

# The Relationship between HR Practices and Well-being and the Mediating Role of Work-life Balance: A Study Among Academicians in A Private University

Hanita Sarah Saad<sup>1</sup>, Ramila Devi Ram Sing<sup>2\*</sup> and Djasrizza Jasir<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Business, UNITAR International University, Selangor, Malaysia

<sup>2\*</sup>Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Business, UNITAR International University, Selangor, Malaysia

<sup>3</sup>Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Business, UNITAR International University, Selangor, Malaysia

E-mail: <sup>1</sup>hanita@unitar.my, <sup>2</sup>ramila@unitar.my, <sup>3</sup>djasrizza@unitar.my

ORCID: <sup>1</sup><https://orcid.org/0009-0007-9534-3880>, <sup>2</sup><https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1480-4993>,

<sup>3</sup><https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4436-3837>

(Received 18 November 2025; Revised 16 December 2025, Accepted 02 January 2026; Available online 27 February 2026)

**Abstract - Purpose** – This study looks at how academicians' well-being is affected by HR strategies based on ability, motivation, and opportunity in a private institution in Malaysia. The study also intends to fill a research gap among academic professionals by determining if work-life balance acts as a mitigating element in the connection. **Research Design** – This study executed a quantitative approach to cross-sectional analysis of the variables. Data were collected through a survey targeting university professors, and of the ninety responses received, seventy were utilized for analysis using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to evaluate the direct and indirect relationships between the variables in the study. **Findings** – Results indicate that academic well-being is greatly enhanced by HR policies that foster both ability and motivation, with work-life balance acting as a mediating factor in these connections. However, there was no discernible effect of opportunity-enhancing activities on well-being or work-life balance. This implies that autonomy and participatory roles could be viewed as stressful rather than empowering if they are not handled well. **Limitations** – The investigation was conducted within a single private university with a modest sample size, which may affect the generalizability of the study. The reliance on self-reported data raises the possibility of common method bias. **Future research** should explore these relationships across multiple institutions using longitudinal or mixed-method approaches. **Practical Implications** – Universities should invest in structured training, reward, and performance feedback systems that strengthen ability and motivation. The management must also be cautious in implementing opportunities to enhance practices, ensuring they do not unintentionally add a burden to the academician. **Originality/value** – This work further develops the empirical literature on academic well-being by utilizing the AMO framework in the context of higher education in Malaysia. It provides tangible and demonstrable evidence affirming the connection between human resource practices and well-being, specifically emphasizing the role of work-life balance in the interplay between human resource strategies and academic well-being.

**Keywords:** Ability, Motivation, Opportunity, Work-life Balance, Academician Well-being

## I. INTRODUCTION

The meaning of well-being depends on the lens through which it is being examined. A popular approach is to view well-being from two perspectives, hedonic and eudaimonic (Tamannaifar & Golmohammadi, 2016). The hedonistic approach views well-being as the quest for pleasure while escaping pain and displeasure. It is grounded in the idea that well-being is primarily about experiencing positive emotions and minimizing negative ones. Eudaimonic well-being, meanwhile, refers to a more meaningful form of well-being that focuses on fulfilling one's potential and pursuing a life of purpose and personal growth that aligns with one's values and goals. In this sense, the pursuit of life goals is inherently linked with a person's vocational endeavor. For many, work gives structure and meaning to daily life. It provides purpose, identity, social connections, and personal fulfillment while contributing to overall well-being. Consequently, the culture, policies, relationships, and resources at work become significant contributors to the well-being of employees. Thus, organizations must have proper strategies and practices in place to promote the well-being of their employees.

Previous studies done on organizational performance have extensively examined the impact of HR initiatives and policies on employees' outcomes (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). In the context of well-being, (Pagán-Castaño et al., 2020) showed how employees' positive perception of HR practices contributes to higher well-being and facilitates employee well-being even during hard times. However, despite such evidence, the question as to which set of HR practices will lead to improved well-being remains unanswered. In this regard, found that different combinations of HR initiatives yielded varying outcomes in employees' happiness and motivation (Samifanni, 2024). They concluded that this relationship is nonlinear and susceptible to the influence of other organizational factors (Azoury et al., 2024). A similar outcome was also shown by, where practices that enhance employees' ability had no measurable effect on well-being.

In contrast, practices that enhance motivation and opportunity produce both negative and positive effects on well-being. Supporting the complexities of these relationships, (Cooper et al., 2019) found that a specific combination of HR practices was associated with a decrease in the feeling of satisfaction and contentment among the workers. In contrast, (Bhoir & Sinha, 2024) found that HR practices do lead to positive employee well-being. Hence, as posited by there is contradictory evidence regarding how HR practices influence employees' well-being, warranting further investigation.

Nevertheless, to examine well-being without considering the context in which it is experienced will only provide an incomplete understanding of the concept. (Lambert et al., 2020) argued that well-being is contextual in nature. To capture this effect, culture, ethnicity, gender, and profession have been investigated and proven to influence a person's well-being. Given that studies regarding academic well-being in Malaysia and its link with HR practices are still under researched (Isa & Kadir@Shahar, 2021), this paper proposes to examine the state of Malaysian academics' well-being and how HR practices influence their well-being (Yang & Singh, 2024). The focus on academia is motivated by the drastic changes in academic work from a few decades ago, which have led to role overload, burnout, and fatigue among faculty members (Gegelashvili & Charaia, 2024; Isa & Kadir@Shahar, 2021).

Much of the research on well-being has concentrated on the direct association between the practices adopted by HR and the effect on the well-being of the people in the organization. Prior research indicates that perception of work-life balance can exert either a negative or a positive impact on well-being. However, for academicians whose lives are marked by role conflict, heavy workloads, stress, and burnout, more evidence is needed to clarify the link between these constructs. This gap hence presents justification for the current investigation (Biswas, 2024).

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Employee Well-being

A substantial body of research has proven the link between a happy and contented workforce and favorable organizational outcomes like higher productivity and improved competitiveness (Helne, 2021; Ogbonnaya et al., 2022). Employees reporting greater well-being also tend to experience enhanced job satisfaction and more substantial organizational commitment (Guerci et al., 2022; Salas-Vallina et al., 2021). In addition, a workforce that is healthy and satisfied is more likely to display innovative behavior and resilience when faced with challenges, leading to sustainable organizational performance (Ogbonnaya et al., 2022).

In the context of academia, researchers have explored factors like work-life balance, organizational policies, and organizational culture as determinants of well-being. For example, found a significant negative relationship between

toxic workplace culture, management styles, and the well-being of academic staff in Georgian universities. Additionally, (Poškienė & Kazlauskaitė, 2020) reported that leadership approach, organizational culture, and growth opportunities directly influence the psychological well-being and academic performance of lecturers.

In Malaysia, studies that investigate academician well-being per se are scarce. (Khairi et al., 2024) conducted a study to link knowledge management practices and well-being, finding that academicians' well-being can be improved through proper knowledge management, creation, and retention. Additionally, (Abd Aziz et al., 2021) established that conflict between personal and professional demands significantly affects academician well-being. Meanwhile, other studies, such as those by (Nasution et al., 2022) and (Rusdi et al., 2023), adopted the narrow interpretation of using job satisfaction and burnout as a construct to represent the concept of well-being (Fakhari, 2014). As such, a study focusing on the concept of well-being is very much needed to fill the gap in local literature.

Synthesizing the literature thematically reveals several consistent predictors of academic well-being. Job demands, role conflict, and work-life interference, among others, have been shown to have adverse effects on well-being (Salimzadeh et al., 2021). In contrast, perceived autonomy and institutional support are factors that contribute positively to well-being (Li et al., 2024). However, only a few studies examine these predictors within the structure of formal HR practices. Moreover, much of the existing literature is Western-centric, with limited empirical validation from the contexts of developing countries, particularly Malaysia. Against this backdrop, the present study employs the AMO framework to investigate how HR practices influence academician well-being, while also assessing whether work-life balance mediates the relationship. The aim is to generate findings that advance academic knowledge and provide actionable recommendations for enhancing well-being in Malaysian higher education institutions.

### 2.2 AMO HR Practices

According to the AMO framework, companies can improve employee performance and well-being by implementing HR policies that develop employees' skills, encourage their motivation, and give them chances to succeed. These practices are proven not only to enhance employees' work performance but also to improve employee outcomes (Kaur & Malik, 2024; Zhao et al., 2025).

Implementing practices that enhance employees' abilities, such as professional development and training programs, is crucial for equipping (Arulsamy et al., 2023). Teams who believe they are competent in their jobs report higher job satisfaction because they perceive their work as more meaningful, instilling a sense of pride among job incumbents (Saad et al., 2022; Salas-Vallina et al., 2021). Similarly, employees perceived as competent in their job showed significantly higher levels of well-being because such

practices are positively associated with employees' self-efficacy (Kultalahti et al., 2023). For new academics, professional development activities help to improve their social connections, which adds to the sense of well-being (Gast et al., 2022).

The second component under AMO theory is motivation. This encompasses practices like rewards and recognition, career progression opportunities, and performance management practices that stimulate employees' willingness to exert effort. For academicians, recognition for teaching and research, clarity in promotion processes, and fair evaluation systems contribute to feelings of value and security. Subsequently, a fair reward system will also create working conditions that are perceived as positive and nurturing (Sekar et al., 2021). Academicians who perceived an imbalance between their effort and reward suffer from adverse health and psychological effects, while those who received a reward that is commensurate with their effort report a higher sense of well-being and happiness (Anjum & Islam, 2021).

Another HR process that comes under the umbrella of motivation-enhancing practices is the performance management system. (Poškienė & Kazlauskaitė, 2020) have found that performance management practices are positively linked to employees' welfare at work. Notably, the study emphasized the importance of designing the right mix of appraisal components to achieve the intended positive effect on well-being.

The third feature in the AMO HR model is opportunity. This element centers on the idea that when management provides employees with meaningful participation, and voice, will also increase. In academia, this translates to involvement in curriculum design, classroom management, research planning, and institutional governance (Yadav, 2025). When individuals feel they have a say in organizational processes, their sense of belonging and psychological empowerment are enhanced by this perceived influence over organizational decisions (Sharma & Sharma, 2024; Yadav, 2025). Additionally, having job autonomy is also a vital component in promoting academic well-being. As shown by (Sharma & Sharma, 2024), academicians highly value job autonomy and consider it a significant factor in their perception of well-being. The same conclusion was also offered by Anjum and Islam (2021), who showed the importance of autonomy in determining happiness in academic work.

### 2.3 Work-life Balance

(Greenhaus & Allen, 2011) refer to an individual's ability to efficiently manage and meet the demands of his personal life and professional obligations as having work-life balance (WLB). The notion is grounded in the idea that both spheres in a person's life can be in harmony and mutually enriching rather than conflicting. In the academic context, where teaching, research, administrative duties, and often boundaryless workloads intersect, WLB has emerged as a

crucial consideration in any discourse on the well-being of teachers and lecturers (Miranda & Khan, 2022; Nabawanuka & Ekmekcioglu, 2022). (Stankevičienė et al., 2021) similarly emphasize that WLB not only directly influences well-being but can also serve as a mediator between workplace culture and employees' physical and psychological health outcomes.

Within the AMO framework, practices that nurture the opportunity dimension, like flexible work arrangements, participative decision-making, and job autonomy, are particularly relevant in creating work-life balance. Have found that when employees are given control over work schedules, such autonomy improves their WLB and provides a buffer against the stressful impact of commuting, which in turn enhances their well-being. Similarly, motivation-enhancing practices such as recognition have also been positively linked to improved work-life balance and quality, resulting in increased feelings of employees' well-being (Sekar et al., 2021).

### III. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The research framework used in this research is shown in Fig. 1. The independent variables are the AMO-enhancing HR practices, which include training to represent ability, reward and performance management practices to represent motivation, and job autonomy and participative decision-making to represent the opportunity component. The mediating variable for this study is work-life balance, while the dependent variable is academic well-being.

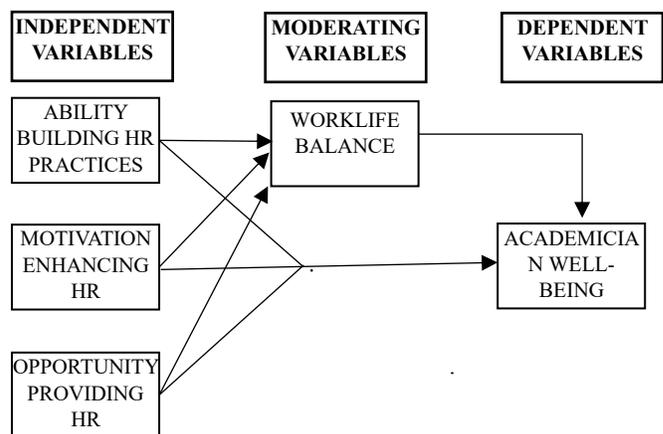


Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework of The Relationship Between HR Practices and Academician Well-Being with The Mediating Role of Work Life Balance

### IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1. Study Design

This study employed a cross-sectional quantitative design to examine the relationship between the HR practices adopted at a higher educational institution and the well-being of the institution's faculty members. A mediating factor, work-life balance, is also positioned in this relationship to examine its effect. A structured questionnaire was developed and later

employed to solicit responses from the study's participants. The instrument was based on established scales identified through a review of relevant literature, with items adopted and adapted to suit the present research context. The questionnaire has two main sections, identified as Section A and Section B. Section A features questions to capture demographic information of the survey participants, specifically age, gender, educational qualification, service tenure, income, and teaching load.

The second section assessed the study constructs through five subsections. Three subsections measured the independent variables: ability-building practices (7 items), practices that enhance motivation (10 items), and opportunity-providing practices (7 items). One subsection measured the mediating variables, specifically work-life balance, through 7 items. The concluding sub-part encompassed 12 questions pertaining to the physical, mental, and social components of well-being. The entire questionnaire contained 43 questions. Every item was positively framed, and a Likert scale of 1 to 5 was deployed to gauge the response, with 1 meaning Strongly Disagree and 5 Strongly Agree. The scales pertaining to AMO HR practices were taken from (Grant et al., 2007) and (Guerci et al., 2022), work-life balance from (Zheng et al., 2015).

#### 4.2. Data Collection

Participants were drawn from a private higher education institution in Selangor, Malaysia. An invitation containing the online questionnaire link was sent to all academic staff via institutional email. Follow-up reminders were posted in internal WhatsApp groups to increase participation. Data collection continued for two months, yielding 90 usable responses from 234 invitations, representing a 38.4% response rate.

#### 4.3. Sample Size

The population targeted in this research comprises full-time academic staff across faculties and ranks in the selected institution, with a total headcount of 234. This institution was purposively chosen to represent the private higher education sector, which is increasingly subject to performance-driven HR practices and work-life integration challenges. Given the relatively small and accessible population size, a census sampling approach was adopted, wherein all 234 academicians were asked to participate in the survey. This strategy enhances the statistical power of the analysis and reduces sampling predisposition by maximizing the inclusion of the population frame. Although census sampling is uncommon in large-scale studies, it is suitable and justifiable when the total population is manageable and relevant to the scope of inquiry (Creswell, 2021).

### V. HYPOTHESIS STATEMENTS

A large body of research has concluded that organizational climate shaped by HR policies and practices influences both the attitudes and emotions of the employees. Salas-Vallina

(2021) showed that HR practices that promote employees' competency, autonomy, and motivation result in increased work-life quality and a feeling of well-being. In the same vein and have found that companies that promote employability by providing training to enhance training skills and competency report higher levels of job satisfaction and well-being among their people. Additionally, (Poškienė & Kazlauskaitė, 2020) established that organizations that provide opportunities and acknowledgment to their employees create a more resilient workforce with a higher sense of well-being even during the pandemic. Drawing from these findings, the following hypotheses are proposed.

*H1a: Ability-building HR practices will directly and positively affect academician well-being.*

*H1b: Motivation-enhancing HR practices will positively and directly affect academician well-being.*

*H1c: Opportunity-providing HR practices will positively and directly affect academician well-being.*

In relation to work-life balance, (Alzadjali & Ahmad, 2024) found that training, recognition, and empowerment significantly influence employees' perception of balance between work and personal life. Most importantly, in higher education institutions, (Latif & Ismal, 2021) found that HR practices have a strong statistical significance on university employees' work-life balance. Hence, the following hypotheses are developed based on these insights.

*H2a: Ability-building HR practices will positively and directly influence academics' work-life balance.*

*H2b: Motivation-enhancing HR practices will positively and directly influence academics' work-life balance.*

*H2c: Opportunity-providing HR practices will positively and directly influence academics' work-life balance.*

Work-life balance is a major factor in determining employee well-being. Maintaining a balance between work and personal life is essential in academic settings, where severe workloads and a blurring of the lines between the two are common. Research indicates that when institutions provide policies enabling employees to balance work and personal demands through flexible scheduling and teleworking, such practices have significantly improved both employees' morale and well-being (Ogbonnaya & Aryee, 2022). Meanwhile, (Latif & Ismail, 2021) also observed that supportive HR environments increased both organizational commitment and perceived work-life balance among university lecturers, leading to enhanced job satisfaction and increased retention rate in the university. Given the aforesaid argument, the final set of hypotheses for this study is:

*H3: Academicians' well-being will be positively correlated with their work-life balance.*

H4a: The relationship between academicians' well-being and ability-building HR practices will be mediated by work-life balance.

H4b: The association between academicians' well-being and HR policies that boost motivation will be mediated by work-life balance.

H4c: The relationship between academicians' well-being and HR practices that provide opportunities will be mediated by work-life balance.

## VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 6.1 Descriptive Analysis

An online questionnaire was administered over two months to all the university's active academic staff, with data collection facilitated via institutional email. WhatsApp groups were used for reminder prompts. Ultimately, 90 responses were deemed viable for analysis. The distribution of respondents is detailed in TABLE I.

TABLE I DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ACADEMICIAN RESPONDENTS

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentages
Gender		
Male	27	30%
Female	63	70%
Age		
25 - 33	6	6.7%
34 - 43	24	26.7%
44 - 53	39	43.3%
54 - 63	21	23.3%
Education Level		
Master's Degree	54	60%
Doctorate Degree	30	33.3%

Professional Years of Teaching Experience	Count	Percentage
6	6	6.7%
1 to 5	15	16.7%
6 to 10	15	16.7%
11 to 15	9	10%
16 to 20	15	16.7%
20 years and above	36	40%

The results indicate that female academicians made up 70% of the sample, which mirrors the actual gender distribution in the institution. The most significant proportion of respondents (43.3%) was between 44 and 53 years old, suggesting a generally experienced cohort. The finding reinforces that 40% of participants had been in service with the university for more than 20 years.

The strength and importance of the associations listed in the hypothesis section were assessed using the structural model. Fig. 2 shows the original model, whereas Fig. 3 shows the modified model.

The initial assessment of the measurement model using SmartPLS revealed that several indicator items exhibited low factor loading, which adversely affected the constructs' reliability and validity. In line with established practice, items with standardized loadings below the acceptable threshold of 0.70 were reviewed and subsequently removed to enhance the model's psychometric properties (Hair Jr et al., 2021; Ho & Kuvaas, 2020). Consequently, twelve items are removed to enhance model which are A1, A2 (Ability); B1, B2, B3, B6, B7 (Motivation); C1 (Opportunity); F1, F9, F11, F12 (Well-Being). The original model fit value also improved from 0.613 to 0.641 after the deletion. The final, refined model, as shown in Fig. 2, retained only the well-performing items and fulfilled the necessary criteria for validity and reliability, which uphold the strength of the subsequent structural model analysis.

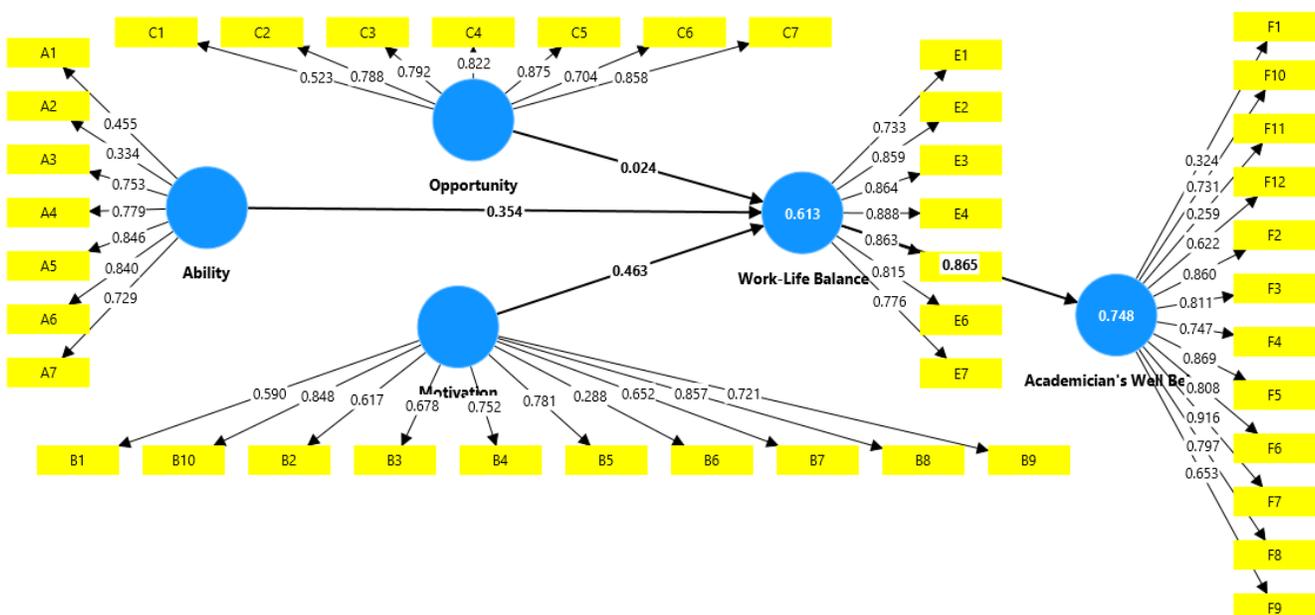


Fig. 2 Preliminary Structural Model Analysis Using SmartPLS

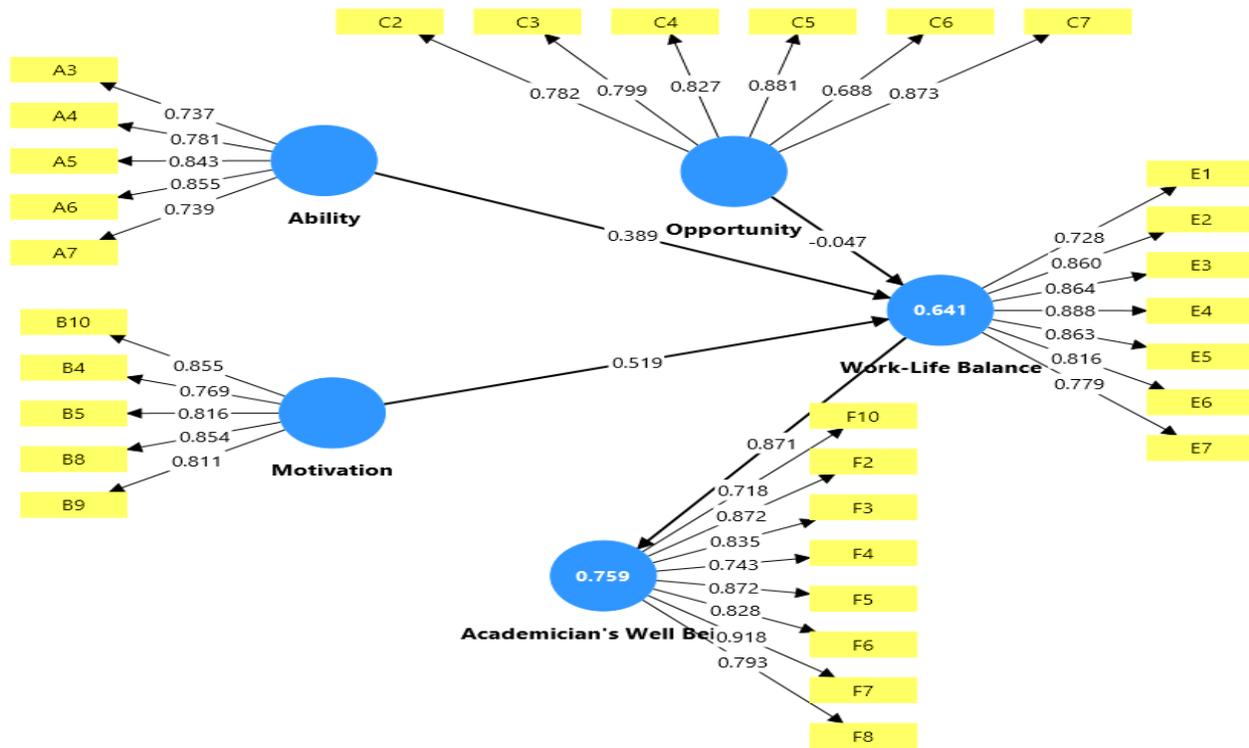


Fig. 3 Structural Model with Standardized Loadings and Path Coefficients from PLS-SEM Analysis

As shown in Fig. 3, all retained indicators exceeded the recommended 0.70 loading, except for C6 (0.688), which was nevertheless retained due to its theoretical importance and minimal impact on reliability and AVE (Hair et al., 2021). Specifically, item loadings ranged from 0.737 to 0.855 for Ability, 0.769 to 0.855 for Motivation, 0.688 to 0.881 for Opportunity, 0.728 to 0.888 for Work-Life Balance, and 0.718 to 0.918 for Academician’s Well-Being. These results affirm the reliability and unidimensionality of the model.

This may reflect the perceptual closeness of constructs in the academic context, where job empowerment in opportunity-providing practices and motivation-related practices might coincide and be perceived as parallel by the lecturers. Similarly, Work-life Balance and Academician well-being have the value of HTMT at 0.929. Although this is below the accepted limit of 0.95, it will be treated cautiously due to the conceptual closeness of the constructs. The rest of the variables have values well within the recommended range, from 0.737 to 0.835, indicating that discriminant validity has been established.

TABLE II CONSTRUCT RELIABILITY AND CONVERGENT VALIDITY ASSESSMENT

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (Rho_A)	Composite Reliability (Rho_C)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Ability	0.852	0.882	0.894	0.628
Motivation	0.879	0.881	0.912	0.675
Opportunity	0.895	0.910	0.920	0.658
AWB	0.932	0.941	0.944	0.680
WLB	0.924	0.929	0.939	0.689

The dependability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite dependability. TABLE II shows that the constructions have strong internal consistency, with values ranging from 0.852 to 0.932. Furthermore, the construct's reliability was assessed using composite reliability rho\_A. With a rho\_A value of 0.8 or higher, the findings

demonstrated that all constructs had good internal consistency. AVE, or Average Variance Extracted, was then used to assess convergent validity. Acceptable convergent validity is indicated by the AVE values, which varied from 0.628 (Ability) to 0.689 (Work-Life Balance).

TABLE III TOTAL DIRECT EFFECT

	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
H1a: Ability → Academician's Well Being	0.339	0.341	0.073	4.618	0.000
H1b: Motivation → Academician's Well Being	0.453	0.453	0.098	4.605	0.000
H1c: Opportunity → Academician's Well Being	-0.041	-0.036	0.114	0.360	0.719

The analysis of the results showed that the direct effect between the AMO-enhancing practices and academic well-being supported H1a and H1b, while H1c was not. As shown in TABLE III, academician well-being can be significantly increased by ability-building practices ( $\beta = 0.339, t = 4.618, p < .001$ ). This provides support for H1a and corresponds to the proposition made by (Kultalahti et al., 2023; Poškienė & Kazlauskaitė, 2020) that when academicians are provided with the relevant training and skills development practices, these initiatives contributes to improved well-being among lecturers because the academicians feels more adept and knowledgeable in performing their job whether teaching, researching, supervising or doing administrative tasks in the faculty.

Similarly, Motivation-enhancing practices exhibited a strong and significant relationship with well-being ( $\beta = 0.453, t = 4.605, p < .001$ ), confirming H1b. The results suggest that when academicians receive recognition and performance feedback, they experience job satisfaction and happiness, knowing their efforts and hard work are acknowledged by management. These findings are consistent with (Salas-Vallina et al., 2021), who emphasizes the centrality of motivation-related HR strategies in enhancing employee emotional and psychological states.

On the other hand, Opportunity-enhancing practices did not significantly influence well-being ( $\beta = -0.041, t = 0.360, p = .719$ ), and H1c was therefore not supported. This finding suggests that while training and motivation initiatives are directly associated with increased feelings of well-being among academicians, participative or involvement-based practices may not yield the same positive outcomes. This non-significant and negative coefficient suggests that merely providing opportunities for participation and involvement may not directly enhance lecturers' well-being and could, in particular academic contexts, be perceived as additional workload or administrative burden. This outcome aligns with emerging critiques of the AMO framework that call for a more context-sensitive understanding of 'opportunity' in environments where job autonomy and workload are already strained. Using the self-depleting theory (Baumeister et al., 1998), it is possible to argue that when academicians are given too much autonomy to decide on matters like course assessments, projects, research, publications, and consultancy activities, their workload increases, consuming the limited resources available. In turn, their overall well-being will be affected by the additional pressure and peer competition (Zhou, 2020). This common assumption of 'more is better' has also been dispelled by Ho & Kuvaas, 2019, where the findings showed a non-significant outcome in wellbeing due to the negative synergy among the AMO HR practices bundles.

TABLE IV PATH COEFFICIENT ANALYSIS

	Standardized Coefficients ( $\beta$ ),	Path	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
H2a: Ability → Work-Life Balance	0.389		0.390	0.086	4.514	0.000
H2b: Motivation → Work-Life Balance	0.519		0.517	0.109	4.783	0.000
H2c: Opportunity → Work-Life Balance	-0.047		-0.041	0.130	0.362	0.717
H3: Work-Life Balance → Academician's Well Being	0.871		0.875	0.022	39.384	0.000

Using path coefficient analysis via PLS-SEM, additional studies were undertaken. For each hypothesised path, TABLE IV shows the standardised path coefficients ( $\beta$ ), mean and sample SD (standard deviation), t values, and p values. Findings indicate that the work-life balance of academic staff is considerably enhanced by the ability-building HR practices ( $\beta = 0.389, t = 4.514, p < 0.001$ ). Likewise, work-life balance is considerably enhanced by the motivation-boosting HR practices ( $\beta = 0.519, t = 4.783, p < 0.001$ ). These results suggest that when employees perceive the institution as supportive of skills enhancement and having practices that motivate the staff, their feeling of work-life balance is significantly enhanced.

In contrast, Opportunity-providing HR practices do not possess a statistically significant relationship with Work-Life Balance ( $\beta = -0.047, t = 0.362, p = 0.717$ ). This insignificant relationship may be attributed to two key factors within the academic context. First, opportunities for participative decision-making often involve academicians serving on committees or holding administrative roles, which increase

their responsibilities and workload. Rather than alleviating pressure, these added duties may exacerbate stress, thereby undermining work-life balance. Second, the autonomy granted is typically centered on *how* work is performed, rather than *when* or *how much*, which are more directly relevant to complementary effort and individual life. Given the grueling hours and weekend commitments experienced by academicians in the university, such practices providing opportunities may not effectively balance their life.

Work-Life Balance showed a substantial and statistically important constructive effect on Academician's Well-Being ( $\beta = 0.871, t = 39.384, p < 0.001$ ). This robust relationship underscores the critical role of maintaining work-life harmony as a determinant of overall employee well-being within academic settings. This finding aligns with previous research (Miranda & Khan, 2022; Nabawanuka & Ekmeckioglu, 2022), particularly within the contexts of higher education institutions, where work boundaries are often blurred between one role and another.

All of these findings empirically support the relationship between employee well-being and work-life balance. Nevertheless, the results also suggest that not all HR interventions yield uniform outcomes. Thus, the organization

needs to carefully differentiate and tailor HR strategies to fulfill the psychological and practical needs of academic staff.

TABLE V THROUGH MEDIATION

	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
H4a: Ability → Work-Life Balance → Academician's Well Being	0.339	0.341	0.073	4.618	0.000
H4b: Motivation → Work-Life Balance → Academician's Well Being	0.453	0.453	0.098	4.605	0.000
H4c: Opportunity → Work-Life Balance → Academician's Well Being	-0.041	-0.036	0.114	0.360	0.719

Work-Life Balance's mediating function in the relationship between academicians' well-being, ability, motivation, and opportunity-anchored HR practices was evaluated using the bootstrapping technique (with 5,000 sub-samples). The results are shown in TABLE V. The results show support for the theory that faculty balance in their work and personal lives mediates the association between ability-building practices and well-being. The indirect effect, although moderate, was still positively significant ( $\beta = 0.339, p < 0.001$ ). This suggests that when organizations enhance employees' skills and capabilities, such initiatives could indirectly improve academicians' sense of contentment by enabling them to manage work-life demands more effectively.

The analysis revealed the most substantial mediation effect among the three paths ( $\beta = 0.453, p < 0.001$ ), underscoring Work-Life Balance's critical role in translating motivational

HR interventions into positive well-being outcomes. This study emphasises the value of encouraging meaningful work, acknowledgement, and internal motivation since these factors not only keep students interested in their studies but also improve their work-life balance, which in turn improves their general well-being.

TABLE VI shows that the indirect path was statistically non-significant ( $\beta = -0.041, p = 0.719$ ). This outcome aligns with prior findings and reinforces the interpretation that, in the higher education setting, opportunity-oriented initiatives can be counterproductive if not aligned with manageable workloads and supportive structures. Negating their potentials to foster balance and, by extension, well-being. Overall, these findings reinforce the differentiated impact of AMO-enhancing HR practices on employee well-being and emphasize the role of Work-Life Balance as an important mediator in these relationships.

TABLE VI: MEASUREMENT MODEL SUMMARY

Hypothesis	Path	Beta Coefficient	t-Statistic	p-Value	Result
H1a	Ability → Well-Being	0.339	4.618	0	Supported
H1b	Motivation → Well-Being	0.453	4.605	0	Supported
H1c	Opportunity → Well-Being	-0.041	0.36	0.719	Not Supported
H2a	Ability → Work-Life Balance	0.389	4.514	0	Supported
H2b	Motivation → Work-Life Balance	0.519	4.783	0	Supported
H2c	Opportunity → Work-Life Balance	-0.047	0.362	0.717	Not Supported
H3	Work-Life Balance → Well-Being	0.871	39.384	0	Supported
H4a	Ability → WLB → Well-Being	0.339	4.618	0	Supported
H4b	Motivation → WLB → Well-Being	0.453	4.605	0	Supported
H4c	Opportunity → WLB → Well-Being	-0.041	0.36	0.719	Not Supported

**VII. CONCLUSION**

This study looked at how HR practices, work-life balance (WLB), and academicians' well-being relate to each other in a private university in Malaysia. It found that HR practices that improve ability and motivation significantly improve WLB, which in turn mediates their positive impact on overall well-being. However, HR practices that improve opportunities did not significantly affect WLB, indicating that autonomy and participative roles may be mishandled and viewed as extra work. These results demonstrate how context-sensitive HR implementation is and how crucial

WLB is to converting HR initiatives into well-being outcomes. By applying AMO theory to academic contexts, highlighting the mediating function of WLB in HR-well-being relationships, and filling a vacuum in the literature on higher education, the study makes a theoretical contribution. Future research could benefit from longitudinal or mixed-method designs and larger multi-institutional samples, while also considering moderators such as leadership, organizational culture, pay equity and gender. Qualitative research (e.g. interviews, focus groups) could provide important insights, as could cross-national studies offering assess cultural applicability. Consequently, the universities studied should aim to better position their strategic HR policy

integration, enhancing training, recognition, and performance appraisal practices, and relaxing restrictions and administrative burdens to promote the well-being of staff and the functioning of the university.

#### *Suggestion for methodological and quality enhancement*

This study emphasizes how HR procedures have a significant impact on academicians' work-life balance and overall well-being. Future research should use longitudinal designs to minimize bias and record changes over time, further improving the quality of the findings. Generalisability can be improved by enlarging samples to encompass a variety of university kinds. It is advised to adopt mixed-method approaches, combining surveys with focus groups or interviews, to gain a deeper understanding of the contextual elements that influence employees. Technically, the use of sophisticated statistical methods like SEM or PLS would facilitate advanced analyses of mediation and moderation interplay. Organizations should periodically review HR policy frameworks to incorporate feedback related to the ongoing structure of organizational well-being. As a final point, examining the interplay of culture, leadership, and digitally driven transformations within an organization as moderating variables would provide a more comprehensive perspective on sustainable HR practices in the higher education sector.

#### *Appendix A: Sample Questionnaire*

Sample items for measuring each construct in this study are provided below. The respondents provided their answers using a 5-point Likert scale, which includes strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree.

##### A. Ability-enhancing HR practices

1. My institution regularly offers professional development opportunities.
2. I participate in training programs that enhance my research and teaching abilities.
3. Attendance at scholarly conferences and workshops is encouraged by the university.
4. Performance reviews emphasize skill development over criticism.
5. My work duties align with my academic background and skills.

##### B. Motivation-enhancing HR practices

1. Management acknowledges and rewards my achievements.
2. Promotion policies are transparent and based on merit.
3. University incentives enhance my motivation and performance.
4. I am provided with motivational, constructive feedback.

5. My efforts are aligned with the institutional goals and are appreciated.

##### C. Opportunity-enhancing HR practices

1. Participation in decision-making processes is encouraged.
2. The department values my thoughts and recommendations.
3. There are plenty of chances to work on projects with coworkers.
4. The management gives freedom to try out novel teaching strategies.
5. I have enough freedom to organize and carry out my academic work.

##### D. Work-life Balance

1. I am able to successfully balance my personal and professional obligations.
2. I have adequate flexibility at work to attend to personal or family obligations.
3. I don't often feel stressed out by demanding work schedules.
4. A healthy work-life balance is encouraged at my institution.
5. I consider my workload to be manageable and appropriate.

##### E. Employee Well-being

1. At work, I feel both intellectually and physically well.
2. My workplace fosters a positive and contented atmosphere.
3. My superiors and coworkers provide me with emotional support.
4. My work helps me grow as a person and be happy.
5. I am happy with my job life at the institution overall.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Abd Aziz, N. N., Yazid, Z. N. A., Tarmuji, N. H., Samsudin, M. A., & Abd Majid, A. (2021). The Role of Religiosity on Work-Family Conflict, Work-Family Enrichment and Well-Being among Muslim Women Academicians in Malaysia. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 11(3), 472-497. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v11-i3/8807>
- [2] Alzadjali, B., & Ahmad, S. Z. (2024). The impacts of a high commitment work system on well-being: the mediating role of organization support and employee work-life balance. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 56(1), 53-77. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ICT-11-2022-0084>
- [3] Anjum, N., & Islam, M. A. (2021). Workplace Happiness: Exploring the Factors Shaping Academics' Subjective Well-being. *Journal of Management in Practice*, 6(1).

- [4] Anwar, G., & Abdullah, N. N. (2021). The impact of Human resource management practice on Organizational performance. *International Journal of Engineering, Business and Management (IJEEM)*, 5, 35-47. <https://dx.doi.org/10.22161/ijeem.5.1.4>
- [5] Arulsamy, A. S., Singh, I., Kumar, M. S., Panchal, J. J., & Bajaj, K. K. (2023). Employee training and development enhancing employee performance—A study. *Samdarshi*, 16(3), 1-11.
- [6] Azoury, N., Subrahmanyam, S., & Sarkis, N. (2024). The Influence of a Data-Driven Culture on Product Development and Organizational Success through the Use of Business Analytics. *Journal of Wireless Mobile Networks, Ubiquitous Computing, and Dependable Applications*, 15(2), 123-134. <https://doi.org/10.58346/JOWUA.2024.12.009>
- [7] Bhoir, M., & Sinha, V. (2024). Employee well-being human resource practices: a systematic literature review and directions for future research. *Future Business Journal*, 10(1), 95.
- [8] Biswas, A. (2024). Modelling an Innovative Machine Learning Model for Student Stress Forecasting. *Global Perspectives in Management*, 2(2), 22-30.
- [9] Cooper, B., Wang, J., Bartram, T., & Cooke, F. L. (2019). Well-being-oriented human resource management practices and employee performance in the Chinese banking sector: The role of social climate and resilience. *Human Resource Management*, 58(1), 85-97. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21934>
- [10] Creswell, J. W. (2021). *A concise introduction to mixed methods research*. SAGE publications.
- [11] Fakhari, M. (2014). Relationship of Organizational culture, Teamwork and Job satisfaction in interprofessional teams. *International Academic Journal of Science and Engineering*, 1(2), 36-44.
- [12] Gast, I., Neelen, M., Delnoij, L., Menten, M., Mihai, A., & Grohnert, T. (2022). Supporting the well-being of new university teachers through teacher professional development. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 866000. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.866000>
- [13] Gegelashvili, N., & Charaia, V. (2024). Factors Affecting the Well-being of Academic Staff. *International Journal of Health, Wellness & Society*, 14(3). <https://doi.org/10.18848/2156-8960/CGP/v14i03/91-113>
- [14] Grant, A. M., Christianson, M. K., & Price, R. H. (2007). Happiness, health, or relationships? Managerial practices and employee well-being tradeoffs. *Academy of management perspectives*, 21(3), 51-63. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2007.26421238>
- [15] Greenhaus, J. H. & Allen, T. D. (2011). Work-family balance: A review and extension of the literature. In J. C. Quick & L. E. Tetrick (Eds.), *Handbook of occupational health psychology* (pp. 165-183). American Psychological Association
- [16] Guerci, M., Hauff, S., & Gilardi, S. (2022). High performance work practices and their associations with health, happiness and relational well-being: are there any tradeoffs?. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 33(2), 329-359. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2019.1695647>
- [17] Hair Jr, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., Sarstedt, M., Danks, N. P., & Ray, S. (2021). *Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) using R: A workbook* (p. 197). Springer Nature.
- [18] Ho, H., & Kuvaas, B. (2020). Human resource management systems, employee well-being, and firm performance from the mutual gains and critical perspectives: The well-being paradox. *Human Resource Management*, 59(3), 235-253. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21990>
- [19] Isa, K., & Kadir@ Shahar, H. (2021, July). Factors associated with stress among academic staff at a Malaysian public university. In *AIP Conference Proceedings* (Vol. 2347, No. 1, p. 020021). AIP Publishing LLC. <https://doi.org/10.1063/5.0052834>
- [20] Kaur, H., & Malik, P. (2024). HR practices and subjective well-being: A systematic review and conceptual model based on the AMO framework. *Human Systems Management*, 01672533251339610. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01672533251339610>
- [21] Khairi, S. M. M., Nor, N. M., Johar, E. R., & Rosnan, H. (2024). Knowledge Management Practices and Academician Well-Being: A Case Study of Selected Private Universities in Malaysia. *International Journal of Economics, Management and Accounting*, 32(1), 101-127.
- [22] Kultalahti, S., Viitala, R., Hujala, M., & Kekale, T. (2023). Employee well-being: the role of perceived competence. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 35(7), 648-661. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JWL-06-2023-0095>
- [23] Lambert, L., Lomas, T., van de Weijer, M. P., Passmore, H. A., Joshanloo, M., Harter, J., & Diener, E. (2020). Towards a greater global understanding of wellbeing: A proposal for a more inclusive measure. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 10(2), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v10i2.1037>
- [24] Latif, N. A., & Ismail, R. (2021). HRM practices and work-life balance among academic staff: Evidence from Malaysian public universities. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Innovation in Hospitality and Tourism*, 10(3), 25-38
- [25] Li, M., Fu, N., Chadwick, C., & Harney, B. (2024). Untangling human resource management and employee wellbeing relationships: Differentiating job resource HR practices from challenge demand HR practices. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 34(1), 214-235. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12527>
- [26] Miranda, J. C., & Khan, R. K. (2022). An exploratory study into the aspects of work-life balance among academics in Australian Universities. *Malaysian Journal of Qualitative Research*, 8(2), 41-52.
- [27] Nabawanuka, H., & Ekmekcioglu, E. B. (2022). Millennials in the workplace: perceived supervisor support, work-life balance and employee well-being. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 54(1), 123-144. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ICT-05-2021-0041>
- [28] Nasution, N. J. R., Mohamed, S., Hashim, N. A., Norley Shuib, A. W. N., & Al, N. F. (2022). Psychological Distress, Burnout and Job Satisfaction among Academicians in Science and Technology Faculties in a Malaysian University. *ASEAN Journal of Psychiatry*, 23(6). <https://doi.org/10.54615/2231-7805.47262>
- [29] Ogbonnaya, C., & Aryee, S. (2022). HRM practices, employee well-being, and organizational performance. In *Handbook on management and employment practices* (pp. 369-391). Cham: Springer International Publishing
- [30] Pagán-Castaño, E., Maseda-Moreno, A., & Santos-Rojo, C. (2020). Wellbeing in work environments. *Journal of Business Research*, 115, 469-474. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.12.007>
- [31] Poškienė, E., & Kazlauskaitė, R. (2020). Organizational Caring for Employee Wellbeing through Performance Management. *Human Resource Management/Zarządzanie Zasobami Ludzkimi*, 13(5). <https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0014.4442>
- [32] Rusdi, F. A. D., Razak, A. A., & Embong, Z. (2023). "I find it very difficult to go to work; it is emotionally exhausting": Understanding the Burnout and Underlying Emotions among Malaysian University Academics. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 22(10), 37-53. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.22.10.3>
- [33] Saad, H. S., Jasin, D., Kaur, S., Hansaram, H. R., & Loy, C. K. (2022). Factors influencing turnover intention: A study among primary school teachers in Selangor. *Asian Journal of Social Science Research*, 4(2), 26-41.
- [34] Salas-Vallina, A., Alegre, J., & López-Cabrales, Á. (2021). The challenge of increasing employees' well-being and performance: How human resource management practices and engaging leadership work together toward reaching this goal. *Human Resource Management*, 60(3), 333-347. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.22021>
- [35] Salimzadeh, R., Hall, N. C., & Saroyan, A. (2021, September). Examining academics' strategies for coping with stress and emotions: A review of research. In *Frontiers in Education* (Vol. 6, p. 660676). Frontiers Media SA. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2021.660676>

- [36] Samifanni, F. (2024). Understanding the Japanese University Students' Motivation and Demotivation in Attending EFL Classes. *International Academic Journal of Social Sciences*, 11(1), 11–25. <https://doi.org/10.9756/IAJSS/V1111/IAJSS1103>
- [37] Sekar, S., Sivakumar, G., Magenthiran, J., Kirupanantha, J. R. T., Fernandez, R., & Loy, C. K. (2021). Impact of human resource management practices on employee turnover intention. *Asian Journal of Social Science Research*, 3(2), 57-74. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8063341>
- [38] Sharma, A., & Sharma, H. (2024). Job autonomy and employee psychological well-being: The mediating effect of employee voice. *South Asian Journal of Human Resources Management*, 23220937241257279. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23220937241257279>
- [39] Stankevičienė, A., Tamaševičius, V., Diskienė, D., Grakauskas, Ž., & Rudinskaja, L. (2021). The mediating effect of work-life balance on the relationship between work culture and employee well-being. *Business Economics and Management (JBEM)*, 22(4), 988-1007. <https://doi.org/10.3846/jbem.2021.14729>
- [40] Tamannaifar, M., & Golmohammadi, S. (2016). Comparison of psychological well-being and job stress between teachers of special and ordinary schools in Isfahan city. *Hum. Res. Manag*, 3, 11-19.
- [41] Yadav, P. (2025). Implementing Sustainable Human Resource Management Practices in Higher Education Institutions: A Case Study Approach. In *Green HRM Awareness and Training in Higher Education Institutions* (pp. 99-110). IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-2956-6.ch004>
- [42] Yang, C., & Singh, S. S. B. (2024). User Experience in Information System Platforms: A Study on Learning Styles and Academic Challenges. *Journal of Internet Services and Information Security*, 14(4), 209-223. <https://doi.org/10.58346/JISIS.2024.14.012>
- [43] Zhao, D., Tang, N., Lim, V. K., & Hai, S. (2025). AMO-Enhancing HRMPs and Employee Well-Being Dimensions: A Three-Level Meta-Analysis. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 63(2), e70013. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1744-7941.70013>
- [44] Zheng, C., Molineux, J., Mirshekary, S., & Scarparo, S. (2015). Developing individual and organisational work-life balance strategies to improve employee health and wellbeing. *Employee Relations*, 37(3), 354–379. <https://doi.org/10.1108/er-10-2013-0142>
- [45] Zhou, E. (2020). The “too-much-of-a-good-thing” effect of job autonomy and its explanation mechanism. *Psychology*, 11(2), 299-313.