

Job Demands, Job Resources and Employee Mental Well-Being in Higher Education Institutions: The Mediating Roles of Work-Life Imbalance and Psychological Safety.

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ABSTRACT:

Purpose

The study based on the JD-R theory, investigates impact of Job demands and Job resources on employee mental well-being in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), where work-life imbalance and psychological safety serve as mediating factors. The study is specifically aimed at exploring how organizational politics, role ambiguity, autonomy and rewards & recognition affect employee mental well-being in higher education context.

Methodology/Approach

The study used quantitative research with the primary data collection technique; structured questionnaires distributed to 200 employees in Higher Education Institutions. Collected data by using convenience sampling technique. Data that obtained was analyzed descriptively, reliability and validity analysis, PLS-SEM using software Smart PLS.

Findings

The findings suggest that role ambiguity and organizational politics are the factors that significantly contribute to work-life imbalance, thus affecting the employee mental well-being in the organization. On the other hand, autonomy and rewards and recognition positively contribute to psychological safety, which is beneficial for the mental well-being of employees. The mediation analysis also showed that work-life imbalance, and psychological safety significantly mediated between workplace factors and employee mental well-being.

Originality/Value

The study extends the concept of JDR theory by incorporating work-life imbalance and work-related psychological safety in a comprehensive framework to understand the mental well-being of employees at HEIs. The findings build on the existing research literature by offering a deeper understanding of

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organizational demands and enhanced organizational resources collectively influence employee mental wellbeing in education sector. The study also includes practical implications for improving the mental well-being of employees by fostering supportive workplace practices at the educational institutions.

Keywords: Mental Well-Being, Work-Life Imbalance, Role Ambiguity, Organizational Politics, Autonomy, Rewards and Recognition, Psychological Safety.

1. Introduction

Background of the Study

With growing demands of the job, workload, technological advancements, and a changing work environment, employee mental well-being has become a significant issue in the workplace. Too much stress in the workplace, burnout, and imbalance in work and life have a negative impact on the psychological functioning, emotional stability, employee engagement and overall wellbeing of people. In higher education institutions (HEIs), mental well-being is an emerging issue because they have multiple functions, productivity expectations, and constant performance demands for the employees.

The issues in the workplace intensified even further during the COVID-19 pandemic, with greater digital workloads, teaching remotely, changing to new technology, and unclear boundaries between work and life balance. Role ambiguity, organizational politics and work-life balance have become more predominant in the changing work conditions that faculty members and academic professionals are experiencing and these factors have impacted their psychological and emotional health.

The JDR theory is an important theory to explain well-being of the employees in the organizational context. Job demands cause psychological strain, stress and emotional fatigue, while job resources facilitate employee motivation, engagement, psychological functioning and employee well-being (as per JD-R framework). Furthermore, psychological safety is crucial factor that make

sure that employees can speak up, effectively manage stress & feel emotionally secure in the workplace.

While existing research has studied employee stress, burnout, work-life balance, psychological well-being separately, less research has investigated the combined role of JDs, JRs, psychological safety, and work life imbalance within a single framework and with the aim of explaining employee mental well-being within Higher Education Institutions. Hence, this study examines indirect relationships between JD and JR to employee mental wellbeing through a mediation of work-life imbalance and psychological safety among HEI employees.

Problem Statement

Higher education institutions are experiencing a large number of employees suffering from work-related stress as role ambiguity, workload pressure, organizational politics and work-life imbalance. The negative impact of these psychological stressors in the workplace leads to emotional exhaustion, stress, anxiety and psychological strain amongst academic employees.

This post-pandemic work environment has further increased faculty and academic professionals stress on their digital workload, technological pressure, and work-life stress. Many employees still feel they don't have enough autonomy in the workplace, their voice is not heard enough, and less psychological safety.

Previous research has mostly investigated burnout, job satisfaction and employee engagement individually, and little effort has been

made to investigate the combined effect of JD and JR on mental wellbeing among employees in HEIs. Moreover, psychological safety element of the JD-R framework and how it was connected with work-life balance were not fully explored. Hence, the current study is planned to examine the effect of JD and JR over the employee mental wellbeing, by taking work-life imbalance and psychological safety dimensions of HEIs employees in between.

Research Gap

Past studies have focused on individual effects of role ambiguity, organizational politics, autonomy, rewards and recognition, psychological safety, work-life imbalance, & employee mental wellbeing. However, the literature that does exist has tended to focus on concepts like burnout, employee satisfaction and engagement in the workplace, and little work has concentrated on employee mental well-being in higher education settings.

Further, few studies have investigated both JDs and JRs in the JDR model explaining mental well-being of employees in universities. Additionally, previous research has paid inadequate consideration to the processes through which workplace demands and resources transmit their adverse and beneficial effects on employee mental wellbeing.

Besides, taking all of the above factors together and their integrated impact on employee mental well-being have not been well studied as a part of a single conceptual framework in HEIs. This research aims to fill the gaps by analyzing extension of JD-R theory by adding work-life imbalance and psychological safety as intermediary variables on paths between job variables and employee mental well-being.

Research Objectives

primary objective

To explore the mediating effects of work-life imbalance and psychological safety between job demands, job resources and employee mental well-being among employees in Higher Education Institutions.

secondary objectives

- To explore the impact of role ambiguity on work-life imbalance.
- To identify and analyse the role of organizational politics on work life imbalance.
- To analyse the effect of work life imbalance on mental well-being of employees.
- To explore the association between autonomy and psychological safety.
- To analyze the effect of rewards and recognition on psychological safety.
- To evaluate the relationships between the employee's psychological safety and mental well-being.
- To examine the mediation effect of work-life imbalance and psychological safety in relationship to workplace factors and employee mental well-being.

Literature review

JD-R Theory

JDR framework explains how JDs and JRs in work environment relate to employee well-being, stress, motivation and psychological outcomes. The JDR framework suggests that JDs lead to negative psychological outcomes, including emotional exhaustion and burnout, while job resources result in positive outcomes, like employee engagement, well-being, and motivation (**Bakker & Demerouti, 2017**). Job demands have the potential to put further stress on employees, and therefore job resources play an significant role in supporting employee wellbeing and resilience(**Demerouti & Bakker, 2023**). Earlier studies have already shown that high level of job demands, workload pressure and work-life imbalance have negative effect on mental well-being or work-related stresses which lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout, even after considering the mitigation role played by self-regulation(**Singh et al., 2025; Scheel et al., 2023**). Previous studies identified job demands as strong predictors of the burnout construct while job resources positively influence the employee engagement construct and mental well-being of employees(**Bakker & De Vries, 2021**).The JDR model also been used extensively to explain the psychological functioning, stress reduction and

employee motivation in organizational contexts(Lesener et al., 2019). Within the context, autonomy, recognition and supportive workplace practices are important resources in enhancing the well-being state of employees, and in decreasing the magnitude of the burden(Bakker et al., 2023).Hence, the JDR model is solid theoretical framework to explain relationship between the workplace demands, organizational resources, psychological safety, work-life imbalance and employee mental well-being within Higher Education Institutions(Schaufeli, 2017).

Job Demands:

Role Ambiguity

RA is a key stressor in the workplace and it has been linked with a negative impact on psychological states including psychological functioning, employee engagement and organizational outcome. Unclear job expectations and poor job role awareness have been repeatedly linked to poor employee outcomes such as emotional exhaustion in workplaces and psychological distress and work alienation in stressful workplaces specifically(Schmidt et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2023). Comparably, RA has been determined as -ve phenomenon on extra-role performance, job confidence and job outcomes, employee engagement. (Abdelaziz et al., 2025; Lee et al., 2024; Mañas et al., 2018). The previous research shows that the negative impact of role ambiguity with respect to employees satisfaction, psychological health & organizational commitment(Jackson & Schuler, 1985). In schools, that teachers and faculty members in teaching staffs are high in anxiety and poor in decision making skills, and are emotionally exhausted, have lower level of confidence in making decisions due to role ambiguity(Ayyildiz et al., 2025; Khanal & Ghimire, 2024; Mwakyusa & Mcharo, 2024). Furthermore, it can be conditional from the results that RA as a negative factor on faculty members' organizational commitment(Homayed et al., 2025). The stress within an organization, has been a major area of concern of previous work,

which attributed the problem directly to role ambiguity(Rizzo et al., 1970).

Organizational Politics

Organizational politics has become major concern, as a work stressor that can detract from employees' attitudes, psychological functioning and organizational outcomes. The influence of organizational politics on employee behaviour, and workplace relationships have been demonstrated in previous studies to be negative as they create stressful work environments (Ferris et al., 2002; Malik et al., 2024; Muiruri, 2023; Naseer et al., 2020). Work engagement and other emotional factors like job satisfaction has been also associated with perceived organizational politics among employees (Ayyildiz et al., 2025; Bhatia et al., 2025; Su & Xie, 2023). In addition, other studies reveal how detrimental organizational politics are on employees' mental health, work-life balance, employee commitment, and employees' retention(Abdi et al., 2025; Obeng et al., 2025). Emotional exhaustion and stress of the employees at the workplace are also related to higher education institutions (HEIs), in which case employees working in universities under perceived organizational politics suffer from greater emotional stress(Jabeen et al., 2026). Additionally, organizational politics lead to employee mistrust and less belongingness feelings among employees in the organizations(Erkutlu & Chafra, 2016).

Job Resources:

Autonomy

Autonomy has been considered as one of the significant employee job resources that will provide positive influence on employee motivation, engagement, satisfaction, and psychological functioning. Previous study shown that greater autonomy is linked with decreased burnout amongst teachers and academics, and higher job satisfaction(Ha et al., 2025). Similarly, higher work autonomy among employees is associated with higher professional adjustment, participation and work engagement(Narayanan et al., 2024). Previous studies also reveal positive implications for the person's development, learning behavior, self-

efficacy and motivation, that are autonomy supportive (Xu et al., 2024; Doğuş & Tabak, 2024; Yıldırım & Ayvaz Tuncel, 2025). The relationship of autonomy support with improvements in academic outcomes, critical reflection, and effective teaching practices in educational context have been recognized (Fu et al., 2023; Reeve & Cheon, 2024). In addition, workplace flexibility and autonomy in making decisions improve employee adaptability, the effectiveness of teaching, and workplace functioning, especially in crisis situations (Chaturvedi et al., 2021; Verma et al., 2023). The significant influence of autonomy and positive workplace climate on employees job satisfaction and growth in higher education learning institutions are also emphasized in existing literature (Oduro et al., 2025). Similarly, (K. Rajesh & C. Palanivelrajan, 2026) emphasized the advantages of autonomy in the realm of higher education for flexibility, efficient education, and career growth.

Rewards and Recognition

Reward and recognition are crucial organisational tools which can have a positive effect on employee satisfaction, motivation, and commitment. The previous education-related studies have consistently demonstrated that effective reward systems improve teachers' motivation, performance and commitment to the academic activities (Dlamini, 2026; Jabeen et al., 2026). In the same way, rewards and supportive leadership practices also have positive effects on employee satisfaction, trust, engagement and organizational functioning in education institutions (Hardianto et al., 2025; Tang et al., 2025). Existing studies also show that recognition and supportive work climate is crucial for sustaining teachers' motivation and commitment, especially in challenging situations (Kontar et al., 2025). Recognition practices are linked to improve career adjustment, task performance, career development and job commitment among workers within the workplace environment (Kramer & Bosman, 2024; Meng & Briscioli, 2024). In addition, systematic incentive programs have impact on teaching effectiveness, staff performance and

organizational development in an educational setting (Baumeler et al., 2023; Førland & Roxå, 2024). Furthermore, employees' motivation to be committed to an organisation and perform their jobs have been found to be affected by financial rewards and recognition (Aisa et al., 2024).

Work-Life Imbalance

WLI has been identified as a major negative aspect affecting employee's mental well-being, psychological functioning and organizational outcomes in the workplace. Previous research had revealed consequence of COVID-19 and remote working to employees highlighted work-life balance and stress at work, especially for the employees who were working in educational institutions (Akanji et al., 2023; Shirmohammadi et al., 2022). From, context of higher education institutions, rising workload pressures and work-family conflict have been linked to anxiety, emotional strain, burnout, and lower occupational well-being of teachers and academic professionals (Jerg-Bretzke et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2025; Winefield et al., 2014). The past study also suggested that work-family conflict has detrimental effects on employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, psychological functioning, and on employee's mental well-being (Allen et al., 2000). Similarly, it has been determined that high levels of teacher work-family conflict add much to teacher burnout, depression, emotional exhaustion, and job-related stress (Dr. Rizwan Ahmad et al., 2023; Y. Li et al., 2024). Emotional labor and work-life balancing issues have negative impact on teachers' well-being in educational context (Chen et al., 2025). In addition, increasing workloads and pressures in teaching work has created more difficulties in maintaining work-life balance. Long-term positive WLI leads to quality of life, satisfaction and mental well-being of the employees (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Zaitouni et al., 2024). Negative work-family conflict leads to extreme psychological stress and to lower wellbeing levels of employees (Moreno-Jiménez et al., 2009).

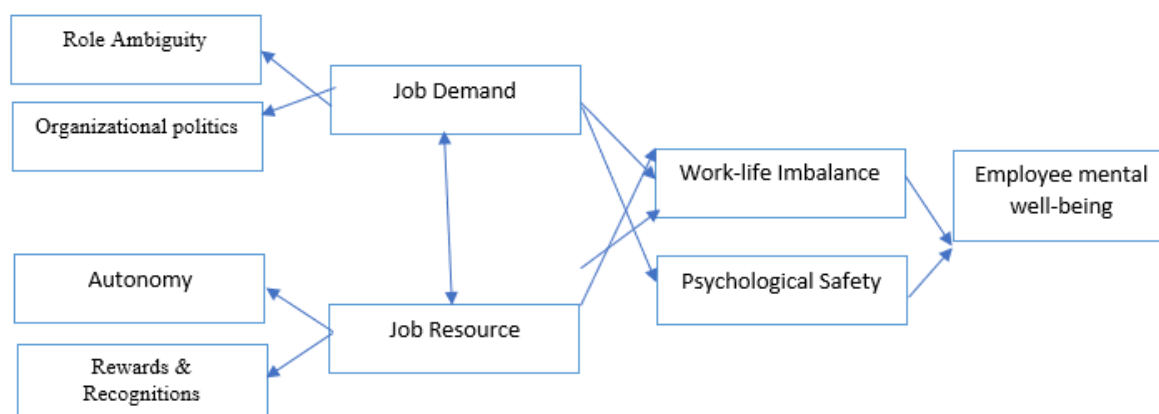
Psychological Safety

Psychological Safety has established as one of the significant organizational conditions that affects

employee well-being, engagement, relationship at work and organizational functioning. Empirical studies show that, psychological safety reduces employee silence, burnout and positively influencing employee engagement, communication, among university employees (Kassandrinou et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2023). Likewise, employees are well equipped to deal with uncertainty, stress, and challenges in the work place, when they are part of a psychologically safe workplace culture (Robinson et al., 2023). Additionally, qualitative research in higher education suggests that elements of supportive leadership practices, connectedness and socially responsible leadership cultures have a positive influence on psychological safety and well-being of employees (Fleming et al., 2023; Kyambade et al., 2024). PS has also been associated to workplace confidence, knowledge sharing, innovative and positive work relationships (Catyanadika & Rajasekera, 2022; Yadav & Pandita, 2025; Zhu et al., 2019). Existing Studies also indicate that current workplace bullying and silent employee experiences as well as unsupportive organizational practices contribute to poor psychological safety among academic staff (Mazzone et al., 2024). However, in educational institutions, supportive HR practices and leadership support employees' perception of security, participation, productivity and satisfaction in the workplace (Batta et al., 2025; Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Frazier et al., 2017).

Employee Mental Well-Being

Conceptual Framework



Previous studies shows that mental health and psychological functioning are significantly affected by stressors in the workplace, organizational characteristics and workload among employees (Khalid & Syed, 2024). Similarly, organizational climates and conditions positively influence employee satisfaction, well-being and performance in the workplace (Danna & Griffin, 1999; Wright & Cropanzano, 2000). Existing studies indicate negative effects on employee well-being in the areas of burnout, technostress, workplace bullying and pandemic-related pressures (Conway et al., 2021; X. Li et al., 2025). The covid -19 pandemic has intensified depression, emotional burnout, psychological distress among faculty and academic staff in HEIs (Pakdee et al., 2025; Van Niekerk & Van Gent, 2021; Verma et al., 2023). Faculty members experience positive effects of institutional support, supportive workplace practices, work-life balance, and perceived organizational support on mental health and work functioning (Deniz & Kocabaş, 2024; Hammoudi Halat et al., 2023). Positive work-life balance has also been linked with better employee health, improved institutional productivity, and better working conditions in educational institutions (Cuyasan & Dait, 2026). In addition, workplace initiatives that support employee mental well-being and organizational support systems that foster an employee psychology that have positive effect on mental well-being and psychological functioning in the workplace (Sarkar et al., 2024).

The proposed conceptual framework is based on JDR theory and has objective of understanding how the demands and resources of workplace influence employee mental well-being in HEI. The framework suggests that increased levels of RA and organizational politics lead to more work-life imbalance which will negatively impact on employee's mental well-being. In addition, high job demands like role ambiguity and organizational politics, unclear job expectations and work-life imbalance increase emotional exhaustion and stress of HEI employees. Job Resources, like autonomy and rewards & recognition, have a +ve impact on employee well-being & psychological safety. An organization with an autonomous and supportive environment will help employees feel psychologically safe, confident, and supported at work. The framework also assumes that JDs are connected with employee mental well-being through work-life imbalance, and that job resources are associated with employee mental well-being through psychological safety. Thus, the framework depicts the interaction among work stressors and their combined effect on mental well-being in higher education institutions.

2. Methodology

It refers to the systematic procedure employed in collecting, analyzing and interpreting data to achieve the research objectives. It provides a scientific and structured approach to the research work. This study examined how JDs and JRs affect EMWB through psychological safety, and work life imbalance of employees in HEIs.

The study grounded on Job Demands Resources theory and uses quantitative research method to study the relationships among role ambiguity, organizational politics, autonomy, rewards and recognition, work-life imbalance, PS, and employee mental well-being.

Research Design

The research uses analytical and descriptive research designs. The descriptive design is useful to understand current work conditions, and perception of JDs, JRs, psychological safety,

work-life imbalance and employee mental well-being of employees. The relationships between variables that appear in the conceptual framework are analyzed in the analytical design.

The research follows a quantitative research design because it is a type of study which involves gathering and analyzing numerical data from the statistical techniques.

Research Approach

The study adopts the deductive method. The deductive approach was used because an empirical study is conducted and the hypotheses are to test the relationships among the variables based on JDR theory that selected in study.

Population

The population of study consists of employees (including faculty members and teaching professionals) from higher education institutions. The respondents are teaching professionals from universities and colleges who face the workplace demands, the pressures and the changing work environments.

Sample Size

This study includes sample of 200 respondents from HEIs. The number of the selected samples is deemed as sufficient to carry out the statistical study and the structural equation modeling. The sample size ($N = 200$) was deemed sufficient for conducting a PLS-SEM analysis and mediation testing, as suggested by previous research.

Sampling Technique

The study includes Convenience sampling technique as a sampling method. The technique is adopted based on accessibility and availability of faculty members and employees.

Sources of data

It involves primary and secondary data.

- primary data collected through a structured questionnaire from the respondents.
- secondary data sourced through research articles, scientific journals, & online databases that related to employee mental wellbeing,

psychological safety, Job Demands & resources of employees.

Data collection method

Data collected through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire comprises statements corresponding to the domains of role ambiguity, organizational politics, autonomy, rewards and recognition, work-life imbalance, PS and EMW of the employee.

The answers are given through 5-point rating scale:

1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree

Variables of research

Independent variables

Job Demands: Role Ambiguity, Organizational Politics

Job Resources: Autonomy, Rewards and Recognition

Mediating Variables: Work-Life Imbalance, Psychological Safety

Dependent Variable: Employee mental well-being

Hypotheses of the Study

Job demands:

H1: Role Ambiguity positively impacts the employee work-life imbalance.

H2: Organizational Politics positively impacts the employee work-life imbalance.

H3: Work-life Imbalance negatively impacts the Employee Mental Well-being.

Job Resources:

H4: Autonomy positively impacts the employee Psychological Safety.

H5: Rewards and Recognition positively impact the employee Psychological Safety.

H6: Psychological Safety positively impacts the Employee Mental Wellbeing.

Mediating Hypotheses:

H7: WLI mediates relationship between Role Ambiguity and employee mental well-being.

H8: Work-Life Imbalance mediates relationship between Organizational Politics and employee mental well-being.

H9: PS mediates relationship between AT and EMWB.

H10: PS mediates relationship between RR and EMWB.

Statistical Tools Used for Analysis

The collected data will be examined by using adequate statistical tools.

Descriptive Statistics: Mean, Percentage, Frequency, and Standard Deviation.

Inferential Statistics: Reliability Analysis, Structural Equation Modeling

The study uses smartPLS software for testing conceptual framework, mediation effects, and relationships between the variables.

Reliability and Validity analysis

Reliability of questionnaire will be tested by using cronbach's alpha that ensure appropriate measures, including composite reliability, average variance extracted and discriminant validity is used to measure-validity of the constructs. Additionally, discriminant validity of constructs will be checked using HTMT ratio. The following steps contribute to making the research instrument consistent, accurate and valid.

Ethical Considerations

The study guarantees confidentiality and privacy of the respondents. The study is voluntary & the personal information collected will only be used for academic & research purpose. The respondents will be informed about the purpose of study & throughout the study they will be kept confidential before collecting of data.

3. Results

Table 1: Respondents demographic profile (N=200)

demographic profile	category	frequency	percentage (%)
Age	<25	13	6.5%
	25–35	113	56.5%
	36–45	49	24.5%
	46–55	14	7.0%
	56+ years	11	5.5%
Gender	Male	95	47.5%
	Female	104	52.0%
	Prefer not to say	1	0.5%
Educational Background	diploma	2	1.0%
	bachelor's	85	42.5%
	master's	87	43.5%
	MPhil	4	2.0%
	PhD	20	10.0%
	other	2	1.0%
Role in Institution	school teacher	38	19.0%
	lecturer	52	26.0%
	assistant professor	53	26.5%
	associate professor	26	13.0%
	professor	31	15.5%
Years of Experience	<5	70	35.0%
	5–10	57	28.5%
	11–15	28	14.0%
	16–20	35	17.5%
	Above 20	10	5.0%
Type of Institution	Government	103	51.5%
	Private	54	27.0%
	Deemed	31	15.5%
	Autonomous	12	6.0%

Interpretation: Table 1 shows, demographic profile of respondents. Most of them are of age

25-35 years (56.5%). Female respondents (52.0%) were slightly more than the male respondents

(47.5%). The majority of respondents (43.5%) have Master's degrees, followed by (42.5%) Bachelor's degree. Most respondents are Assistant Professors (26.5%) and Lecturers (26.0%) in terms of their roles in institution. The

majority of respondents had <5 years of Experience (35.0%). In addition, most of the respondents work in Government Institutions (51.5%), while (27.0%) are in Private Institutions.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Items (N=200)

Constructs	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Role Ambiguity (RA)	RA1	3.020	1.207
	RA2	3.455	1.102
	RA3	3.405	1.089
	RA4	3.295	1.147
Organizational Politics (OP)	OP1	2.950	1.206
	OP2	3.190	1.049
	OP3	3.230	1.159
	OP4	3.120	1.132
Autonomy (AT)	AT1	3.330	1.182
	AT2	3.200	1.171
	AT3	3.360	1.117
	AT4	3.560	1.059
Rewards & Recognition (RR)	RR1	3.300	1.116
	RR2	3.200	1.152
	RR3	3.360	1.186
	RR4	3.275	1.121
Work-Life Imbalance (WLI)	WLI1	3.195	1.310
	WLI2	3.475	1.112
	WLI3	3.285	1.171
	WLI4	3.335	1.192
Psychological Safety (PS)	PS1	3.090	1.212
	PS2	3.130	1.043
	PS3	2.965	1.179
	PS4	3.335	1.192
Employee mental well-being (EMWB)	EMWB1	3.285	1.149
	EMWB2	3.295	1.198
	EMWB3	3.340	1.217
	EMWB4	3.285	1.153

Interpretation: Table 2 presents, the descriptive statistics of research. Mean values reflect a moderate level regarding role ambiguity, organizational politics, autonomy, reward and recognition, work-life imbalance, PS and EMWB of employees. However, comparatively higher mean values were found for autonomy and work-

life imbalance among the constructs, suggesting moderate perceptions of autonomy and work-related imbalance of employees in Higher Education Institutions. The moderate standard deviation values show the moderate difference between respondents' perceptions related to the study variables.

Table 3: Reliability and Validity of constructs (N=200)

Constructs	Items	Factor loadings	cronbach's alpha (α)
Role Ambiguity (RA)	RA1	0.732	0.758
	RA2	0.790	
	RA3	0.750	
	RA4	0.684	
Organizational Politics (OP)	OP1	0.861	0.843
	OP2	0.794	
	OP3	0.859	
	OP4	0.781	
Autonomy (AT)	AT1	0.818	0.751
	AT2	0.827	
	AT3	0.633	
	AT4	0.755	
Rewards & Recognition (RR)	RR1	0.851	0.782
	RR2	0.835	
	RR3	0.810	
	RR4	0.684	
Work-Life Imbalance (WLI)	WLI1	0.906	0.873
	WLI2	0.824	
	WLI3	0.860	
	WLI4	0.824	
Psychological Safety (PS)	PS1	0.779	0.769
	PS2	0.857	
	PS3	0.776	
	PS4	0.677	

Employee Mental Well-Being (EMWB)	EMWB1	0.843	0.814
	EMWB2	0.873	
	EMWB3	0.851	
	EMWB4	0.636	

Interpretation: Table 3 shows reliability and validity analysis of constructs. The loading values of all the factors were greater than threshold value of 0.60, which is considered as acceptable construct validity. The cronbach's alpha

coefficient values were between 0.751 and 0.873 representing good internal consistency between constructs. The constructs were reliable and valid in general and suitable for further analysis.

Table 4: Convergent Validity of Constructs (N=200)

Constructs	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
Role Ambiguity (RA)	0.846	0.582
Organizational Politics (OP)	0.894	0.679
Autonomy (AT)	0.836	0.564
Rewards & Recognition (RR)	0.854	0.598
Work-Life Imbalance (WLI)	0.912	0.723
Psychological Safety (PS)	0.847	0.583
Employee Mental Well-Being (EMWB)	0.883	0.655

Interpretation: Table 4 shows convergent validity analysis of the constructs. The values of reliability for composite were obtained: from 0.836 to 0.912 which is more than 0.70 recommended value that shows that there is satisfactory internal consistency between the

constructs. Similarly, AVE values range from 0.564 to 0.723, which all are greater than threshold value of the acceptable range of 0.50. Results of the overall showed good convergent validity of constructs used in this research.

Table 5: Discriminant Validity using HTMT Ratio (N=200)

constructs	RA	OP	AT	RR	WLI	PS	EMWB
RA	—						
OP	0.621	—					
AT	0.548	0.592	—				
RR	0.566	0.644	0.681	—			
WLI	0.732	0.701	0.528	0.574	—		

PS	0.514	0.562	0.734	0.715	0.547	–	
EMWB	0.681	0.695	0.726	0.742	0.771	0.784	–

Interpretation: Table 5 presents the discriminant validity analysis using the HTMT ratio. Discriminant validity of constructs was satisfactory as all HTMT values showed to be below the recommended value (0.90). The results

indicate the validity of all constructs being different from each other and sufficiently capturing the various aspects of the study variables.

Table 6: Hypothesis Testing of Structural Model (N=200)

Hypotheses	relationship	beta (β)	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	RA→WLI	0.412***	5.821	0.001	supported
H2	OP→WLI	0.386***	4.973	0.002	supported
H3	WLI→EMWB	-0.524***	6.417	0.000	supported
H4	AT→PS	0.438***	5.962	0.001	supported
H5	RR→PS	0.401**	5.218	0.003	supported
H6	PS→EMWB	0.583***	7.104	0.001	supported

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Interpretation: Table 6 presents hypotheses testing. The results indicate that Role Ambiguity significantly influences WLI ($\beta=0.412$, $p<0.001$), and OP also positively influences Work-Life Imbalance ($\beta=0.386$, $p<0.001$). Further, WLI negatively influences EMWB ($\beta=-0.524$, $p<$

0.001). Similarly, Autonomy strongly influences PS ($\beta=0.438$, $p<0.001$), while RR also +VE influence PS ($\beta=0.401$, $p<0.001$). PS further shows positive influence on EMWB ($\beta=0.583$, $p<0.001$). Since all P-values are below 0.05, all hypotheses are supported.

Table 7: Mediation Analysis of the Constructs (N=200)

Hypotheses	Mediation path	beta (β)	t-value	p-value	Result
H7	RA →WLI →EMWB	-0.216 ***	4.872	0.001	Supported
H8	OP →WLI →EMWB	-0.202 ***	4.315	0.002	Supported
H9	AT →PS →EMWB	0.255 ***	5.106	0.000	Supported
H10	RR →PS →EMWB	0.234 ***	4.784	0.001	Supported

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Interpretation: Table 7 shows the Mediation Analysis of study variables. The findings indicate the relationship between both variables: Role Ambiguity and EMWB ($p<0.001$, $\beta=-0.216$); and Organizational Politics and Employee Mental Well-Being ($p<0.001$, $\beta=-0.202$) were significantly mediated by Work-Life Imbalance. Similarly, Psychological Safety strongly mediates the relationship between Autonomy & Employee

Mental Well-Being ($\beta=0.255$, $p<0.001$), and between Rewards and Recognition and Employee Mental Well-Being ($\beta=0.234$, $p<0.001$). The mediated outcomes of the JD-R theory hypothesis are consistent with the results of mediation of workplace demands and resources on association with WLI and PS to mental well-being.

4. Discussion

Findings of the Research

The study addresses the role of JDs and JRs on EMWB of employees in HEIs through mediating role of work-life imbalance and psychological safety. Findings for demographic data indicated that most of respondents were in between the age of 25-35 and most of the respondents were working for Government institutions.

The descriptive statistics showed moderate dimensions of role ambiguity, organisational politics, autonomy, rewards and recognition, work-life imbalance, PS and EMWB from the respondents. All the constructs were identified to be reliable and valid with acceptable threshold value for the reliability and validity Analysis.

The findings of hypothesis testing showed that role ambiguity and organizational politics had statistically significant effect on WLI, with negative effects on EMWB. Additionally, autonomy, rewards and recognition were found to positively impact psychological safety, and PS was found to significantly impact Employee Mental Well-Being. The mediation analysis proved that work-life imbalance mediates relationship between JDs and EMWB, while psychological safety mediated the connection between JRs and EMWB. In general, results confirmed the JDR theory in context of HEIs.

Limitations of the Study

The study is limited to employees working in HEIs and may not represent employees from other sectors. The study adopts quantitative research approach & relied on self-reported responses, which may involve respondent bias. The sample size was limited to 200 respondents, and the study focused only on selected job demands and job resources variables.

5. Conclusion

The study emphasizes the JDs and JRs as the significant predictors of employee mental well-being in HEIs. Role ambiguity and organizational politics contribute to employee's work-life imbalance, stress and emotional strain, which has

an adverse impact on EMWB. Conversely, AT and RR have a positive impact on psychological safety, employee confidence, workplace satisfaction.

These results highlight the significance positive workplace culture in educational institutions. Organizational support and recognition and autonomy can contribute to having a positive work climate and mental well-being among employees. Thus, HEIs need to focus on stress factors and promote an optimistic work environment to reduce the impact of workplace stress on EMWB.

Theoretical Implications

The research contributes to existing literature by supporting the JDR theory in context of Higher Education Institutions. The study integrates JDs, JRs, work-life imbalance, Psychological Safety, and Employee Mental Well-Being into a single conceptual framework. Further, the study enhances the understanding of mediation mechanisms by explaining how work-life imbalance and psychological safety act as important mediating variables between workplace factors and employee mental well-being. The study also expands use of JD-R theory in the educational sector, particularly in understanding employees' psychological and emotional outcomes.

Practical Implications

The study presents practical implications for academic administrators and management of Higher Education Institutions. Educational institutions should reduce role ambiguity by clearly defining employee roles and responsibilities. Management should also minimize organizational politics and create transparent communication systems to reduce workplace stress. Further, institutions should encourage autonomy, recognize employee contributions, and establish supportive work cultures that improve psychological safety. Conducting employee mental well-being awareness programs, employee counselling sessions, and stress management initiatives may help to enhance employee mental well-being.

Suggestions

HEIs should implement policies that promote EMW and WLI. Institutions should provide flexible work arrangements, supportive leadership, and employee recognition programs. Clear communication and transparent decision-making processes should be encouraged to reduce organizational politics and role ambiguity. Training programs related to stress management, emotional well-being, and psychological safety should also be conducted regularly. Further, institutions should strengthen employee support systems and create healthy workplace

environments that encourage trust, collaboration, and professional growth.

Future Scope of the Study

Future studies may include larger sample sizes and respondents from different sectors for broader generalization of the findings. Researchers may also include additional variables such as leadership style, emotional intelligence, organizational support, and burnout. Longitudinal and mixed-method research designs may provide deeper understanding of employee mental well-being and workplace behavior over time.

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8. Author Declaration

It being hereby declared that:

1. “Job Demands, Job Resources and Employee Mental Well-Being in Higher Education Institutions: The Mediating Roles of Work-Life Imbalance and Psychological Safety” is an original manuscript and it has not been previously published in any journal, conference proceedings, book, or other publication.
2. The manuscript will not be submitted to any other publications during the review process by the International Journal of Special Education.
3. All authors have contributed significantly to the conception, design, data collection, analysis, interpretation and preparation of the manuscript.
4. All contributors have read and agreed to the submitted version of the paper.
5. There are no conflicts of interest involved with this research, according to the authors.
6. The research was done adhering to the principles of ethical research with voluntary participation. All respondents' confidentiality and anonymity were respected during the research process.

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