

# ENHANCING FACULTY RETENTION THROUGH QUALITY OF WORK LIFE: A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW IN THE CONTEXT OF INDIAN UNIVERSITIES

*Dr. Niti Sharma*

Director, Highl Digital Consulting Pvt. Ltd., Bathinda

## Abstract

Retention of faculty is one of the important strategic initiatives that Indian universities need to adopt in order to meet increasing competition and to contribute to organizational development. The problem of higher turnover can be accredited to a drop in productivity as well as student learning outcomes. In this regard, quality of work life is a major factor impacting the job satisfaction as well as retention in the educational sector. This study presents a conceptual review of the available literature to evaluate the impact of quality of work life on faculty retention among Indian universities. This study makes use of social exchange theory, Herzberg's two-factor theory, and the job Demands-Resources model to present a conceptual framework in establishing the linkage between QWL, job satisfaction, and employee retention. The study covers the strategic insights for universities in India to increase faculty retention.

## 1. Introduction

There have been significant developments going on in the higher education sector in India. There is an increasing focus on evaluation of measurable outcomes in the universities in context to the focus on research, publications, visibility of the institution, and student satisfaction levels. The changing scenario of education promotes accountability that has in turn enhanced performance expectations of the faculty. Turnover can be considered as a major challenge for universities in order to. provides strength to their academic research fellows by retaining faculty for long-term institutional growth. Quality of work life can be understood as the overall satisfaction level of employees in regard to their work environment, job security, growth opportunities, and work-life balance (Rantanen et al, 2011). In academic context, QWL supports participative governance, transparency, and autonomy in the institution. The current study evaluates the impact of QWL on faculty retention by providing a conceptual analysis of existing literature.

## 2. Objectives of the study

1. Analysis of the factors influencing faculty retention in higher education institutions in India
2. Examining the different dimensions of QWL in the higher education industry.
3. Reviewing the existing literature to establish linkage between quality of work life and job satisfaction and turnover
4. Provide strategic recommendations in order to improve employee retention by introduction of QWL initiatives.

## 3. Research Methodology

This study makes the use of qualitative research method and thematic analysis of secondary data.

### Data sources

This secondary data has been reviewed from peer-reviewed journals and journal articles published between 2010 to 2025, available from databases such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and other institutional repositories.

### Inclusion criteria

- The publications involving empirical or conceptual review have been included in the study.
- Focus has been given on including publications from last 15 years in the study.
- The available research on human resource employee turnover and retention, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment has been included as part of the study.

## 4. Literature Review

### 4.1 Quality of Work Life in Higher Education

Quality of work life is a broad term, including work-life balance, career growth, job satisfaction, workplace environment, and autonomy. In the context of higher education, academic freedom will include research resources access, transparency in appraisal systems, freedom of flexibility to do research and relationships (Hobfoll et al., 2018).

Subbarayalu and Al Kuwaiti (2024) In their study, found that the satisfaction level of faculty members in higher education setup in India is influenced by several factors such as their perception towards transparency in organizational policies, fairness in distribution of workload, and support provided by institutional leadership.

There has been a shift in the teaching scenario post-COVID with focus going on digital teaching and hybrid work models. Those have in turn created challenges for managing work-life balance. There have been increased instances of enhanced emotional labor as well as extended working hours impacting the emotional well-being of faculty members, as indicated in this study (Allen et al., 2015).

### 4.2 Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment

Job satisfaction can be defined as the positive response that originates from an individual towards his or her job. Studies have suggested that job satisfaction has a direct relationship with the conditions in the work environment and directly impacts outcomes of retention (Brough et al., 2014).

Organizational commitment can be referred to as the attachment of individuals towards their institution. Haar et al. (2019) in their study mentioned about the role of support in the work environment that leads to enhancement in the commitment level of individuals, thereby reducing turnover. Arunachalam et al. (2024) in their study have highlighted that the commitment level of faculty in Indian institutions is largely influenced by support rendered by the institution and work-life balance.

### 4.3 Faculty Retention in Indian Universities

Barkhuzein et al. (2014) in their study, have mentioned that burnout is a major factor impacting the turnover among the academic faculty. The retention of the faculty is influenced by various factors such as opportunities provided for career progression, level of compensation, culture in the institutional environment, and recognition provided to the individuals.

Rahman et al. (2018), in their study, have reported that presence of work-family conflict directly impacts or increases turnover. On the contrary, no work-family conflict leads to longer job spans and satisfaction levels among individuals. Furthermore, Jamuna Rani (2024), in her study, has highlighted that policies related to gender roles also plays a part in impacting the job retention among women faculty in the institution. Hobfoll et al. (2018) in their study, have suggested the adoption of the Jobs Demands Resources (JDR model, which implies providing individuals with adequate amount of resources in their job to mitigate stress and improve engagement and retention. The study further adds that the perception of positive support by the institution in terms of flexible policies and autonomy leads to development of stronger loyalty and retention among the individuals. Thus, the review of literature affirms that QWL leads to enhanced job satisfaction and commitment, which directly influences the retention of faculty in higher institution setup.

## 5. Theoretical Framework

- **Social Exchange Theory:** Social exchange theory supports the idea that employees reciprocate the kind of treatment given to them by the institution. So, positive treatment by the institution supports long-term retention and loyalty among the individuals (Haar et al., 2019).
- **Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory:** Herzberg's theory calls for the adoption of hygiene factors by the institution that will motivate the individuals, enhancing their job satisfaction level and thus increasing retention.
- **Job Demands–Resources Model:** The availability of resources in the job directly mediates the risk of stress and increases engagement among the individuals (Hobfoll et al., 2018).

## 6. Proposed Conceptual Model

On the basis of review of literature, the current study has proposed a conceptual model of supporting or enhancing the quality of work life, which will in turn lead to increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment among

the individuals. This will have a direct positive impact on retention of faculty members in the institution. So it is important for the leadership of the higher education institution to instill a culture which directly enhances the quality of work life, ultimately leading to longer retention spans of faculty.

## 7. Discussion

The study shows that it is important for the universities or the leadership to focus on improving the retention of faculty in the institution by adoption of suitable initiatives for creation of a holistic workplace environment. Such initiatives may call for introduction of salary based incentives, adoption of a transparent appraisal system, providing support or funding for research, mentorship and training programs, equality in distribution of workload, and directly impact organizational commitment and improved retention. The perception of faculty members in looking at organizational policies like fairness, respect, recognition, and providing opportunities for career development, all these have an impact on the emotional well-being and organizational commitment level of individuals. So the organizational commitment level is not merely the result of financial compensation, but it encompasses other factors such as institutional support, participative governance, and other meaningful career progression opportunities. Thus, QWL should be viewed as a comprehensive framework for guiding holistic culture that promotes faculty well-being and growth.

## 8. Conclusion

In the nutshell, it can be concluded that quality of work life is a significant determinant in impacting the retention levels of faculty in Indian universities. Hence, it is important for institution to focus on improving the quality of work life in order to lead to increased job satisfaction as well as commitment levels of individuals. This will lead to creation of long-term loyalty, which in turn would benefit the institution in terms of productivity, research abilities, and also student outcomes. Therefore, it is important for universities in India to ensure effective integration of QWL initiatives or strategies as part of their institutional framework in order to create sustainable growth and academic excellence.

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