Analyzing Work Stress Indicators and Remedial Measures Among Faculty in Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

Purpose - This study explores the key indicators of work stress and identifies remedial measures to alleviate occupational stress among faculty members in higher education institutions. The research emphasizes the significant challenges faculty face, such as workload, role ambiguity, work-life imbalance, and insufficient resources, and proposes solutions to enhance well-being and institutional productivity.

Design/methodology/approach - A descriptive research design was employed, incorporating a correlation survey to analyze stress indicators and coping mechanisms. Data were collected using a validated survey instrument with a five-point Likert scale. Statistical analysis, including factor analysis and chi-square tests, was conducted using SPSS software to identify stress factors and evaluate the effectiveness of proposed interventions.

Findings - Seven key dimensions influencing work stress were identified, including personal burnout, operational gaps, role strain, role overload, professional stagnation, lack of motivation, and workplace strain. Personal burnout emerged as the most significant stressor, highlighting issues such as inadequate compensation and limited growth opportunities. Proposed remedial measures include wellness programs, mentorship, resource allocation, and institutional support policies to address these factors and improve faculty well-being and engagement.

Originality/value - This study provides a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics of occupational stress in academia and offers actionable strategies to improve faculty job satisfaction and institutional effectiveness. The findings underscore the importance of culturally tailored interventions to address region-specific challenges and promote a supportive work environment in higher education institutions.

Keywords: Work stress, faculty well-being, higher education institutions, role ambiguity, occupational stress management.

Introduction

The academic profession within higher education institutions is widely recognized as one of the most challenging occupations, owing to the multifaceted roles faculty members are expected to perform. From teaching and mentoring students to engaging in research, administrative responsibilities, and service duties, faculty must navigate a landscape characterized by constant demands and expectations (Gillespie et al., 2001; Kumar et al., 2024) In recent years, these demands have intensified due to institutional changes, increased workload, and the complexities of adapting to evolving educational paradigms, leading to heightened levels of

work-related stress among academic staff (Abouserie, 1996; Tytherleigh et al., 2005). Addressing these stressors is essential not only for the well-being and job satisfaction of faculty but also for the performance of educational institutions as a whole. This research focuses on identifying key indicators of work stress among faculty in higher education and exploring effective remedial measures to mitigate these stressors. The notion of academia as a low-stress career characterized by significant autonomy, flexibility, and job security has changed over the past few decades. Faculty are increasingly experiencing stress from excessive workloads, a lack of resources, and role ambiguity, all of which contribute to deteriorating job satisfaction and well-being (Tytherleigh et al., 2005). These factors are further compounded by pressures from external stakeholders, including government bodies and accrediting organizations, which place demands on higher education institutions to meet certain performance standards and rankings (Kumar et al., 2024; Mudrak et al., 2018) The cumulative effect of these factors has led to a rise in occupational stress among faculty, as they struggle to balance teaching, research, administrative duties, and service obligations in an increasingly competitive and resource-constrained environment (Rothmann & Barkhuizen, 2008b).

Research in several countries has shown the prevalence and effects of occupational stress among professors in higher education institutions. The findings of a study conducted by Tytherleigh et al., (2005) reveals that in a study of UK higher education institutions faculty personnel endure significant stress stemming from workload, role uncertainty, and restricted career advancement options. In South African institutions, (Kumar et al., 2023; Rothmann & Barkhuizen, 2008b), highlighted workload, resource scarcity, and institutional demands as major stresses. These findings emphasize the worldwide prevalence of academic stress, indicating the necessity for interventions that account for the various factors influencing faculty stress in distinct cultural and institutional settings.

Key Indicators of Work Stress Among Faculty

Research on occupational stress in academia has identified several indicators of work stress that affect faculty members' professional and personal lives. Among these, workload, role ambiguity, work-life imbalance, and limited resources are particularly significant (Abouserie, 1996; Gmelch et al., 1986). The workload is a predominant stressor in academia, as faculty members often juggle teaching responsibilities, research, student advisement, and administrative tasks, leading to feelings of being overwhelmed and undervalued. Excessive workloads can hinder productivity, stifle creativity, and contribute to burnout, negatively impacting both the individual and the institution (Mudrak et al., 2018; Pankaj et al., 2023).

Role ambiguity is another factor closely associated with stress in academic settings. Faculty often face unclear expectations regarding their roles and responsibilities, particularly in institutions that lack clear organizational structures or have rapidly changing priorities (Ostrom et al., 2015). The unclear delineation between research, teaching, and administrative roles can lead to confusion, frustration, and anxiety, as faculty struggle to fulfill competing demands. This ambiguity can impair job performance and increase turnover intentions, as faculty may feel unsupported or unable to meet institutional expectations (Gmelch et al., 1986). Work-life imbalance is a further indicator of stress among faculty, especially as personal time becomes increasingly overshadowed by professional responsibilities. Faculty members often work beyond standard hours, as teaching and research demands encroach upon evenings, weekends, and holidays (Kumar et al., 2021; Ylijoki, 2013). This imbalance not only leads to exhaustion and diminished mental health but can also strain family relationships and reduce job satisfaction (Kinman, 2001). In addition to personal repercussions, work-life imbalance has institutional implications, as overworked faculty are less likely to engage with their roles proactively or demonstrate long-term commitment to their institutions (Roos & Borkoski, 2021).

The lack of sufficient resources and institutional backing substantially exacerbates stress among academic

personnel (Kumar et al., 2024). Faculty members may encounter challenges due to obsolete technology, restricted access to research resources, and inadequate funding for projects, which might impede their capacity to perform job responsibilities efficiently (Schmidt, 2023). Insufficient institutional support adversely impacts professional development, resulting in professors being less likely to obtain training or mentorship opportunities that could improve their job performance and well-being. These issues are intensified in resource-limited institutions, as staff are required to accomplish more with fewer resources, frequently resulting in frustration and a feeling of powerlessness.

Impact of Work Stress on Faculty and Institutions

The influence of occupational stress on faculty members transcends personal well-being, impacting their job happiness, productivity, and total organizational commitment. Abouserie, (1996) asserts that job unhappiness resulting from work-related stress can diminish faculty engagement, decrease morale, and heighten turnover risk, all of which adversely affect the institution's stability and reputation. Moreover, stressed faculty are more prone to health-related problems, such as anxiety, depression, and burnout, which not only impair job performance but also impose further strains on institutional health resources (Gillespie et al., 2001). Excessive stress levels among educators adversely affect student learning and institutional outcomes. Faculty under stress may find it difficult to uphold teaching standards, offer sufficient student mentorship, and foster a constructive academic atmosphere (Gmelch et al., 1986). Thus, faculty work-related stress can indirectly affect student engagement and happiness, since students depend on faculty for direction, support, and exemplars of professional and academic achievement. Institutions that neglect these challenges jeopardize their educational mission and student outcomes.

Considering the various elements that contribute to academic work-related stress, it is crucial to adopt comprehensive remedial strategies that cater to organizational and individual requirements. Studies indicate that institutions can alleviate faculty stress by establishing clear role expectations, encouraging work-life balance, improving resource accessibility, and cultivating a supportive work environment (Hammoudi Halat et al., 2023; Kumar et al., 2023). Institutions could delineate role expectations by creating precise job descriptions, offering performance evaluations, and instituting systems for workload management that enable faculty to balance teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities (Rothmann & Barkhuizen, 2008a). Enhancing work-life balance can be achieved by implementing flexible work rules, including remote work opportunities and adaptable hours, to address personal requirements and mitigate burnout. Kumar et al.,(2024); Roos & Borkoski, (2021) underscore the significance of institutional support in fostering faculty well-being, proposing that professional development initiatives and mental health resources can alleviate stress and improve job satisfaction. These programs may encompass time management workshops, counselling, and resilience training to provide faculty with techniques for proactively managing stress.

Work-related stress among professors at higher education institutions is a complex issue requiring both institutional and individual focus. By comprehending the principal indications of occupational stress, such as workload, job ambiguity, work-life imbalance, and resource constraints, institutions can formulate tailored solutions to foster a more supportive academic environment. These criteria are crucial for both the welfare and job satisfaction of faculty members, as well as for the overall success and stability of higher education institutions.

Review of Literature

Nowadays, Work-related stress among higher education teachers has become a critical issue due to its effects on mental health, job satisfaction, and institutional efficacy. Research consistently identifies excessive workloads, role ambiguity, and inadequate resources as key stressors for academics. Tytherleigh et al., (2005)

observed that academic personnel in the UK encounter escalating administrative obligations in conjunction with teaching and research duties, hence intensifying stress levels. Rothmann & Barkhuizen, (2008) identified resource deficiency and work-life balance as significant difficulties in South African institutions. Faculty members frequently encounter stress due to insufficient institutional support, resulting in emotional weariness and burnout. A thorough review by Agyapong et al., (2022) highlighted the influence of institutional culture and insufficient autonomy on increasing stress levels among educators. Gender disparities exacerbate stress, as female teachers frequently have distinct problems, including discrimination and increased family duties (Dogra & Kaushal, 2022).

The consequences of faculty stress transcend individual experiences, impacting the academic quality of institutions and student results. Sabagh et al., (2018) utilized the Job Demands–Resources model to elucidate the relationship between elevated stress levels and reduced faculty performance. The result of the study conducted by Maslach & Leiter, (2016) reveals that chronic stress results in burnout, marked by depersonalization and diminished personal achievement. Besides professional consequences, stress exacerbates mental and physical health disorders, such as anxiety, depression, and cardiovascular complications. Gardner, (2010) noted that extended stress can lead to diminished motivation and involvement, ultimately jeopardizing the viability of academic institutions.

Mitigating faculty stress necessitates specific interventions at both the individual and institutional tiers. Organizational modifications, including the reduction of administrative burdens and the clarification of role requirements, have demonstrated potential in mitigating stress (Johnson & Neshkova, 2024). Moreover, mentorship programs and collaborative activities can cultivate a friendly atmosphere, alleviating the feelings of isolation frequently experienced by professors (Heider, 2005). The implementation of wellness programs encompassing stress management training, counseling services, and mindfulness practices has been helpful in enhancing faculty well-being (Pankaj et al., 2023; Shen & Slater, 2021). Acknowledging faculty accomplishments and offering avenues for professional development also aid in alleviating stress and improving job satisfaction (Blix et al., 1994). Regional variations in the factors contributing to faculty work stress highlight the need for customized therapies that correspond with cultural and socio-political situations. Conner & Douglas, (2005) identified that bureaucratic inefficiencies, inflexible hierarchical frameworks, and societal expectations substantially contribute to the stress encountered by faculty members. Furthermore, the demands to publish in international journals and to keep pace with swift technical breakthroughs intensify workload-related stress.

The study by Pucciarelli & Kaplan, (2016) indicates that professors encounter distinct pressures stemming from resource constraints, political instability, and erratic educational practices. These issues result in work uncertainty and position ambiguity, hence exacerbating stress. Customizing stress management programs to accommodate cultural and geographical differences can improve their effectiveness, ensuring they meet professors' distinct demands and problems in higher education institutions (Griffith et al., 2024; Kumar et al., 2024).

The integration of technology in academic settings offers productivity benefits but also introduces challenges such as digital fatigue and work-life imbalance (Marsh et al., 2022). Remote work has further blurred boundaries between professional and personal lives. Future research should examine the sustainability of current interventions, considering evolving digital demands and their impacts on faculty well-being.

The comprehensive literature review highlights critical gaps in understanding the indicators and management of work stress among faculty in higher educational settings. This prompts the necessity for a focused study to explore the key stressors, their impacts, and effective remedial measures to enhance faculty well-being and

institutional productivity in diverse academic environments.

Research Objectives

1. To explore and analyze the key indicators of work-related stress affecting faculty members in higher educational institutions.
2. To investigate and propose effective remedial measures to address work stressors experienced by faculty members in higher educational institutions.

Research Methodology

This study utilizes a descriptive research design to systematically identify and analyse work stress indicators and remedial measures among faculty members in higher educational institutions. The descriptive approach comprehensively depicts the attributes, variables, and relationships associated with faculty stress, highlighting individual and institutional factors. Specifically, a correlation survey design was implemented to examine potential associations between stress indicators and coping mechanisms among respondents. Data were collected using a meticulously developed and pre-validated survey instrument, designed based on a comprehensive review of relevant literature, including insights from prior studies (D Souza, 2020)(David J. et al., 1967). This thorough literature review ensured that the survey captured essential factors pertinent to the academic setting and addressed specific challenges encountered by faculty members. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale, allowing participants to express levels of agreement or disagreement on a range of statements, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Using this non-comparative, itemized rating scale, respondents provided nuanced feedback on various stress indicators, such as workload, role clarity, professional development opportunities, and work-life balance. This approach enabled a detailed analysis of the prevalence and intensity of stress factors and an assessment of remedial measures perceived as beneficial by faculty members. The survey's structured design and the Likert scale's sensitivity ensured reliable primary data collection, providing valuable insights into higher educational institutions' complex stress dynamics and support needs. This methodology serves as a foundation for evidence-based recommendations for institutional support strategies.

Data Analysis

The data collected through the questionnaire for this study was digitized and analyzed using the SPSS 24 software package. Items with low internal consistencies were identified and excluded to ensure data quality. For this study, five items related to ambiguous or weakly correlated responses were excluded based on pre-analysis reliability checks. The remaining items were used for further analysis. A reliability test was conducted to assess the reliability and validity of the data obtained from respondents. The Cronbach's alpha value was calculated as 0.91, indicating a high internal consistency and reliability level for the scale used in the study. This value confirms that the responses provided by the faculty members were consistent and trustworthy for subsequent analysis.

Frequency and percentage analyses were performed to evaluate the distribution and demographic attributes of the data. Additionally, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was applied to the data set, which included 35 statements relating to work stress indicators and remedial measures among faculty in higher education institutions.

Findings

Table 1 presents the chi-square test results, indicating a significant work stress level among employees. The chi-square statistic was calculated as 5828.837, with 595 degrees of freedom (DoF) and a significance level of 0.00, highlighting a strong correlation between the analyzed variables.

Additionally, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy yielded a value of 0.933,

confirming the suitability of the dataset for factor analysis. The statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) further reinforces the robustness of these findings, validating the reliability and appropriateness of the data for detailed analysis and interpretation. These results substantiate the strength of the correlations and the potential for meaningful insights into the factors influencing work stress.

Table 1: KMO measure of sampling adequacy

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.933
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5828.837
	df	595
	Sig.	0.000

Source: Author's Development.

The factor analysis revealed seven critical dimensions, collectively accounting for 68.731% of the total variance, offering a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing occupational stress. The most prominent dimension, Personal Burnout, emerged as the most significant factor, with the highest Eigenvalue of 12.58, explaining 35.943% of the variance. This finding underscores the pervasive impact of personal burnout, driven by stressors such as insufficient salary, limited growth opportunities, and lack of training, on the overall perception of occupational stress. Targeted initiatives such as wellness programs, mental health support, and stress management training are essential to mitigate this issue.

Table 2: Factor loadings value using varimax rotation (Principal component analysis)

Factors	Variables	Loading Value	Eigenvalue	Percentage of Variance
F-1 Personal Burnout	I feel stressed because my salary is much less than the responsibilities allocated to me.	.763	12.58	35.943
	There is little scope for personal growth in my current job role.	.742		
	Less chance of promotion in my current job affects my enthusiasm for work.	.708		
	There is very little chance in my current job to learn the most important things for taking up higher responsibilities.	.669		
	I am not getting any opportunities, such as Faculty development programs/Workshops/Seminars, etc., for the training about my job profile.	.550		
	The right to select subjects after the senior faculties from residual subjects makes me tense.	.536		
	I don't have time and opportunities to prepare myself for the future challenges of my job.	.559		

	My current responsibilities interfere with my additional organizational roles, leading to promotion.	.446		
F-2 Operational Gap	My various interests (Social et al., Hobbies, etc.) remain neglected due to my hectic work profile.	.838		
	Due to a heavy workload, I cannot give my family the required time.	.736		
	My social life has been disturbed due to multiple job responsibilities (teaching, research, exam duties, co-curricular activities, administrative assignments, etc.)	.722	2.077	9.935
	I need more training and preparation to perform my job more effectively and efficiently.	.453		
	There is a strong need to create an effective team having complementary skills.	.453		
	The scarcity of resources (Books, e-library access for databases, Internet, Projector for online lectures, etc) is the major challenge in performing my duties.	.440		
F-3 Role strain	I am not clear on the scope and responsibilities of my job profile.	.666		
	I am not clear what are the priorities in my job role i.e., teaching, research, grievance handling, student evaluation process, etc.	.653		
	I don't have adequate knowledge to perform my job effectively.	.593	1.658	7.738
	Online lectures/sudden arrangement of guest lectures etc. interfere with my family life.	.517		
	I don't get sufficient information that is required to perform assigned tasks effectively.	.411		
F-4 Role Overloaded	Much time is consumed in capturing informational data for rating agencies i.e., UGC, NIRF, AICTE, and IQAC, etc. instead of performing main tasks (Teaching & Research)	.773		
	Extra responsibilities such as participation in Institutional CSR activities/Additional administrative work/Co-curricular activities etc. keep me overburdened.	.701	1.556	4.446
	There is a need to reduce some parts of my job profile.	.630		
	Lack of sufficient time for completion or satisfying responsibilities related to documentation/register work makes me tense.	.528		

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F-5 Professional Stagnation	I have to devote much more time to learning advanced innovative techniques such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Business Analytics (BA), Programming Languages, etc.	.657		
	Lack of financial resources creates hindrances in my research work/project.	.510		
	Due to the repetitive nature of work, sometimes I feel stagnant in my current job role.	.508	1.434	4.097
	Allotting multiple tasks (Admission work/Teaching/Research work/Examination duty, etc.) simultaneously in my current job leads to compromise with the work quality.	.473		
	Extra responsibility for office/clerical work due to the shortage of non-teaching staff affects my job role adversely.	.412		
F-6 Motivation Lessness	I feel stressed when my HOD/Director does not differentiate between hardworking and non-hardworking teachers.	.831		
	I feel stressed if the credit for my work is given to others.	.780	1.123	3.208
	Sometimes, my enthusiasm for work is reduced due to the lack of appreciation/motivation from the University/College/Institution authorities.	.717		
F-7 Workplace Strain	I am always in a dilemma while carrying out/performing work under more than two seniors	.585		
	I get puzzled when others interfere with my work.	.583		
	I feel tense when the distribution of work related to co-curricular activities does not match my personality.	.568	1.052	3.004
	Completion of the syllabus in a hurried manner creates problems for me.	.407		

Source: Author's Development.

Operational Gap, with an Eigenvalue of 2.077, accounted for 9.935% of the variance. This factor highlighted challenges such as neglect of personal interests, heavy workload, and inadequate resources. Addressing these gaps requires organizational restructuring, process optimization, and specialized training programs to enhance operational efficiency and reduce stress. The third and fourth dimensions, Role Strain (Eigenvalue 1.658; 7.738% variance) and Role Overload (Eigenvalue 1.556; 4.446% variance), revealed the significant influence of unclear responsibilities and excessive workloads on faculty stress. Effective strategies to manage these factors include redefining job roles, streamlining responsibilities, and ensuring equitable task distribution.

Professional Stagnation was identified as the fifth dimension, with an Eigenvalue of 1.434, accounting for 4.097% of the variance. Faculty experiencing stagnation due to repetitive tasks and limited career progression can benefit from mentorship programs, skill enhancement initiatives, and professional development opportunities. The sixth and seventh dimensions, Motivation Lessness (Eigenvalue 1.123; 3.208% variance)

and Workplace Strain (Eigenvalue 1.052; 3.004% variance), emphasized the need for interventions to boost morale and reduce workplace conflict. Recognition programs, open communication, and employee engagement initiatives can help create a supportive and productive work environment.

Figure 1: Percentage of Variance explained by the extracted factors.
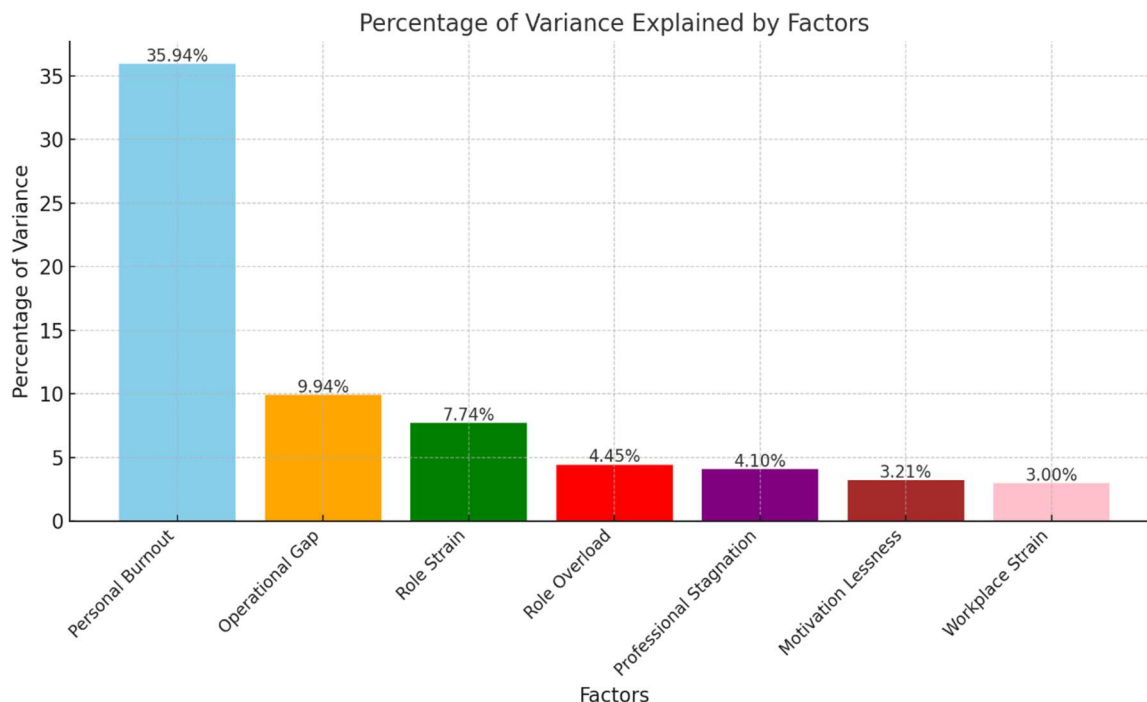
Source: Author's Development.

Figure 1 illustrates the percentage of variance explained by seven key factors influencing occupational stress among faculty in higher education. "Personal Burnout" emerges as the dominant factor, accounting for 35.94% of the total variance, indicating its substantial impact on stress levels. "Operational Gap" follows, explaining 9.94% of the variance, highlighting issues related to work-life balance and resource constraints. "Role Strain" and "Role Overload" contribute 7.74% and 4.45% of the variance, suggesting stress from ambiguous and excessive responsibilities. The remaining factors, "Professional Stagnation," "Motivation Lessness," and "Workplace Strain", explain smaller portions of variance, emphasizing specific challenges related to career growth, recognition, and work environment. This distribution underscores the need for targeted interventions in these areas.

Remedial Measures for the Work Stressors

Mitigating work-related stress among higher education professors necessitates a comprehensive and proactive strategy. Initially, it is imperative to adopt wellness programs emphasising mental health support and resilience development. To alleviate burnout, these programs may encompass stress management courses, mindfulness sessions, and routine mental health assessments (Chaudhry, 2013). Organized training sessions on time management and task prioritization provide professors with practical abilities to manage job demands efficiently. Establishing a nurturing environment is an essential strategy. Mentorship programs facilitate faculty exchanging experiences and obtaining counsel, thereby improving emotional resilience and alleviating feelings of isolation (Ekienabor, 2016). Moreover, flexible work schedules cater to personal requirements, fostering a more balanced work-life integration. Acknowledging faculty contributions via performance-based incentives enhances motivation and work satisfaction (Ahmad et al., 2016).

Table 3: Remedial measures for work stressors.

Citation	Research Article Title	Work Stress Factor	Remedial Measure
(Salami, 2009)	*Job-related stress, personality, social support and Burnout among college of Education lecturers*	Personal Burnout	Align faculty compensation with workload to address financial stress and increase motivation.
(Sharma & Jyoti, 2009)	*Job satisfaction of university teachers: An empirical study*	Personal Burnout	Promote career growth opportunities through clear pathways for promotion to boost job satisfaction.
(Kompier & Aust, 2016)	*Organizational stress management interventions: Is it the singer not the song?*	Personal Burnout	Implement skill development programs (e.g., workshops) to enhance teaching effectiveness and prepare for future responsibilities.
(Greenhaus et al., 2003)	*The relation between work–family balance and quality of life*	Operational Gap	Initiate work-life balance policies (e.g., limiting weekend work) to allow for personal time and reduce stress.
(Frone et al., 1997)	*Relation of work–family conflict to health outcomes: A four-year longitudinal study of employed parents*	Operational Gap	Provide family-friendly policies to help faculty meet personal obligations without work interference.
(Allen et al., 2000)	*Consequences associated with work-to-family conflict: A review and agenda for future research*	Operational Gap	Enhance access to resources like e-libraries and online learning tools to support faculty's teaching and research.
(Pearce & Sims, 2002)	*Vertical versus shared leadership as predictors of the effectiveness of the effectiveness of change management teams*	Operational Gap	Create interdisciplinary teams with complementary skills to improve productivity and reduce stress from excessive workloads.
(Rizzo et al., 1970)	*Role conflict and ambiguity in complex organizations*	Role Strain	Provide clear job descriptions to reduce ambiguity and ensure clarity in faculty responsibilities.
(Beehr et al., 1976)	*Relationship of stress to individually and organizationally valued states: Higher order needs as a moderator*	Role Strain	Set guidelines for prioritizing tasks, such as teaching and research, to reduce confusion in role expectations.
(Acker & Dillabough, 2007)	*Women 'learning to labour' in the 'male emporium': Exploring gendered work in teacher education*	Role Strain	Offer knowledge enhancement programs to empower faculty in their roles and build confidence.
(Schaufeli et al., 2009)	*How changes in job demands and resources predict burnout, work engagement, and sickness absenteeism*	Role Overload	Minimize redundant tasks and limit responsibilities beyond core teaching roles to avoid overwhelming faculty.
(Caplan, 1975)	*Job demands and worker health: Main effects and occupational differences*	Role Overload	Evaluate additional responsibilities (e.g., co-curricular activities) to avoid assigning too many non-teaching duties.
(Saks et al., 2007)	*Socialization tactics and newcomer adjustment: A meta-analytic review and test of a model*	Professional Stagnation	Encourage advanced training in new methodologies to keep faculty updated and engaged.
(Demerouti et al., 2001)	*Burnout and engagement at work as a function of demands and control*	Professional Stagnation	Provide financial support for research, allowing faculty to engage in scholarly projects that prevent stagnation.
(Maslach et al., 2001)	*Job burnout*	Professional Stagnation	Rotate responsibilities to reduce monotony and maintain engagement in diverse tasks.
(Eisenberger et al., 1990)	*Perceived organizational support and employee diligence, commitment, and innovation*	Motivation Lessness	Establish recognition programs that acknowledge individual efforts to reduce motivation lessness and enhance morale.
(Deci et al., 1989)	*Self-determination in a work organization*	Motivation Lessness	Implement transparent crediting systems to ensure individual contributions are recognized, fostering motivation.
(Ryan & Deci, 2000)	*Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being*	Motivation Lessness	Encourage appreciation and expressions of gratitude from institutional authorities to boost morale.
(Kahn et al., 1964)	*Organizational stress: Studies in role conflict and ambiguity*	Workplace Strain	Simplify reporting structures to decrease role conflict and provide a clearer path for task execution.
(Hackman & Oldham, 1976)	*Motivation through the design of work: Test of a theory*	Workplace Strain	Grant greater autonomy in task completion, allowing faculty to execute tasks without external interference.
(Pearlin, 1989)	*The sociological study of stress*	Workplace Strain	Assign co-curricular activities that match faculty interests and personalities to enhance job satisfaction.

Accessible counselling services offer a safeguard for those facing elevated stress levels, guaranteeing prompt treatments. Creating feedback mechanisms between faculty and administration can diminish job ambiguity and enhance resource distribution. Effective communication channels facilitate collaborative problem-solving and enhance comprehension of faculty requirements (Khahro & Javed, 2022). Fostering a culture of collaboration and mutual respect inside institutions cultivates a supportive academic atmosphere. These indicators jointly

improve faculty well-being, productivity, and engagement, thereby advancing institutional objectives.

Discussions

The findings of this study substantially enhance the comprehension of job stress indicators and corrective actions among professors in higher education institutions. This research identifies critical stressors, including workload, role ambiguity, work-life imbalance, and resource deficiencies, and underscores their significant effects on faculty well-being, job satisfaction, and institutional performance. Institutions must tackle workload management by implementing efficient administrative procedures and prioritizing duties corresponding to academic expertise and institutional objectives. Role ambiguity was identified as a notable stressor, supporting the conclusions of Gmelch et al. (1986) and Ostrom et al. (2015). Faculty frequently struggle to manage overlapping tasks, resulting in confusion and frustration. Well-defined roles and regular communication from management can alleviate this issue and improve job clarity. These solutions correspond with the study's second hypothesis, recognising effective role demarcation as an essential corrective action. The study's results further corroborate the notion of the influence of work-life imbalance on faculty stress. According to Kinman (2001) and Ylijoki (2013), the intrusion of work into personal time results in fatigue and impaired mental health. Flexible work arrangements, including telecommuting and adjustable scheduling, may mitigate this difficulty. Institutions must prioritize activities that foster work-life integration to maintain faculty motivation and engagement.

Insufficient resources, especially in underfunded institutions, markedly exacerbate occupational stress. This study corroborates Schmidt's (2023) assertions regarding how antiquated infrastructure and restricted access to research tools impede professional progress. Supplying sufficient resources, mentorship initiatives, and training opportunities can mitigate these constraints, allowing academics to operate efficiently. The research highlights the cumulative impact of these stressors on institutional results, consistent with the findings of Rothmann and Barkhuizen (2008). Faculty stress adversely affects teaching quality, research productivity, student satisfaction, and institutional reputation. Holistic difficulties necessitate comprehensive wellness programs that encompass mental health support and stress management training. The study confirms the mediation function of job satisfaction in alleviating stress and improving faculty well-being. Consistent with the findings of Sabagh et al. (2018), this study illustrates that supportive HR policies—such as acknowledging faculty accomplishments and providing professional development opportunities—enhance morale and productivity. Institutions must implement inclusive and culturally attuned measures to cultivate a supportive workplace climate.

Conclusion

The study highlights the complex dynamics of work-related stress among professors in higher education, stressing its diverse sources and considerable effects. Faculty members experience ongoing stress from overwhelming workloads, unclear roles, insufficient resources, and a lack of work-life balance. Institutional inefficiencies, cultural differences, and external pressures, including accreditation requirements and performance standards, exacerbate these issues. The findings indicate that these pressures undermine both the well-being and job satisfaction of educators while also reducing institutional productivity, thus impacting the quality of education and student outcomes. Personal burnout became a significant issue caused by low compensation, absence of professional development possibilities, and insufficient institutional support. Operational deficiencies, including disregarding personal interests and familial responsibilities, significantly intensify the stress. Role strain and role overload, arising from ambiguous roles and excessive workloads, considerably affect faculty morale and productivity. Furthermore, professional stagnation, lack of motivation, and workplace stress were significant factors influencing faculty engagement and performance. The paper presents a comprehensive and diversified strategy to address these difficulties. Wellness programs prioritising

mental health support, stress management, and resilience development are essential for alleviating burnout. Offering explicit job descriptions, adaptable work schedules, and sufficient resources can mitigate operational and role-specific stress. Institutional measures, including recognition programs, mentorship, and professional development opportunities, are vital for improving faculty morale and career satisfaction. Mitigating cultural and regional variations in stress factors necessitates customized interventions that correspond with particular institutional and societal contexts. Promoting a cooperative and courteous institutional culture is essential for establishing a helpful academic atmosphere. Establishing open communication lines, feedback mechanisms, and transparent procedures can improve resource allocation and diminish ambiguity, fostering a sense of empowerment among academics. Given the widespread effects of digital tiredness and changing workplace dynamics, future interventions must integrate adaptive solutions to address the problems of technological integration and remote work.

Theoretical Implications

This study substantially enhances the theoretical comprehension of work stress dynamics among professors in higher education institutions. By identifying critical stressors such as workload, role ambiguity, work-life imbalance, and inadequate resources, it broadens the applicability of stress theories, including the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model and Organizational Role Theory (ORT). The results substantiate the JD-R model's assertion that excessive job demands coupled with insufficient resources result in burnout and reduced well-being. This is notably obvious in the incidence of personal burnout and operational deficiencies discovered in the research, demonstrating the model's relevance in academic settings. Role ambiguity, identified as a major stressor, substantiates the ORT's claim that vague expectations result in cognitive overload and job discontent. This study expands the theoretical perspective by highlighting how institutional inefficiencies intensify these stressors, underscoring the necessity for more defined organizational frameworks and role clarity. Moreover, the study contributes to the literature on Work-Life Balance Theory, illustrating how professional obligations encroach upon personal time, negatively impacting teacher morale and institutional results. A significant theoretical contribution recognizes the impact of cultural and regional circumstances on stress dynamics. This research indicates that generic stress models must adjust to cultural differences, such as hierarchical institutional frameworks or resource constraints, to reflect localized conditions accurately. This discovery promotes the incorporation of context-specific variables into current stress theories, hence augmenting their relevance and explanatory capacity across many academic domains.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study possess considerable practical significance for academic institutions seeking to cultivate healthier work conditions and enhance faculty well-being. A significant practical finding is the necessity for institutions to mitigate workload-related stress by streamlining administrative processes and distributing tasks by academic skills. Explicit job descriptions and consistent feedback systems help mitigate role uncertainty, enhance job satisfaction and decrease turnover intentions. Formulating work-life balance rules, including flexible hours and telecommuting alternatives, might alleviate the negative impacts of professional obligations on personal well-being. This strategy is essential for sustaining faculty involvement and institutional efficiency.

Furthermore, improving resource accessibility, especially in underfunded institutions, mitigates operational disparities. Equipping academics with contemporary infrastructure, research instruments, and professional development opportunities enables them to perform their duties proficiently. Recognition and incentive systems that highlight teacher accomplishments are equally significant. Performance-based rewards and mentorship

programs not only elevate morale but also improve career happiness, tackling issues of demotivation and professional stagnation. To alleviate workplace stress, it is advisable to cultivate a collaborative culture via transparent communication and fair allocation of tasks. The research underscores the importance of customizing interventions to accommodate cultural and regional distinctions. Institutions must adopt policies that align with local circumstances, including resource limitations and cultural norms, to ensure that solutions are both practical and effective. By using these measures, universities can foster a supportive academic climate, thereby improving faculty well-being and institutional performance.

Limitations and Future Studies

This study offers valuable insights into the work stress indicators and remedial measures among faculty in higher education institutions. However, certain limitations must be acknowledged. First, the reliance on self-reported data introduces the potential for response bias, as participants may have overstated or understated their stress levels or perceptions of institutional support. While measures were taken to ensure confidentiality and reduce social desirability bias, such biases cannot be eliminated. Additionally, the study's cross-sectional nature limits its ability to establish causality between stress indicators and proposed interventions. Longitudinal studies could better capture the dynamic interactions between work stress and institutional policies over time.

The sample's geographic and demographic scope also limits generalizability. The study focuses primarily on specific institutions, which may not fully represent the diverse experiences of faculty in varied educational and cultural contexts. Future research should extend its scope to include diverse institutional settings and broader cultural contexts to understand stress dynamics better.

Future studies could also adopt mixed-methods approaches, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to provide deeper insights into faculty experiences. Investigating the role of emerging trends, such as digitalization and remote work, on faculty stress and coping mechanisms presents another promising avenue. By addressing these limitations, future research can refine theoretical frameworks and offer actionable strategies for mitigating work stress in higher education.

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