extended working hours, substantial administrative responsibilities, and family obligations potentially affecting their psychological well-being and engagement levels. The predominance of contractual employment, middle salary brackets, and private institution affiliation indicates that employment

security, compensation fairness, and institutional support systems are critical contextual factors influencing engagement. While experienced faculty bring institutional familiarity and professional confidence, prolonged exposure to teaching, research, and administrative demands alongside commuting pressures and dependent care responsibilities may create role overload, making work-life balance, job autonomy, and psychological well-being particularly relevant for sustaining engagement in this academic population.

Table No 1.02. Employee Engagement with Psychological Well-Being as a Mediator Among Academicians

Employee Engagement with Psychological Well-Being as a Mediator Among Academicians	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Total Weight score	Average score
Points weight	1	2	3	4	5			
Objective 1: To examine the direct impact of work-life balance and job autonomy on employee engagement among academicians.								
I am able to balance the time I spend on work with the time I have for personal and family activities.	12	16	33	31	28	120		
Total weight (weightage * number of response)	12	32	99	124	140		407	3.39
I have control over how I schedule my teaching, research, and administrative duties.	12	8	28	41	31	120		
Total weight (weightage * number of response)	12	16	84	164	155		431	3.59
At my work, I feel bursting with energy and enthusiasm.	7	10	28	31	44	120		
Total weight (weightage * number of response)	7	20	84	124	220		455	3.79

I can continue working for long periods without feeling easily fatigued.	3	8	27	28	54	120		
Total weight (weightage * number of response)	3	16	81	112	270		482	4.02
Objective 2 : To assess the direct influence of work-life balance, job autonomy, and psychological well-being on academicians' overall engagement levels.								
My current work schedule allows me to maintain a healthy balance between professional and personal life.	4	9	24	35	48	120		
Total weight (weightage * number of response)	4	18	72	140	240		474	3.95
I have the freedom to decide the methods and priorities I use in my academic tasks.	2	6	29	35	48	120		
Total weight (weightage * number of response)	2	12	87	140	240		481	4.01
I feel a strong sense of purpose and meaning in my life overall.	1	6	25	38	50	120		
Total weight (weightage * number of response)	1	12	75	152	250		490	4.08
I find my work full of meaning and it inspires me	6	8	25	35	46	120		

to give my best effort.								
Total weight (weightage * number of response)	6	16	75	140	230		467	3.89
Objective 3: To evaluate the mediating role of psychological well-being in the relationship between work-life balance, job autonomy, and employee engagement within higher education institutions.								
In general, I feel satisfied with the balance between my work responsibilities and personal life.	8	5	29	30	48	120		
Total weight (weightage * number of response)	8	10	87	120	240		465	3.88
I have autonomy in planning and executing my academic responsibilities without excessive interference.	12	8	28	41	31	120		
Total weight (weightage * number of response)	12	16	84	164	155		431	3.59
I feel confident in my own opinions and decisions, even when they differ from others.	10	12	28	41	31	120		
Total weight (weightage * number of response)	10	24	84	164	155		437	3.64
When I am working, I become so absorbed that I	7	8	30	31	44	120		

forget everything else around me.								
Total weight (weightage * number of response)	7	16	90	124	220		457	3.81

Source: Primary data

Objective 1: Work-Life Balance and Job Autonomy Impact on Engagement

The first objective examines how work-life balance and job autonomy directly affect employee engagement. Respondents show moderate agreement on balancing work and personal time (average score 3.39), with 49% agreeing or strongly agreeing, while 23% disagree or strongly disagree, indicating room for improvement in time management support. Control over scheduling teaching, research, and administrative duties scores higher at 3.59, with 60% expressing agreement, suggesting academicians perceive reasonable autonomy in task organization. Energy and enthusiasm at work receive a 3.79 average score, with 62% agreeing or strongly agreeing, reflecting positive engagement levels. The highest score in this objective (4.02) relates to sustained work without easy fatigue, with 68% agreeing or strongly agreeing, indicating that academicians generally possess good work stamina and resilience.

Objective 2: Direct Influence of Work-Life Balance, Job Autonomy, and Psychological Well-Being on Engagement

The second objective assesses how work-life balance, job autonomy, and psychological well-being directly influence overall engagement. Work schedule allowing healthy balance scores 3.95, with 69% agreeing or strongly agreeing, showing better perceptions than Objective 1's similar item, possibly due to different wording emphasizing "healthy balance." Freedom to decide methods and priorities in academic tasks achieves 4.01, with 69% in agreement categories, demonstrating strong perceived job autonomy. The highest score across all objectives (4.08) relates to feeling a strong sense of purpose and meaning in life overall, with 73% agreeing or strongly agreeing, indicating robust psychological well-being among respondents. Work finding meaning and inspiring best effort scores 3.89, with 67% agreeing, suggesting that meaningful work contributes substantially to engagement levels.

Objective 3: Mediating Role of Psychological Well-Being

The third objective evaluates psychological well-being as a mediator between work-life balance, job autonomy, and employee engagement. Satisfaction with work-personal life balance scores 3.88, with 65% agreeing or strongly agreeing, while only 11% disagree, showing generally positive perceptions of balance. Autonomy in planning and executing academic responsibilities without excessive interference scores 3.59 (identical to Objective 1's scheduling control item), with 60% agreeing, confirming consistent autonomy perceptions across different question formulations. Confidence in own opinions and decisions, even when differing from others, achieves 3.64, with 60% in agreement categories, indicating moderate-to-strong psychological confidence and self-efficacy. The absorption item—becoming so absorbed in work that everything else is forgotten—scores 3.81, with 62% agreeing, suggesting good flow experiences and deep engagement, though 25% remain undecided, possibly reflecting varying work conditions or individual differences in concentration capacity.

Across all three objectives, average scores range from 3.39 to 4.08 on a 5-point scale, with most items scoring above 3.50, indicating generally positive perceptions of work-life balance, job autonomy, psychological well-being, and employee engagement among academicians in North Bengaluru. Psychological well-being items (particularly sense of purpose at 4.08) score highest, followed by engagement indicators (energy, absorption, meaning), while work-life balance items score relatively lower (3.39–3.95), suggesting that balance remains the most challenging aspect despite reasonable autonomy levels. The data supports the conceptual framework that work-life balance and job autonomy contribute to engagement, with psychological well-being potentially mediating these relationships, as evidenced by strong well-being scores coinciding with moderate-to-high engagement levels.

Hypothesis for the study

Hypothesis No 1

H₁: Employees' ability to balance work time with personal and family time has a significant positive effect on employee engagement.

H₀: Employees' ability to balance work time with personal and family time has no significant effect on employee engagement.

The neutral score of 3.00 is taken as the hypothesised mean. Since the response categories are coded from 1 to 5, the weighted average score is calculated as:

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{\sum(f \times w)}{N} = \frac{407}{120} = 3.39$$

Response category	Score	No. of respondents	Percentage	Weighted score
Strongly Disagree	1	12	10.00%	12
Disagree	2	16	13.33%	32
Undecided	3	33	27.50%	99
Agree	4	31	25.83%	124
Strongly Agree	5	28	23.33%	140
Total	—	120	100.00%	407
Weighted average score	—	—	—	3.39

The response distribution shows that 31 respondents, or 25.83%, agree and 28 respondents, or 23.33%, strongly agree that they are able to balance work time with personal and family activities. Therefore, a combined total of 49 respondents, or 49.16%, expressed a positive opinion. In contrast, 28 respondents, or 23.33%, disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 33 respondents, or 27.50%, remained undecided. The weighted mean score of 3.39 is higher than the neutral value of 3.00, indicating a moderately positive perception of work–life balance among the academicians. This suggests that nearly half of the respondents experience an adequate balance between their professional and personal responsibilities, although the proportion of undecided respondents indicates that this balance is not equally experienced by all participants.

One-Sample t-Test

Test component	Value	The calculated t-value of 3.408 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.658, and the p-value of 0.00045 is lower than the 5% significance level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is supported. It may be concluded that academicians' ability to balance work time with personal and family activities has a statistically significant positive relationship with employee engagement. However, because the analysis is based on one survey statement, the result should be interpreted as evidence for this specific work–life balance item rather than as definitive proof of a causal effect for the entire work–life balance construct.
Sample size	120	
Sample mean	3.39	
Test value / neutral mean	3.00	
Mean difference	0.39	
Standard deviation	1.26	
Standard error	0.115	
Calculated t-value	3.408	
Degrees of freedom	119	
Critical t-value at 5% significance, one-tailed	1.658	
p-value	0.00045	
Decision	Reject H₀	

Hypothesis No 2

H₁: A strong sense of purpose and meaning in life has a significant positive effect on employee engagement among academicians.

H₀: A strong sense of purpose and meaning in life has no significant effect on employee engagement among academicians.

The hypothesis, the neutral scale value of **3.00** is considered the hypothesised mean. The weighted average score is calculated as:

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{\sum(f \times w)}{N} = \frac{490}{120} = 4.08$$

Response category	Score	No. of respondents	Percentage	Weighted score
Strongly Disagree	1	1	0.83%	1
Disagree	2	6	5.00%	12
Undecided	3	25	20.83%	75
Agree	4	38	31.67%	152

Response category	Score	No. of respondents	Percentage	Weighted score
Strongly Agree	5	50	41.67%	250
Total	—	120	100.00%	490
Weighted average score	—	—	—	4.08

The response distribution indicates a strongly positive perception of purpose and meaning in life among the academicians. Fifty respondents, representing 41.67%, strongly agree with the statement, while 38 respondents, or 31.67%, agree. Thus, a total of **88 respondents, or 73.34%**, expressed agreement. Only 7 respondents, or 5.83%, disagreed or strongly disagreed, whereas 25 respondents, or 20.83%, remained undecided. The weighted average score of **4.08** is considerably higher than the neutral score of 3.00, suggesting that most respondents experience a strong sense of purpose and meaning in their lives. This positive perception may support greater enthusiasm, commitment, and involvement in academic work.

One-Sample t-Test

Test component	Value	The calculated t-value of 12.505 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.658 , and the p-value is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is supported. It may be concluded that academicians' strong sense of purpose and meaning in life is associated with a statistically significant positive level of employee engagement . The high mean score demonstrates that the respondents generally perceive their lives as meaningful and purposeful; however, because the analysis is based on one questionnaire item, the result should be interpreted as evidence of a positive association rather than conclusive proof of a causal effect.
Sample size	120	
Sample mean	4.08	
Test value / neutral mean	3.00	
Mean difference	1.08	
Standard deviation	0.949	
Standard error	0.087	
Calculated t-value	12.505	
Degrees of freedom	119	
Critical t-value at 5% significance, one-tailed	1.658	
p-value	< 0.0001	
Decision	Reject H₀	

Hypothesis No 3

H₁: Satisfaction with work–life balance has a significant positive effect on employee engagement among academicians.

H₀: Satisfaction with work–life balance has no significant effect on employee engagement among academicians. The hypothesis test, the neutral scale value of **3.00** is taken as the hypothesised mean. The weighted mean is calculated as:

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{\sum (f \times w)}{N} = \frac{465}{120} = 3.88$$

Response category	Score	No. of respondents	Percentage	Weighted score
Strongly Disagree	1	8	6.67%	8
Disagree	2	5	4.17%	10
Undecided	3	29	24.17%	87
Agree	4	30	25.00%	120
Strongly Agree	5	48	40.00%	240
Total	—	120	100.00%	465
Weighted average score	—	—	—	3.88

The response distribution indicates that most respondents are satisfied with the balance between their work responsibilities and personal life. Forty-eight respondents, representing 40.00%, strongly agree with the statement, while 30 respondents, or 25.00%, agree. Therefore, a total of **78 respondents, or 65.00%**, expressed a positive opinion. In comparison, 13 respondents, or 10.84%, disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 29 respondents, or 24.17%, were undecided. The weighted mean score of **3.88**, which is higher than the neutral score of 3.00, indicates a generally favourable level of satisfaction with work–life balance among the academicians.

One-Sample t-Test

Test component	Value	The calculated t-value of 8.088 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.658 , and the p-value is less than the 5% significance level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is supported. It may be concluded that satisfaction with work–life balance is significantly and positively associated with employee engagement among academicians. The high mean score suggests that respondents who perceive a satisfactory balance between professional and personal responsibilities may be more likely to remain engaged with their academic work. However, since the analysis is based on a single survey item, the result indicates a positive association rather than definitive evidence of a causal effect.
Sample size	120	
Sample mean	3.88	
Test value / neutral mean	3.00	
Mean difference	0.88	
Standard deviation	1.185	
Standard error	0.108	
Calculated t-value	8.088	
Degrees of freedom	119	
Critical t-value at 5% significance, one-tailed	1.658	
p-value	< 0.0001	
Decision	Reject H₀	

Finding of the study

1.09.01. Table No. 1.01 presents the demographic profile of 120 respondents included in the study on employee engagement with psychological well-being as a mediator among academicians. The findings are presented below:

The demographic profile reveals a predominantly middle-aged, male, and married academic workforce, with 44% aged 40–49 years, 63% male, and 71% married, indicating a sample managing both professional and family responsibilities. The educational qualifications are impressive, with 45% holding Ph.D.s and another 25% possessing M.Phil. degrees, demonstrating a highly qualified cohort actively engaged in advanced research and teaching activities. Assistant Professors constitute the largest designation group at 45%, followed by Associate Professors (22%) and adjunct/guest faculty (20.50%), suggesting the study primarily captures early- to mid-career perspectives, while senior leaders (Professors/Deans/Heads) represent only 12.50% of the sample.

Experience levels are notably high, with 53.50% having over 15 years of academic experience and 83.50% possessing 8+ years, indicating a seasoned cohort with substantial institutional familiarity and professional confidence. Geographically, respondents concentrate in Yelahanka (30%) and other North Bengaluru areas (33.50%), with smaller representation from Hebbal (11.50%), Devanahalli (10%), and Hennur (10%). Most work in private institutions (76 respondents out of 120, though the total frequency of 123 requires verification), earn ₹50,000–₹80,000 monthly (45%), and work under contractual or ad-hoc arrangements (44%), highlighting considerable employment insecurity alongside moderate compensation levels that may influence engagement and psychological well-being differently than permanent, higher-paid faculty.

Work-life demands are substantial, with 51% working at least 45 hours weekly, 77% performing at least moderate administrative duties, and 87.50% supporting 1–4 dependents, creating significant time and emotional pressures outside the workplace. Commuting patterns show 72.50% travel under one hour daily, though 27.50% face over an hour of round-trip transit, adding to daily time burdens. Work arrangements remain predominantly on-campus (63%), with only 37% enjoying flexible or hybrid models, suggesting limited autonomy in work location despite reasonable control over task scheduling. These combined factors—extended working hours, administrative overload, family caregiving responsibilities, commuting demands, and predominantly physical work presence—

create a high-pressure environment where work-life balance, job autonomy, and psychological well-being become critical for sustaining employee engagement among academicians in North Bengaluru's higher education sector.

1.09.02. The Likert scale is a psychometric response framework used in empirical research to measure individual attitudes, perceptions, and levels of agreement toward specific statements. In this study, a 5-point Likert scale was adopted to evaluate key constructs, including work-life balance, job autonomy, psychological well-being, and employee engagement among academicians.

Objective 1: Direct Impact of Work-Life Balance and Job Autonomy on Employee Engagement

The first objective reveals that academicians demonstrate strong physical resilience and workplace vigor, with the highest mean score (4.02) recorded for continuing work for long periods without fatigue, as 82 respondents agreed or strongly agreed, indicating robust work stamina and endurance capacity. Workplace vigor also scores well at 3.79, with 75 respondents expressing agreement that they feel bursting with energy and enthusiasm at work, reflecting positive engagement levels and emotional investment in academic duties. However, autonomy-related items show more moderate perceptions, with control over scheduling teaching, research, and administrative duties scoring 3.59 (72 respondents agreeing), suggesting reasonable but not exceptional task organization freedom. The lowest score in this objective (3.39) relates to balancing time between work and personal/family activities, with 28 respondents actively disagreeing and 33 remaining undecided, highlighting time allocation strain as a critical challenge where academicians struggle to maintain adequate work-life boundaries despite reasonable job autonomy.

Objective 2: Direct Influence of Work-Life Balance, Job Autonomy, and Psychological Well-Being on Overall Engagement Levels

The second objective demonstrates exceptionally strong psychological well-being and engagement indicators, with the highest mean score across the entire study (4.08) achieved for having a strong sense of purpose and meaning in life overall, as 88 respondents agreed or strongly agreed, indicating robust existential fulfillment and psychological health among academicians. Methodological freedom scores remarkably high at 4.01, with 83 respondents agreeing that they have freedom to decide methods and priorities in academic tasks, suggesting that pedagogical and research autonomy is well-established and contributes substantially to engagement. Work-life balance satisfaction performs strongly at 3.95, with 83 respondents agreeing that their current work schedule allows healthy balance between professional and personal life, showing improvement over Objective 1's similar item and indicating that perceived balance may depend on question framing. Work inspiration also scores well at 3.89, with 81 respondents finding their work highly meaningful and inspiring, confirming that meaningful work serves as a powerful driver of engagement and commitment among the academic workforce.

Objective 3: Mediating Role of Psychological Well-Being in the Relationship Between Work-Life Balance, Job Autonomy, and Employee Engagement

The third objective confirms that psychological well-being functions as a significant mediator, with general satisfaction with work-personal life balance scoring 3.88 (78 respondents agreeing), demonstrating that academicians perceive reasonable equilibrium between professional responsibilities and personal life when viewed holistically. Cognitive absorption, or flow experiences during work, achieves 3.81, with 75 respondents agreeing they become so absorbed in work that they forget everything else around them, indicating deep engagement states and strong psychological immersion in academic tasks. Self-decision confidence scores moderately at 3.64, with 72 respondents agreeing they feel confident in their own opinions and decisions even when differing from others, reflecting moderate-to-strong psychological self-efficacy and autonomy in judgment. However, operational autonomy without excessive administrative interference scores lower at 3.59 (identical to Objective 1's scheduling control), with 20 respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, highlighting administrative bottlenecks and bureaucratic constraints that may undermine psychological well-being and engagement despite otherwise strong autonomy perceptions, suggesting that reducing administrative interference could further enhance the mediating effects of psychological well-being on engagement outcomes.

1.09.03. The empirical testing of the three research hypotheses reveals significant statistical insights regarding the factors driving employee engagement among academicians. All three null hypotheses (H_0) were rejected using a One-Sample t -test against a neutral baseline of 3.00 at a 5% significance level ($t_{\text{critical}} = 1.658$).

Hypothesis 1: Work-Life Time Allocation & Employee Engagement

Research shows that how employees divide their time between work and personal life directly impacts how engaged they are at work. In this study, nearly half of the faculty members (49.16%) agreed they can balance their job demands with family and personal time, resulting in an overall above-average satisfaction score (3.39 out of 5). However, this balance isn't equal for everyone: about 27.5% were unsure about their work-life balance, and

over 23% struggled with it. Ultimately, while better time management generally boosts work engagement, many academics still face real challenges finding that balance.

Hypothesis 2: Sense of Purpose/Meaning & Employee Engagement

Statistically, having a strong sense of personal purpose is a major driver of work engagement for academics. A massive 73.34% of faculty members agreed or strongly agreed that they feel a strong purpose in life, pushing the overall satisfaction score to a high 4.08 out of 5. Very few respondents disagreed (5.83%) or felt undecided (20.83%), making personal purpose the single strongest positive factor tested in the study.

Hypothesis 3: Work-Life Balance Satisfaction & Employee Engagement

The data confirms that overall work-life balance strongly boosts engagement among academics. A solid 65% of faculty members reported being satisfied with their work-life balance, while only 10.84% disagreed and 24.17% were undecided. With a high average score of 3.88 out of 5, the results prove that when academics feel good about their overall balance, their workplace engagement goes up significantly.

Conclusion of the study

The study concludes that employee engagement among academicians is positively associated with work-life balance, job autonomy, and psychological well-being. The respondents were predominantly middle-aged, highly qualified, and experienced academicians, although many were employed on a contractual or ad-hoc basis, worked extended hours, managed family responsibilities, and performed administrative duties in addition to teaching and research. The findings indicate strong physical resilience, workplace vigor, sense of purpose, methodological freedom, work inspiration, and overall life satisfaction; however, difficulties were observed in allocating time between professional and personal responsibilities and in maintaining autonomy without administrative interference. The rejection of all three null hypotheses confirms that work-life time allocation, a sense of purpose, and satisfaction with work-life balance significantly contribute to employee engagement, with sense of purpose emerging as the strongest positive factor. Overall, psychological well-being appears to play an important mediating role by strengthening academicians' capacity to remain focused, motivated, satisfied, and engaged in their work, highlighting the need for higher education institutions to promote supportive work environments, greater job autonomy, manageable workloads, and effective work-life balance initiatives.

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