

FACULTY RETENTION DYNAMICS: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND WORK LIFE BALANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

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Abstract

Faculty retention remains a challenge in higher education, especially in specialized fields like aviation, where demands are high and responsibilities are complex. Many faculty members struggle with heavy workloads, limited career growth, and difficulties in balancing work and personal life, which can lead to turnover. This study examined how human resource management (HRM) practices and work-life balance affect faculty retention in an aviation higher education institution. A quantitative predictive-correlational design was used, involving 125 faculty members from the main and satellite campuses. Data were collected through a survey examining HRM practices, work-life balance, and faculty retention. The results showed that HRM practices are significantly related to both work-life balance and faculty retention. In particular, factors such as compensation, professional development, workload management, and job autonomy were found to strongly support better work-life balance and higher retention. The study also found that work-life balance plays an important role in faculty retention and partially explains how HRM practices influence faculty decisions to stay. This means that while good HR practices directly affect retention, their impact is stronger when they also improve faculty well-being. Overall, the findings show the importance of creating supportive HR policies that not only focus on performance and rewards but also promote a healthy balance between work and private life. These insights may help school leaders and policymakers formulate more effective strategies to retain faculty in higher education.

Keywords: *faculty retention, human resource management practices, work-life balance, higher education, aviation education*

1. Introduction

Faculty is the key resource in higher education institutions (HEIs) as their performance directly impacts students' learning and success of the institution (Ababneh, 2020; Pandit & Paul, 2021). But retaining qualified faculty is a huge challenge, especially in niche fields such as aviation. Hence, one of such critical problems is the issue of faculty retention, as high attrition rates endanger the stability of institutions along with the quality of education and student progress (Mok, 2021). When it is constant, high turnover may be deleterious to academic programs and student success as well as reputation (Khan et al., 2021).

Faculty responsibilities encompass teaching, research, extension, and administrative tasks, which are often challenging to balance and can affect work-life satisfaction (Khan et al., 2021). Research conducted in Pakistan indicates that effective human resource practices foster a stronger

connection between faculty and university values, thereby reducing burnout and turnover intentions (Sial et al., 2020). Additional studies demonstrate that job autonomy, clearly defined roles, and constructive feedback contribute to improved work-life balance, whereas the absence of these factors is associated with increased stress (Badri et al., 2020; Sabuero, 2023).

The quality of leadership plays a big role in whether faculty members stay or leave. When leaders are supportive and approachable, faculty are more likely to feel valued and stick around. On the other hand, poor leadership can make people want to move on (Niewiesk et al., 2023). It's not just about work, either—personal factors, like having a family to take care of, also shape these decisions.

Of course, competitive pay matters, but it isn't the only thing faculty care about. A friendly workplace, good relationships with colleagues, and chances to learn and grow are just as important (Al Doghan, 2022). Many faculty members actually put a higher value on having freedom in their work and on professional development, sometimes even more than just work-life balance (Khan et al., 2021).

Some experts say focusing too much on work-life balance can hide the importance of faculty having control over their work and chances to grow professionally. Research shows that when faculty have freedom in their teaching and research, they feel more satisfied and less burned out. Also, providing opportunities like funding for research and attending conferences shows that the institution cares about their career growth, which makes faculty feel valued. To keep great teachers, schools need a plan that combines help with work-life balance, gives faculty autonomy, and offers professional development chances.

This study is an attempt to assess the impact of human resource practices composed of its identified subdimensions on faculty retention in the aviation higher education sector. The mediating role played by work-life balance in this relationship has also been examined to analyze the complete process through which human resource practices influence faculty retention.

Statement of the Problem

Specifically, this sought to answer the following questions:

Is there a significant relationship between human resource management practices and:

- 1.1 faculty retention, and
- 1.2 faculty work-life balance?
2. Is there a significant relationship between work-life balance and faculty retention?
3. Does the level of work-life balance of the faculty significantly mediate the relationship between human resource practices and faculty retention?

2. Methodology

A quantitative predictive-correlational research design to examine the relationships among the variables. This design was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to determine the strength and direction of relationships and to test the mediating effect of work-life balance. The participants of this study were 125 faculty members from Villamor main campus as well as its satellite campuses in Fernando Air Base, Basa, and Mactan. Representing diverse academic fields from engineering and technology to liberal arts and computer studies these educators brought a wide range of experiences and perspectives. To understand their realities, the researcher crafted a detailed survey, distributed both in person and online, that invited respondents to share not just

statistics but their personal views on HR practices, sources of stress and satisfaction, and what influences their sense of belonging and decision to stay.

The analysis utilized weighted mean to describe the variables, employed Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (Pearson r) to examine relationships, and conducted mediation analysis to assess whether work-life balance mediates the relationship between HRM practices and faculty retention. The level of significance was set at 0.05 to determine whether the relationships among variables were statistically significant.

To ensure that every participant's voice was captured accurately and fairly, the survey tool was carefully validated by a panel of experts, including deans and HR practitioners who understand the academic environment. A pilot test with 30 faculty members helped refine the questionnaire, and statistical checks confirmed its reliability, with strong consistency across topics like stress and turnover intentions. Ethical safeguards were a priority from start to finish: all information was kept confidential, and every faculty member participated by choice, knowing their perspectives would be respected and protected.

In the final phase, proving the mediation, linear regression was used to estimate the direct and indirect effects of the mediating effect of work-life balance on the relationship between human resource practices and faculty retention. After analysis, findings were interpreted, and the necessary conclusions were provided.

1. Results and Discussion

The data in Table 1 show the correlations between the variables under human resource practices and those in faculty work-life balance. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation showed that all HRM practices had statistically significant positive relationships with faculty work-life balance dimensions (personal, time, leisure, and stress), with correlation coefficients ranging from $r = .262$ to $r = .607$, all significant at the 0.01 level

Table 1. Correlation between Human Resource Practices and Faculty Work-Life Balance

Human Resource Practices	Personal;	Time;	Leisure	Stress Management
Recruitment and Selection;	.279**	.423**	.282**	.295**
Professional Development Opportunities;	.395**	.377**	.370**	.262**
Compensation and Benefits;	.481**	.456**	.398**	.396**
Performance Evaluation;	.407**	.413**	.372**	.323**
Rewards and Recognitions;	.403**	.480**	.431**	.406**
Training and Development;	.459**	.423**	.431**	.339**
Work-life Balance Policies	.511**	.537**	.456**	.505**
Job Autonomy	.452**	.528**	.435**	.466**
Workload Management	.473**	.607**	.501**	.517**

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Among HRM practices, workload management and work–life balance policies had the strongest associations with work–life balance, particularly in time and stress. Workload management had strong positive correlations with time balance ($r = .607$) and stress management ($r = .517$), indicating that effective workload regulation played an important role in helping faculty manage their time and reduce stress. Work–life balance policies were also strongly related to time ($r = .537$) and stress ($r = .505$), indicating that these policies directly supported faculty well-being. These findings suggested that improvements in HRM practices were linked to better faculty work–life balance across several areas.

Managing faculty workload effectively can reduce the stress and time pressures that many faculty experience, making it easier for them to balance work and personal life. This is supported by the strong correlation ($r=0.607$) with time balance found in the data. When institutions introduce clear work-life balance policies, they not only help prevent burnout but also improve productivity. As a result, focusing on specific HRM improvements can help retain faculty members, improve teaching quality and support the institution's goals, especially in demanding fields such as aviation education (Mohanraj, 2025). Strategic HRM practices such as effective workload management play an important role in helping faculty achieve better work-life balance and experience less stress, as evidenced by strong statistical correlations. When institutions give faculty greater flexibility and autonomy, this leads to better time management and less stress, similar to trends observed with job autonomy and related policies. Many academic studies confirm that these HRM practices can increase job satisfaction and help keep faculty for longer periods when applied thoughtfully (Abao et al., 2025).

Human resource practices in an aviation institution that promote work–life balance (e.g., flexible scheduling, manageable workloads, leave provisions, and employee well-being programs) help faculty members protect their personal needs while sustaining their work performance. These policies directly support time management by giving faculty greater control over when and how tasks are completed, thereby reducing role conflict and preventing work from spilling into nonwork hours. They also encourage leisure by legitimizing rest and recovery as part of healthy productivity, making it easier for faculty employees to disengage, recharge, and maintain social and family relationships.

Finally, work–life balance policies strengthen stress management by reducing chronic overload, setting clear boundaries, and providing institutional support (e.g., counseling, wellness initiatives), which collectively reduce burnout risk and help faculty and employees achieve a more sustainable, balanced work-life routine.

Table 2. Correlation between Human Resource Practices and Faculty Retention

Human Resource Practices	Job satisfaction	Organizational Commitment	Job security	Employee engagement
Recruitment and Selection;	.555**	.486**	.406**	.558**
Professional Development Opportunities;	.491**	.330**	.408**	.527**
Compensation and Benefits;	.589**	.444**	.573**	.602**
Performance Evaluation;	.646**	.478**	.520**	.635**
Rewards and Recognitions;	.648**	.465**	.458**	.603**
Training and Development;	.582**	.401**	.493**	.613**
Work-life Balance Policies	.561**	.429**	.482**	.559**

Job Autonomy	.581**	.480**	.445**	.606**
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** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results showed that human resource management practices were significantly and positively correlated with key indicators of faculty retention, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job security, and employee engagement. The correlation coefficients ranged from $r = .330$ to $r = .648$, all of which were significant at the 0.01 level.

Performance evaluation and rewards and recognition had particularly strong relationships with job satisfaction ($r = .646$ and $r = .648$), showing that fair evaluation systems and recognition were important for increasing faculty satisfaction. Compensation and benefits also had strong positive correlations with job security ($r = .573$) and employee engagement ($r = .602$), indicating that fair pay contributed to both stability and involvement among faculty.

Overall, the correlation findings showed that effective human resource management practices were significantly linked to higher faculty retention and better work–life balance. The strong and consistent correlations highlighted the important role of HRM practices in supporting faculty well-being, engagement, and long-term commitment to the institution. These results provided statistical justification for continued investment in HRM practices, especially workload management, performance evaluation, compensation, and work–life balance policies as key strategies for maintaining a stable and satisfied academic workforce.

Table 3. Correlation between Work-Life Balance and Faculty Retention

	Job satisfaction	Organizational Commitment	Job security	Employee engagement
Workload Management	.634**	.521**	.378**	.580**
Personal;	.593**	.486**	.429**	.547**
Time;	.691**	.661**	.390**	.579**
Leisure	.570**	.500**	.398**	.523**
Stress	.653**	.619**	.381**	.571**

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results indicated that work–life balance was significantly related to faculty retention, providing empirical evidence that faculty members' ability to balance personal life, time, leisure, and stress was closely linked to their decisions to stay committed to the institution.

Specifically, positive and significant correlations were found between work–life balance dimensions (personal, time, leisure, and stress) and key faculty retention indicators, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job security, and employee engagement. These findings showed that as faculty experienced a better balance between their professional and personal responsibilities, their satisfaction, commitment, job security, and engagement also increased. The consistency of significant relationships across all dimensions indicated a strong and reliable association.

Overall, the statistical evidence supported the conclusion that work–life balance was a significant predictor of faculty retention. Achieving a balance between professional and personal life is crucial for the well-being of educators and plays a vital role in retaining talented faculty

within higher education institutions. Varma (2025). Faculty who perceived a better work-life balance were more likely to remain satisfied, committed, and engaged in their roles, thereby contributing to institutional stability. These findings highlighted the importance of policies and practices that promoted work-life balance as strategies for improving long-term faculty retention.

Work-life balance is closely linked to faculty retention because it shapes two key psychological drivers of staying: job satisfaction and organizational commitment. When faculty can manage teaching, research, service, and personal responsibilities without chronic overload, they experience less stress and burnout, which tends to improve day-to-day satisfaction with their role (e.g., workload fairness, autonomy, and overall well-being).

Over time, this positive experience signals that the institution supports and values them, strengthening organizational commitment especially affective commitment (emotional attachment) and normative commitment (a sense of loyalty/obligation).

In contrast, persistent work-life imbalance can erode satisfaction, weaken commitment, increase turnover intentions, and ultimately push faculty to seek employment in institutions or industries offering healthier workload expectations and better support.

Table 4. Mediation Analysis of Work Life Balance in the Relationship between Human Resource Practices and Faculty Retention

	coefficient	Standard Error	T-statistics	P value	Lower Limit CI	Upper Limit CI
Human Resource Practices – Work Life Balance	0.5434	0.0727	7.4780	0.000	0.399	0.687
Human Resource Practices – Faculty Retention	0.2992	0.0425	6.6212	0.000	0.209	0.389
Work Life Balance – Faculty Retention	0.3408	0.0465	7.3321	0.000	0.249	0.4328
Direct	0.2992	0.0425	6.6212	0.000	0.209	0.389
Indirect	0.1853	0.0420			0.108	0.273
Total	0.4844	0.0448	10.816	0.000	0.396	0.573

N=125 CI -confidence Interval

Model Summary for Worklife Balance

R = .5591, R² = .3125, F (1, 123) = 55.9212, p = .0000

Model Summary for the Faculty Retention

R = .8026, R² = .6442, F(2, 122) = 110.4671, p = .0000

The results from table 4 reveal that work-life balance significantly mediated this relationship (indirect effect coefficient = 0.1853, 95% CI [0.1080, 0.2734], p = 0.0000). Human resource practices influenced retention both directly (coeff = 0.2992, SE = 0.0425, t = 6.6212, p = 0.0000, 95% CI [0.2097, 0.3886]) and indirectly through work-life balance, thereby confirming partial mediation.

Faculty generally had favorable perceptions of human resource practices, with prior descriptive results showing the highest observed ratings overall. Work-life balance was rated as

satisfactory ($R = 0.5591$, $R^2 = 0.3125$, $F(1,123) = 55.9212$, $p = 0.0000$), and retention was also rated highly ($R = 0.8026$, $R^2 = 0.6442$, $F(2,122) = 110.4671$, $p = 0.0000$). Faculty reported positive experiences with institutional policies, administrative support, and professional development, and appreciated flexible scheduling, manageable workloads, and consideration for personal responsibilities. Retention indicators, such as organizational commitment and intent to stay, were rated moderate to high and were closely linked to these factors.

Human resource practices strongly predicted work-life balance (coeff = 0.5434, SE = 0.0727, $t = 7.4780$, $p = 0.0000$, 95% CI [0.3996, 0.6873]), which aligns with earlier descriptive findings indicating that faculty valued support and flexibility. Work-life balance, in turn, improved retention (coeff = 0.3408, SE = 0.0465, $t = 7.3321$, $p = 0.0000$, 95% CI [0.2488, 0.4328]). The total effect was also strong (coeff = 0.4844, SE = 0.0448, $t = 10.8162$, $p = 0.0000$, 95% CI [0.3957, 0.5730]). All p -values were 0.0000, rejecting the null hypothesis of no effects and confirming significant interactions among the variables. Human resource practices, such as offering better training and managing workloads more thoughtfully, make it easier for faculty to balance their work and personal lives. The numbers show a strong link between HR support and work-life balance. When HR provides real help, it takes a lot of stress off faculty and gives them the flexibility they need, something your earlier results also highlight as important to them.

When faculty have a better work-life balance, they are more likely to stay with the institution. It's like giving them enough space and support, which makes them want to continue working there. Overall, the positive impact of HR support and better work-life balance is clear from the strong numbers. The data shows these results are reliable and not just a coincidence.

The direct effect (coeff = 0.2992, $p = 0.0000$) demonstrated that human resource practices independently increased retention through factors such as compensation, promotion, workload policies, performance evaluation, and growth opportunities. These elements signaled organizational stability and contributed to job satisfaction and commitment, even without relying entirely on work-life balance as a mediator.

The indirect effect occurred as human resource practices improved work-life balance ($p = 0.0000$), which in turn increased retention ($p = 0.0000$). This happened through factors such as workload distribution, flexible scheduling, leave policies, and supportive measures that enhanced well-being. The significant partial mediation (with confidence intervals excluding zero) highlighted the importance of human-centered approaches alongside structural HR measures.

Strategically, the consistent $p = 0.0000$ results across models showed that faculty retention depended on both organizational structures and support for well-being. These findings suggested that aviation institutions needed to align HR practices with real improvements in work-life balance to achieve lasting retention.

2. Recommendations

Based on the findings, schools are encouraged to enhance their HR practices by providing equitable benefits, transparent advancement opportunities, and fostering a supportive work environment to help faculty feel valued and increase retention. Additionally, schools should prioritize initiatives that promote work-life balance, such as reducing excessive workloads, offering flexible scheduling, and supporting faculty wellness. Given the significant role of work-life balance in faculty retention, it should be integrated into all HR policies, rather than considered optional. Ultimately, schools should address both working conditions and employee well-being to ensure faculty satisfaction and commitment. Future research may also explore other influences, such as leadership and organizational culture.

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