

**Exploring Mental Health Issues of University Faculty in Relation to Workplace
Environment: A Qualitative Study**

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ABSTRACT

The mental health of university faculty has emerged as a critical concern in universities lately with the workplace environment playing a central role in shaping well-being. This study explores the interplay between workplace stressors, institutional policies, and individual experiences that contribute to mental health issues among university faculty members. Using a qualitative research design, semi-structured interviews were conducted to examine the lived experiences of faculty. Findings reveal that key stressors such as heavy workload, lack of job security, limited autonomy, and inadequate institutional support contribute to high levels of stress, anxiety, and burnout. These challenges have significant implications for faculty well-being, job satisfaction, and overall academic productivity. The study highlights the urgent need for universities to prioritize faculty mental health by fostering supportive work environments, providing accessible resources and services, and cultivating a culture of openness around mental health. This research contributes to the growing literature on faculty well-being in higher education and offers implications for university administrators, policymakers, and faculty. By addressing the root causes of occupational stress, institutions can promote a healthier, more supportive academic environment that benefits the entire university community.

Keywords: Faculty Mental Health, Work Environment, Occupational Stress, Academic Stress, Job Insecurity

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

This research is conducted on the background of the growing levels of mental anxiety, depression, and stress among the university faculty all around the world (Hatcher *et al.*, 2017). Academic setting, which is highly competitive and requires many skills to survive, scarce resources and a high-performance demand can be a drain to the mind. Moreover, the issue was worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic, which is why it is essential that universities should provide mental health support (Huang *et al.*, 2020). Simultaneously, faculty members can also go through high-stress levels and burnout, which may influence their mental health (Gillespie *et al.*, 2019). Mental illness is a serious problem because its consequences are extremely high dropout rates, a reduction in academic achievements, and even suicidal tendencies (Hatcher *et al.*, 2017). Faculty members are the core assets of the educational-process across academia and they have power to shape individuals, group and society as well as addressing the needs of generating healthy and competent human resources by the educational process to serve the needs of community and employment. A dedicated and accomplished group of individuals shaping young minds, conducting groundbreaking research, and advancing knowledge, faculty may face a hidden struggle with demanding workloads, intense expectations, teaching excellence, and administrative duties (Burns *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, the mental health of the

academics is an issue that should be addressed as soon as possible, and it could have both individual and institutional manifestations.

In recent years, the issue of mental health has become a priority, and mental health conditions emerge among the top causes of disease burdens. The World Health Organization (WHO) regards mental health as a fundamental human right and has defined the concept in terms of mental well-being which allows one to handle the pressures of life, capitalize on their potentialities, learn and work effectively and contribute to the community and to socio economic growth. According to the definition provided by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and National Institutes of Health (NIH) mental health encompasses emotional, psychological, and social well-being of persons and influences how they think, feel, and behave. It is also important in defining the way people deal with stress, their relationship with others and in making healthy decisions (Gillespie *et al.*, 2019). The first reason is that mental health is considered a social stigma, and people prefer not to share their situation with others or go to professionals specializing in it. This is even more conspicuous in times when other social determinants are at work and this includes lower socio-economic groups, persons that have disabilities of accessing mental health services, persons in a state of economic crisis, and persons that do not have family and friends to refer to and they tend to have indicators of no-good mental health. Among the immediate effects of the same is vulnerability to developing psychosis, not to mention deteriorated clinical results. Employment, education, health, social care as well as welfare benefits are other areas which mental health conditions indirectly impact. Second, effects of mental health conditions on health and disease are still significant (Baker *et al.*, 2018).

According to a systematic approach to the worldwide disease burden, mental diseases were still a top ten leading cause of a disease burden in the world, with no global decline since 1990. The stress that might be as a result of teaching and interaction with students is considered as among the key killers of the well-being and life satisfaction of the faculty members in university. To begin with, that faculty at the start of their careers are unprepared when it comes to professional learning activities and appropriate interaction with students, and spending time on them may result in a lowered satisfaction level. Second, teaching and all the preparation and assessment of the students by grading the papers and giving feedbacks is usually a weary task and needs training and incentives. This is not only producing a decrease in the amount of time that faculty has to conduct research but it is also psychologically frustrating due to the inadequacy implications and loss of being able to gain utility out of the time invested in their position. The relationship between job-security and mental health outcomes demonstrate that poor job security is associated with poor mental health outcomes such as depression and burnout (Baldwin *et al.*, 2022).

This is further complicated by the fact that faculty is often faced with large classes which lead to too much work overload as well as the cumulative academic stress of not being able to devote the necessary time to their increasing student numbers. feelings of anxiety and discouragement at their work can occur because of pressures to ensure that students are successful and are able to attain academic standards with reluctant feelings accompanying poor student performance. Institutions that succeed in adapting fast and successfully to new priorities are more apt to be successful and resilient in the long-term, as the recent research notes (Eccles *et al.*, 2019). It was constantly revealed that university learners have a high incidence of high stress, anxiety, and depression (American College Health Association, 2020; Ibrahim *et al.*, 2013). American College Health Association (2020) study has revealed that 60 percent of students have described themselves as overwhelmed and 40 percent as anxious. The research is carried out against the backdrop of an increase in mental anxiety, depression, and stress among university students and faculty all over the world (Hatcher *et al.*, 2017). The source of increasing academic and psychological stress is mounting workloads, longer working hours, and issues with work and life balance). The causes of the academic stress are quite ancient, and it was well known that on the ground of research of Seldin (1987), an excessive number of tasks and an insufficient amount of time are considered the millennium predictors of the academic stress of people.

It is essential that such considerations be addressed because this will help not only increase the well-being of faculty but also the effectiveness and performance of the entire institution as well as student performance (Perry *et al.*, 2023). There is, therefore, an urgent need to examine the effects of the university environment on mental health, gaps in the current system of support and devise effective solutions to the identified problem so that the university community could begin to foster a culture of mental well-being and resilience. Having a strong mental health support system and a culture of transparency regarding mental illness will greatly contribute to job satisfaction and institutional health in general (Johnson *et al.*, 2023).

Statement of the Problem

Although mental health is critically vital in academic life, the academic staff in universities is experiencing great stress, anxiety, and depression that have both the capacity to adversely affect their academic results, well-being, and career prospects in the long run. Nonetheless, university setting, policies, and support services do not meet the complexity and multifaceted nature of mental health problems, which creates a significant discrepancy between the mental health needs of both faculty and students and resources and support services. Thus, the association between the university environment and mental health outcomes is a complex phenomenon that needs to be explored, and effective options to promote mental wellness and resilience among faculty members of university need to be identified.

Objectives of the Study

This study was divided into the following objectives:

- To explore mental health issues of faculty at university level.
- To investigate what factors from work environment, raise mental health issues.
- To seek the ways, the university environment, contribute to mental health issues among faculty.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- What are the mental health issues experience by university faculty?
- How does the university environment contribute to mental health issues among faculty?
- What are the effective strategies to improve mental wellness among university faculty?

Significance of the Study

The study on Exploring the University Faculty Mental Health Issues from University Environment is important since it focuses on a crucial problem that influences the health condition and academic achievements of faculty members in universities. Mental health concerns are common among the population of a university, including stress, anxiety, and depression, with severe ramifications in case of lack of intervention. Through its research on the mental health problems impacting faculty in universities, research can guide more effective systems, services, and policies to be developed. The results of the study can also guide the development of policies in the university, country, and internationally. The results of the study can assist policymakers in designing the specific intervention and programs that meet the special

mental health requirements of faculty and students at universities. The mental health approach to faculty universities can aid in enhancing academic performance, such as higher student retention, grades, and research output.

Delimitations of the Study

The study was delimited to University because of time constraints and shortage of resources. This study becomes completed in the last semester of degree.

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Working in a university environment filled with high standards, stress and tough academics brings significant negative effects on faculty, staff and students' mental health. The Job Demand-Resources (JD-R) model is well known for arguing that when what is expected at work balances with the resources available, this affects both work well-being and performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). A heavy workload, expected high research output and constant student involvement can cause stress and burnout in university if the university does not offer appropriate support, peer teams or learning chances. According to Lelek and her team in 2023, educators who felt more pressure and had few resources reported increased anxiety and depression, illustrating the need for extra support in schools. The way students or faculty members handle stress and their workload can shape their mental health in a big way. For example, stress for faculty members might come from having to publish papers, apply for grants and undergo evaluations, all because of their skills in coping and the culture at their institution (Roberts *et al.*, 2023). It has been found that teaching adaptive coping and resilience improves mental health in university workers which helps create a healthier workplace (Tams & Corbett, 2022). Besides, the Social Support Theory highlights the crucial role of social bonds and help in reducing mental health risks at universities. Our experience indicates that feeling supported among colleagues, members of the administration and family can protect against stress and improve happiness (Taylor *et al.*, 2022). In universities, support from programs, group activities and clear ways to discuss mental health play a big role in helping students cope with stress. In their study, Nguyen and others found that working in teams improves faculty members' job satisfaction and helps stop feelings of separation (2023). The Work-Life Balance (WLB) framework is now increasingly used when talking about mental health in universities. Because academia demands much of one's time, there is often confusion between professional and personal life, causing problems for mental wellbeing (Hancock *et al.*, 2023). Literature now recommends that institutions focus on well-being, aware that encouraging a good work-life balance boosts an academic community's success (Matz *et al.*, 2023).

University faculty's mental health is often affected by both their workload and the balance they manage between personal and work life. Teachers in schools have to handle several roles at once talks, making educational materials, supporting students, doing research, publishing their work and taking part in university service and leadership tasks. Since these duties are often the same, teachers find themselves working long past traditional working hours. In contrast, academics tend to work at night, on weekends and on holidays because of research commitments, time spent grading and the urge to produce work (Huang *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, lots of faculty end up having trouble distinguishing between their professional and personal lives. Too many responsibilities can result in a lot of stress, tiredness and finally, mental burnout. Such mental health issues lead to poor academic work on the part of the faculty and also detract from their general well-being, willingness to teach and how they feel about work (Tams & Corbitt, 2022). Working under too much pressure gets worse if the institution does not provide support. If faculty are required to do more than they can handle without getting more resources, enough time or respect, they might feel overworked or overlooked. Often, universities put major emphasis on gauging productivity through numbers of publications, reviews by students and performance assessments, but pay little attention to the

mental health of faculty. A lack of support or flexibility can cause faculty to feel anxious, depressed and further separate themselves from their job duties. In academia, this problem is damaging because teachers and researchers rely on thinking and feeling strongly to do well Taylor *et al.*, 2022).

Their mental state may be significantly affected at the end of the day by the amount of work they are doing and the way that they are struggling to combine their career with their personal life. Unless faculty members are provided with the proper workload management and institutional support, they might be exposed to the psychological stress that may affect their mental and professional life. Beginning to address these issues through reasonable working loads and actions to assist faculty with managing work and life makes a university faculty stay healthy (Baker *et al.*, 2018). Having so many duties can cause the workload to grow heavy and may lead to trouble when solving one type of issue causes conflicts in other types of responsibilities. Often, a faculty member's research activities can take away from doing course planning and being involved in committees may take away time for grading. Being given expectations for tenure, promotion and performance reviews makes the pressure of all three roles more intense. Some faculty members worry that not paying attention to any matter could slow down their professional advancement (Tams & Corbitt, 2022). Because of this fear, people may work too much and feel great stress trying to satisfy many different needs, skipping time for themselves and personal care. Since faculty members are expected to succeed in teaching, research and service, burnout, anxiety and dissatisfaction at work are increasing among them. If educators feel they cannot meet all the requirements, their self-esteem drops and they feel like they are not up to the task. Teachers may exhaust their psychological resources because they need to care for students and handle the intellectual and organization commitments of research and service. When faculty feel tired, uninterested or disconnected, it may affect both them personally and the standard of their work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Having to handle many duties can make it difficult for faculty to separate work and home time, since they may work after standard work hours. Not having enough 'off time' adds to stress and cuts down the time people can rest, meaning mental health challenges only get worse. Those with caring commitments or other personal jobs might confront an even bigger issue when trying to balance what they do at school and with their families (Hatcher *et al.*, 2017). Correctly understanding faculty roles can help institutions relieve this stress by giving them support where needed. When there are clearer workload rules, employees are given achievable goals and there are assistants or research helpers, the job can be made less challenging. If faculty and administration have open discussions, they can achieve a workplace that supports each other. Career programs that teach individuals how to manage their schedules, lower stress and choose important tasks are useful as well. When universities treat teaching, research and service from faculty as equal and back them with support systems, they cultivate healthy workplaces for faculty (Burns *et al.*, 2019).

On top of these challenges, the unfairness found in publishing can worsen their mental health for younger scientists and minorities, because they may have to work extra hard to be noticed and succeed (Sonnad *et al.*, 2020). Because of these problems, many are asking educational institutions to reassess what they evaluate and favour approaches that appreciate and care for all faculty (Stieg, 2021). Trying to secure finances for research is now a major source of anxiety for faculty at higher education centres. Because funding agencies are tightening their budgets and making grant applications tougher, professors usually feel pressure to obtain funds for their research. Always chasing after money can cause researchers to suffer from anxiety, depression and burnout (Kirkman *et al.*, 2019). Because faculty are expected to both publish important research and find regular sources of funding, they often find themselves working too much without enough time for life outside of work. Researchers state that applying for grants can make faculty feel not good enough and contribute to imposter syndrome. Faculty regularly doubt their skills in preparing competitive proposals and this increases their mental health problems. Also, the rivalry for research grants often leads colleagues to feel more competitive and lonelier (Miller *et al.*, 2021). Also, spending an

extended amount of time on grant applications means faculty have less time for their main tasks of teaching, guiding students and doing research. Stress from seeking out funding for research can persist and harm a person's mental health (Baker *et al.*, 2019). When faculty deal with mental health issues, declining work productivity can increase pressures on them to perform which often makes their difficulty worse (Jenkins *et al.*, 2021).

Moreover, job insecurity may also influence the motivation and productivity of a person at the working place since he/she might be less committed to the job and more involved searching it during working. A study conducted and published in Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology demonstrates that the fear of losing their job may result in numerous undesirable consequences, such as low job satisfaction, negative mental health, and low performance (Wanberg & Kanfer, 2016). Job insecurity too can affect people where they find it hard to plan in the future resulting to becoming more anxious and stressed because of job insecurity. In general, the risk of loss of position or the renewal of contract is one of the major fears of many employees and may adversely affect their mental and emotional status. The best employers can do is to ensure the job security of their workers and offer them a secure environment to counter such effects. Failure to have any influence over career-path can cause huge discontent and stress in contemporary work environment. Departmental politics and conflict can be very influential to the faculty mental health situation, which will most of the time culminate into an aggregated amount of stress, unease, and burnout. The faculty members regularly find themselves in a situation where they have to deal with power structures and inter-personal crises that occur when competing over resources, tenure, and recognition at the academic institutions that they work in (Bourke & Bagshaw, 2018). These disputes may cause the unhealthy working climate that should impair collaboration and communication, causing the faculty to feel isolated and anxious (Monroe & Chiwkula, 2020). Moreover, the fact that an institution might not provide adequate support, and that there are weak conflict management strategies, may enhance these factors, causing reduced job satisfaction and overall well-being (Zell & Grosse, 2019). Institutions can curb the negative outcomes of departmental politics on the faculty members by building a favourable departmental culture where employees are given first priority when it comes to open communication and mental health facilities (Baker, 2021).

A concrete example is the newly cooperative climate that has diffused tensions and repaired staff-management relations. Team work culture, which is the secret of success as an organization can be highly improved by nipping issues in the bud before they snowball into major conflicts and also enriching the right culture for your work force. And, office politics are also human and worldwide, they affect not only the organization climate but further decision-making in general. These relate to individuals or central parties in a department fighting for power to have - free from personal gain, selfless aims, fighting over resources and domination. These can create these power dynamics that cause friction, preventing effective team work and innovation and toxic organizations (APA, 2019). Secondly, the battle over power can cause faction (clique), which will destroy the communication and hinder organizational objectives. The implications of such division were serious and their moral, staff retention and performance in that department was extremely poor as a result. These forces must be visited upon the leadership for work to become holier and a culture of partnership (Cohn *et al.*, 2019).

Over the last few years, there has been a massive change in the environment of higher studies with rise in technology, change in student population and change in the needs of the labor market. Online learning platforms like Coursera or eddy have made high-quality education accessible to all users since students all over the globe can now apply to courses in renowned universities without being limited by geography (Smith, 2021). Moreover, the growing heterogeneity of the student population such as in terms of age, ethnicity and professional backgrounds has also compelled universities to be more accommodative and allow teaching to be more flexible, also appealing to a wider variety of learning styles and needs (Johnson

& Lee, 2022). At the same time, employers have started preferring skills-based recruitment over the usual degree requirement, which has led to the pressure on institutions to train their curricula to align to real-life uses and soft skills (Williams, 2023). Consequently, postsecondary education is transforming towards a less universal focused set and towards a more customized structure, which would play the role of equipping graduates with the knowledge to meet the depths of the modern labor market (Davis *et al.*, 2023). The migration to remote learning and the adoption of digital technologies in the educational sphere has completely changed the school world, making it possible to gain access to resources and encouraging communication during the educational process. Since educational establishments had to adjust to the adversities of the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning platforms gained imminence as they allowed students to keep studying even in remote settings. It has been observed that online learning has the potential to make learning flexible and accessible so that students can attend courses at their convenience.

Administrators not communicating clearly has been one of the problems that have plagued any industry be it business, education and healthcare. Studies have brought out the adverse impacts of ineffective communication on staff participation, performance and work satisfaction. In line with one study published in the Journal of Management (2022), it was revealed that job satisfaction and commitment of employees directly depend on effective and transparent communication of top managers (Grant, 2022). In education, a National Council of Educational Associations (2020) report has provided the need to have open communication between the administrators, teachers, and parents to see to it that the students excel. Just as in healthcare, there is an article published in the Journal of Healthcare Management (2020) that states that appropriate hospital administrator communication can improve patient outcomes and minimize medical slip-ups. A survey by Gallup (2022) in a business setting where employees that receive frequent information as given by the managers is more likely to be engaged and productive than employees who are not given frequent updates (Gagne *et al.*, 2015).

In addition, social services are usually underfunded, and this lack of funding contributes to poor service delivery to vulnerable people and thereby creates more risks of being homeless, hungry, and facing mental health crisis (Kerman *et al.*, 2016). To tackle them, we need a change in the system, more government funding, and a promise of equity so that everyone can get what he or she requires to succeed. Inadequate access to mental health services is a crucial concern that individuals experience all over the world, which is aggravated by socio-economic gaps, stigma, as well as poorly-developed healthcare systems. The World Health Organization (2022) estimates that 1 in every 8 people in the world has a mental disorder, but over 75 percent of individuals in low and middle-income nations do not get any treatment. This gap is partially caused by barriers, including the high costs and a low availability of prepared professionals and the stigma against this condition (Harvard Medical School, 2023).

The COVID-19 pandemic also exacerbated these issues, as a significant proportion of people complained about more symptoms associated with anxiety and depression, which illustrates the necessity to offer mental health services to everyone (Paltiel *et al.*, 2021). New ways to fill this gap, such as tele therapy and community-approaches, are being discussed, but it is necessary to continue working and provide funding in order to achieve equal access to needed mental health care among all citizens (National Institute of Mental Health, 2023). Lack of funding in research and teaching has become a major issue in institutions of higher learning especially due to budget reductions and redirection of funds. Lack of proper funds to carry out research projects is an uphill issue in many institutions that have reduced the chances of faculty and students to participate in novel researches. Also, the level of teaching resources, the availability of the updated materials and learning technologies, tends to be inadequate, which may develop its negative effect upon the quality of education provided. According to recent surveys, the insufficient support does not only interfere with academic progress but influences the rates of retention and student satisfaction (Baker & McDonald, 2023; Thompson *et al.*, 2023). Institutions of higher education should revisit their distribution

of financial resources and make sure to divert enough finances so that they can achieve a vibrant research environment and an overall teaching scenario so that the students are adequately prepared to meet the challenges in the future. These challenges need a one-punch solution which includes institutional changes, improvement in support systems, and a cultural change through focus on tackling mental health issues (Perry *et al.*, 2023).

RESEARCH METHODS

The interviews that helped to examine the mental health dilemmatic of the university faculty based on university work environment were carried out with the assistance of the researcher. The questions were constructed in that type of a way that the respondents felt it easy to give a prompt response. In addition, the closed questions are good in generating frequency of responses that lends itself to statistical analysis. The Interview became too Role and the investigation of the university faculty mental health problem in the light of the working conditions at the university. Although they can be used by the teachers. This section relates to the structure of interviews exploring the university faculty mental health issues from University work environment. The interview included nine items covering various aspects of the study. First, the purpose and significance of the research were explained. In addition, participants' rights and some tips for answering questions were mentioned. Reliability of qualitative research entails verification of whether the studies are consistent and are credible. The participants were all interviewed in the same way in order to ensure that the results obtained were accurate. These interviews were done through a predetermined procedure in which the same questions were used in the interview, the interviewer should have adhered to a particular protocol when conducting the interview, and observed ethical guidelines such as seeking permission before the interview, as well as maintain the participant's confidentiality. Interviews were tape recorded and written verbatim with the consent of the interviewee to ensure that no information was missed and misinterpreted. The researcher also took field notes and employed thematic coding technique in analyzing data. To sum up, validity and reliability were also highly regarded in order to ensure that the tool measures what it is expected to measure and the information obtained is reliable and reproducible. Data collection was conducted personally by researchers throughout the university. The participant was asked to complete an informed consent form to indicate their willingness. I also contacted the participants and explained my research to them. we both settled on the time. The participants met me during the time they provided. they signed the consent form. The respondents would share data with me. I promised the members that the information posted there would remain confidential to other people. I captured his voice with the permission of the participant.

Theme 1: Stress Experiences in the Faculty Role

This theme addresses how frequently faculty members experience stress and the nature of their work-related pressures.

Majority of the faculty members complained of regular and constant stresses and quite a number of them claimed that stress had become a routine in their work lives. The measures were somewhat different among the early-career and senior faculty; however, stress was present all the time. *I am almost stressed every day either it is classes or emails, or something like that a report that way owes it. It's like I'm constantly playing catch-up, and it's taking a toll on my mental health.* (F1).

This analysis shows that the stress is rife among the faculty member who feels like he is overworked by his job. The pressure of attending classes, replying to emails, writing reports etc. is continual and one feels stress all the time and has no time to rest and relax. The comment given by the faculty member shows that

he/she is facing some difficulties trying to tackle the workload and it is now a companion to him/her on a daily basis. This may cause burnout, their reduced productivity and ill-effect to their overall well-being.

I am constantly on the move because I have to juggle with teaching research and service responsibilities. It is tiring and pressuring. My academic life is a never-ending balancing act (F2).

This data reveals how the member of the faculty feels stressed and tired because of work. The idiom behind always on the go gives the impression of being busy all the time as well as feeling to be under pressure to achieve a lot of things. The quotation reveals that the faculty member is overwhelmed with the workload and the work stress makes this faculty member feel burnt out. The data stresses the necessity to seek options to avoid or reduce stress and care about the faculty, and notes that universities should consider the health and happiness of faculty members to be their priority. *There is pressure to publish which can make research a numbers game with much value placed on the count and not the impact of your work (F3).*

This information demonstrates how pressures to publish can result in a shift from quality to quantity in faculty research. It can impose a quantitative emphasis upon quantity and relevance, and depth, thereby pressuring the researchers by inciting them to publish heavy volumes of results rather than meaningful ones. This has the potential of undermining the true purpose of research and its worth.

The pressure to publish can result in a deluge of papers, but not necessarily a sea of ideas. So many papers, but a drought of progress (F5).

This demonstrates exactly how the pressure to publish can lead to an immense amount of time and resources spent on research, that doesn't actually make a substantial or lasting effect. Instead of promoting innovative and breakthrough thinking, the focus on number of publications could also result in repetitive or superficial research that may not be particularly deep-reaching.

Theme 2: Understandings of Mental Health

This theme explores how faculty members conceptualize mental health in their own words. It aligns with the question:

It is the capacity to survive the pressure of the daily life and not letting it bring you actually to your knees. Resilience is how you face the stresses of life in your day-to-day hassles, uncomfortable IT crashes, whatever they are but not letting them take you down. Being able to absorb a blow, recovering after misfortunes (F6).

This fact shows the importance of resilience in dealing with daily stress. It is focusing on the strength of under pressure and hardship, not giving in to pressure. Information shows that resilience has nothing to do with bearing stress, but it is about successfully discovering personal solutions to personal responses. This implies that the resilient people will be able to change more easily even in moments of adversity and remain healthy. This points to the need to promote resilience towards the principle of general well-being.

Mental health refers to the capacity to cope with stress, be flexible to change and recover after failure (F7).

This proves the emphasis of mental health in emotional and psychological robustness. The information reveals that mental health is not only the lack of the issues, but it is also about the creation of resilience and learning how to cope with the problems that appear in life becoming even stronger. Stress management

enables people to resilience as they can adapt to the new environment and recover after any challenge to add to their overall well-being. The

Professors know that mental health is a complicated term and goes further than emotional health. Besides this, mental health goes beyond emotional stability because it encompasses both physical and psychological stability (F8).

This fact leads to the identification of mental health as a multifaceted construct by staff. They also know that it is not just how you feel that makes you healthy, but in other aspects of your life. This is a holistic method which acknowledges the interplay of physical, psychological and social factors on mental health. The definition of well-being as a holistic concept by the faculty members demonstrates the value attached to it in general. *We, as educators, tend to look at academic objective and goals but we need to remember that mental health is the base by which learning actually occurs (F9).*

This data reminds faculty members of the significance mental health has on a student's capacity to learn and perform academically. It argues that faculty need to change their viewpoint and recognize mental health as a critical dimension of students' **general health and academic achievement**.

Theme 3: Support Systems and Coping Mechanisms

This theme captures how university faculty members experience and utilizes support systems both formal and informal as well as the personal strategies they adopt to cope with the stressors of academic life. Many faculty participants expressed disappointment in the absence of formal support structures within the university. They described moments of personal or professional crisis when no assistance was offered, or their needs were ignored or minimized by university administration. *I was forced to request compassionate leave when I lost a close family member. Nobody bothered to see me after that. The bereavement was one to be shouldered without support and on my own (F10).*

This fact brings out a personal experience of a grieving faculty member and how they struggled to come through the support systems of the institution. The fact that one has to plead to take compassionate leave implies that there are no established policies or supportive processes, and the fact that the employee was not given a follow-up care after the leave states the possibility of a lack of emotional support on the side of colleagues and management. *The university does not appear to be concerned about our well-being, it is all about productivity and output. It is at the expense of the well-being in favor of academic prestige (F11).*

This data illustrates the perceived institutional gap in terms of the well-being of the faculty members. The faculty member believes that the university is more productive and output-oriented than it is concerned about the mental and physical health of the faculty. This impression is that the culture and policies of the university might not help them in supporting the needs of the faculty members, and hence, they feel abandoned and unacknowledged. *A friendly group of fellow colleagues has been my savior; they have assisted me to overcome difficult moments and provided good tips (F13).*

This information highlights the importance of peer and collegial support in the lives of the faculty members. The staff member attributes their positive group of colleagues to assisting them to overcome difficult experiences and guide them appropriately. This implies that a supportive community is potentially an essential source of coping with stress and developing resilience as well as improving overall health. *Exercising is not only about physical health, but an effective way of mind, to refresh your mind and alleviate stress (F14).*

This fact brings out the two gains of physical activity and exercise, and it focuses on the effects it has on both the physical and mental health. Exercise can also be used as a good coping mechanism to stress, boost mood and wellbeing. Faculty can more easily handle the pressures of their work by integrating physical activity into their schedule and they will be able to improve their mental state.

Theme 4: Academic Coping Strategies

Students can cope with stress by scheduling their study time and prioritizing their tasks. In order to gain more knowledge about school subjects, these students resort to such strategies as using activity and addressing teachers or tutors as well as school-provided materials. They hear about it as they also see number These strategies do not only keep off the intimidation but also help students approach the academic challenges with more confidence.

Time management means organizing your tasks to make the best use of your time. It helps students avoid last-minute work by planning ahead. And it raises efficiency better time management means you can do more work in less time. *Time management means planning and organizing work to achieve the best possible use of time. Time management allows individuals to reduce their workload, manage stress, and increase their productivity by taking their load off. It also incorporates other orientated notions which differ from time (F4).*

This information demonstrates the efficiency of time management in reducing stress and providing outcomes. With their focus on jobs and achievable goals, individuals can focus on what is important, manage their workload effectively, hence making a step towards their goals or objectives. Effective teaching techniques for faculty members include active learning strategies such as summarizing information, creating concept maps and discussing ideas with others. *I use techniques like summarizing notes and creating concept maps to engage with the material, rather than passively “reading” it or just memorizing it (F17).*

These data draw attentions to factors that increase the likelihood of seeking academic help and feedback, which in turn helps people surmount research difficulties When peers and mentors teach individuals to talk their projects others will provide them with new ways of seeing problems, help to uncover cracks in their logic, and get results on a course that speak to the reader. The data implies a proactive and collaborative method of research, with individuals leveraging external feedback to increase the quality and authenticity of their work.

Theme 5: Supportive Network of Colleagues and Peers

A supportive network provides academic and emotional support for teachers and colleagues alike, so that stress and pressure may blow away. Of course, such a network makes you feel supported and can point out what you cannot do alone. Confidence and an understanding of the world come happens social ties within this circle. In performing tasks or projects people also work together. Strong social ties within this circle make a person feel that he beltings and are good to themselves. In addition, these channels of communication are accessible and open fully, so that when individuals need guidance or support, it is easy for them to find.

And this point makes academic administration all the more important emotionally. Networks that offer support breed a feeling of belonging and connectedness, so that individuals do not feel alone any more (F5). Besides advice, associates and elders offer encouragement to lessen the pressure on people s nerves. Emotional support helps toughen up people’s resistance, increases their capacity to manage, and allows

them to keep today's paths in sight as they adjust for tomorrow. With such support, both teachers and students alike are more likely to take good care of their health and reach what academic goals they have set.

The statistics demonstrate the disruptive potential of academic cooperation. Combining diverse perspectives and experience allow achieving results that are not limited to the efforts of one scholar. *Teamwork brings about a dynamic space where ideas are developed, shared, and refined against each other resulting in breakthrough discoveries and creativity in solving problems. Collaborating with other disciplines adds not only variety to research but also offers individual knowledge and views that can hardly be achieved in isolation (F21).*

This is an evidenced fact of strong advantages of team work in academics. By interacting with other professionals in different disciplines, one may also promote. Interdisciplinary practices, inspire creativity, and achieve better research results. In addition, it fosters the culture of mutual respect, learning to share, and a culture of long-term professional support which has become a part of the contemporary academic practice. *Lifelong learning enhances confidence and increases job satisfaction as well as makes the long-term success possible. According to one of the participants, it is the way to invest in yourself and most likely the best approach to stay up to date with the change and realize the goal of the career as it is the best idea as one put it, investing in professional development is investing in yourself (F22).*

Good communication that is available is essential in ensuring that people of all socioeconomic statuses enjoy equal opportunities. The message is relayed in the correct manner and even the slightest mistake in clarity can change the point of view greatly. By making communication accessible, a person will be able to communicate just like other individuals in terms of fluency and confidence. As one participant noted. *Communication can be the difference between misunderstanding and understanding and accessibility is the key to open the opportunities to everyone. Clarity communication puts across ideas perfectly well on the first instance (F22).*

The results also emphasize the critical importance of communication and access to the inclusivity and mutual understanding. Good communication also helps in relaying of ideas in a proper manner thus minimizing chances of communication being misinterpreted. The concept of accessibility, on the other hand ensures that all people have access to opportunities, resources and information in spite of their capabilities and upbringing. A combination of these factors enhances equity, empowers various groups, and assists in creating a more inclusive and accommodating learning and social atmosphere.

DISCUSSIONS

The results of the present study support the claim of a rather complex and multifaceted relationship between the university environment and faculty mental health. As it has been demonstrated, mental well-being of the faculty members is closely connected to many different aspects of the Institution, such as workload, leadership, job security, and much more the way the workplace culture is established. The findings emphasize that the problem of mental health among the faculty cannot be traced to be affected only by individual stress or personal situation, but is mostly found rooted deep within the structure and culture of academic institutions (Mark & Smith, 2020). Some of the swarmed being will even work. The faculty of the focus group on the way they were overburdened with the teach research administration student mentor duties. It is not just a problem in these specific associated institutions but also a general problem in the field of academia, that more is being expected of the faculty with less resources and support. Such amount of responsibilities is bound to lead to a burn out not only on the performance of the job but also on the overall health. It is in line with previous studies that identified workloads and role strain as two critical predictors

of mental health issues in academia. Being too busied about our job, we may get stressed, fatigued and eventually mentally burned. Such mental health issues lead to poor academic performance among the faculty and staff and cost them their overall health and the extent to which they enjoy teaching considering their perceptions toward the job (Tams & Corbitt, 2022).

The institutional cultures and collegiality section also provide clues as to how the social, relationship way of doing things within the university settings would perform in terms of either being a neutralizing or an accentuating factor in so far as the mental health issues are concerned. Collegial, supportive environments were reported to exist amongst some of the faculty members. People were lamenting a sick competitive culture. It is possible to formulate this paradox as the significance of workplace relationship or relationships in defining the wellbeing of faculty (Wu & Huang, 2023). This sense of alienation and being stressed out is common amongst the academics who feel excluded or undervalued, especially those who are on a fixed contract than permanent (tenure track) appointment. W.-Inclusive and team based leadership and mentoring (and) culture is essential and I believe that the importance of those may hardly be overestimated. The consequence of collegiality is psychological distress which in turn leads to an increase in job dissatisfaction and ultimate departure (turnover) of the faculty in line with findings of other studies on sexual harassment. (Levecque et al., 2017). Therefore, university administrators should work on the creation of policies that will focus on open communication, transparency and actual care of welfare among the staff (Bousema & van de Weijer, 2022). This lack of security engulfs an environment of fear in which the faculty members see themselves being threatened that they have to keep demonstrating their value continuously adding to the already prevalent stress and other emotional repercussions of it. Due to all these issues, there develops a loss of interest towards the studies among some individuals and they end up leaving the academic world (Eccles *et al.*, 2019). The state of academic labor is one in which the precarious existence of faculty cannot be discussed separately as it is evident in the findings that the insecurity of employment is one of the factors of emotional distress and burnout. According to McKenna and Thomas (2015), a more equal approach to academic employment, provided in fair wages, benefits, and extended employment is needed to overcome these problems.

The other crucial theme was access to mental health resources. Although plenty of colleges and universities have some background of counseling or mental help, most of the faculty involved answered no to making use of these services. There are a number of reasons behind this unwillingness, the most obvious ones being fear of confidentiality, lack of time, as well as the overall doubt of the effectiveness of such programs. This may incorporate providing more workable hours of counseling, the offering of mental health services to the peers of the institution in form of network, the offering of mentorship programs as well as integration of well-being into the institutional core values (Othman *et al.*, 2024). The results of this research indicate the necessity of the implementation of institutional changes which can help in eliminating the causes underlying the mental health problem in faculty. Although personal initiatives, including wellness programs, various counseling provisions are crucial, they cannot determine the problem that is systematic in character. Universities should support mental health in such a way that faculty feel supported not merely by a policy that focuses on mental health but appreciates that mental health is a valid issue that impacts the health of faculty as well faculty and institutional success. This involves a paradigm shift in the workload management, job security, leadership, and the practice on the organizational culture. To illustrate, policies that can relieve many of the pressures associated with workload or offer faculty greater institutional support of faculty careers and research would be potentially helpful in removing some of the stressors described in this paper (Kinman & Wray, 2023). The academic life of the institutions includes frequent checks on faculty welfare, establishment of peer support groups, and integration of mental health training to all the leadership and staffs. The outcome of this would not only increase the mental wellbeing of the faculty members in the universities but result in a more productive, engaged and resilient academic force (Bousema & van de Weijer, 2022).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions of the research have seen the crucial role of the university climate in the development of mental health of faculty members. There is obvious evidence in the data that faculty members experience a wide range of stresses, such as excessive workload, confusion in role expectations, departmental culture, which is competitive and isolating, job insecurity, and absence of mental health services specifically targeting the faculty members the study found that the crucial role of university climate in shaping the mental health of faculty members. The data provide clear evidence that faculty experience a wide range of workplace stressors, including excessive workload, role ambiguity, competitive and isolating departmental cultures, job insecurity, and the absence of mental health services tailored to faculty needs. These factors contribute to high levels of burnout, emotional exhaustion, and overall dissatisfaction with academic life. The study further reveals that junior and non-tenure-track faculty are particularly vulnerable, often receiving limited professional and personal support. The combined pressures of teaching, research, administration, student mentoring, and job insecurity create a stressful and, at times, unhealthy environment that undermines faculty well-being. the following recommendations are proposed to address faculty mental health needs. Universities should implement realistic and balanced workloads. This may include reduced teaching loads, additional administrative support for faculty, and recalibrating research expectations to prevent undue pressure. Institutions must foster a culture where faculty feel safe to take breaks, utilize vacation time, and prioritize their health without fear of negative consequences. University leadership plays a critical role in faculty mental health. Training programs for department heads and senior administrators should focus on empathetic communication and mental health awareness. Greater leadership sensitivity can help reduce feelings of isolation, lack of belonging, and burnout.

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