

Hustle Culture in Academia: A Study on Its Impact on Faculty Performance in Bangalore-Based Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract— Hustle culture has emerged as a pervasive and influential force within higher education institutions in Bangalore. While it drives productivity and research output, it simultaneously erodes faculty well-being, contributing to stress, burnout, and reduced job satisfaction. This study investigates the impact of hustle culture on the performance of academicians in higher education institutions across Bangalore. The research explores how hustle-driven work environments influence faculty performance in teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities. Additionally, the study examines the psychological outcomes associated with hustle culture, including stress, burnout, attrition and job satisfaction. The findings aim to uncover institutional and individual-level factors that either exacerbate the effects of hustle culture. To address these challenges, immediate institutional interventions are required specifically like workload redistribution, flexible scheduling, and the implementation of formal well-being policies. Such measures are essential to ensure that productivity is achieved without compromising the health, morale, and overall satisfaction of faculty members

Keywords: Hustle Culture, Academic Performance, Stress, Burnout.



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INTRODUCTION

Hustle culture in academia is an intensely entrenched and prevalent attitude that defines success not by the quality of one's work, but by the quantity and intensity of it. It defies overwork, relentless competition, and constant productivity, leading to a professional environment where an individual's worth is measured by their readiness to sacrifice personal well-being, rest, and a healthy work-life balance. In a system where there is always more research to be done, more papers to publish, more grants to apply for, and more classes to teach—this culture can be particularly insidious and difficult to escape.

This phenomenon is fueled by several factors inimitable to academia, including “publish or perish” pressure, the scarceness of tenure-track positions, and the trepidation of falling behind peers. These pressures create a cycle where academics, from early-career researchers to tenured faculty, feel a persistent need to be “on” and fecund, often boasting about long hours and dearth of downtime as a badge of honor.

However, the consequences of this mentality are severe and far-reaching. It is a primary driver of academic burnout, leading to a mental health crisis among students and faculty, marked by elevated rates of anxiety, depression, and chronic stress. This relentless focus on output, ironically, can also stifle creativity and innovation that academia should foster. By valuing quantity over quality and business over balance, hustle culture not only troubles individuals but also destabilizes the core mission of intellectual investigation and concerted knowledge creation.

Hustle culture, the credence that overtask and constant hustle and bustle are the means to success. Hustle culture has a significant negative impact on employee performance. While it may seem to lead to short-term gains, it is eventually unsustainable and detrimental, resulting in decreased productivity, creativity, and overall well-being.

Hustle culture is a lethal mindset that has become profoundly implanted in academia. It defies overwork, relentless competition, and constant productivity as the primary measures of an academic's worth and the keys

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to success. This culture pressures individuals to always be "on," sacrificing personal well-being, rest, and a healthy work-life balance to meet professional demands.

MANIFESTATIONS IN ACADEMIA

Hustle culture isn't a formal policy; it's an intensely entrenched set of expectations that manifest in various ways Glorifying long hours, Constant pressure to publish Academic FOMO (Fear of Missing Out, Resume padding Social media influence

Hustle Culture impact on Academic Performance

The pressure to constantly hustle often backfires, ultimately diminishing an academic's ability to perform effectively.

- **Burnout and Reduced Productivity:** The most direct consequence is academic burnout. Persistent pressure leads to mental, physical, and emotional enervation, which significantly reduces motivation and job satisfaction. Burned-out academicians are less fecund and are unable to emphasize their core duties. Research shows that when employees are engaged in work for more than 50 hours a week it leads to diminishing returns, and efficiency of employees drops.
- **Stifled Creativity and Innovation:** Profound imaginative thinking necessitates periods of respite and reflection. When academicians are constantly "on" and whoosh to meet deadlines, they have petite stint for the mental downtime needed to generate new ideas, connect incongruent concepts, or develop innovative research proposals. This milieu can stifle the very inventiveness that is essential for pioneering academic work.
- **Decline in Teaching Quality:** Prominence on research and publishing, teaching can become an addendum. The pressure and exhaustion from a high-pressure, hustle environment can lead to deterioration of an academician capacity to prepare appealing lectures, provide quality mentorship to students, or offer a supportive erudition environment.
- **Increased Turnover:** The relentless demands of hustle culture are driving many gifted individuals out of academia. Graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and early-career faculty often face overwhelming pressure to produce, compete, and sacrifice personal well-being. Witnessing the toll this takes on their mentors—burnout, disillusionment, and departure—many choose to leave the field entirely. This exodus results in a profound loss of talent, mentorship, and institutional memory, weakening the very foundations of academic progress.
- **Toxic Workplace Environment:** Hustle culture can create a high-pressure, toxic work environment where employees feel unsafe setting boundaries or taking breaks. The fear of

being perceived as uncommitted or replaceable discourages rest and self-care, eroding trust and psychological safety. Over time, this undermines teamwork, stifles communication, and damages morale—leading to reduced collaboration and a pervasive sense of unease across the organization.

- **Poor mental health:** Hustle culture fuels a range of mental health challenges—such as anxiety, depression, chronic stress, and an ongoing sense of guilt for taking breaks or not being productive
- **Strained relationships:** The relentless pursuit of hustle often sidelines meaningful connections with loved ones, leaving individuals isolated and deprived of essential social support.
- **Erosion of Collegiality:** When competition becomes the norm, collaboration often takes a back seat. The collective pursuit of knowledge gives way to individual ambition, with career advancement overshadowing shared progress.
- **Inequality and Exclusion:** Hustle culture places an unfair burden on individuals with caregiving duties, chronic health conditions, or financial constraints. The capacity to work nonstop is a privilege not everyone possesses, and this mindset creates barriers to success for people from diverse backgrounds.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Aulia Putri Maharani et al (2024) conducted quantitative research consists of 150 respondents which come from the students of the Faculty of Social and Political Science Jenderal Soedirman University. . This research successfully discovered that most of the students have a moderate hustle culture. It shows that most of the respondents (61.3%) are having a high hustle culture. Most of them (41.30%) said that it happens because of they need a good personal branding also the matter of portfolio. Through this research we also discover that the respondents actually know the importance of their education.

Muhammad Zahran Assariy et al (2024) researched on the influence of hustle culture on mental health. They opined that hustle culture has become an increasing phenomenon in recent years. This study discusses the relationship between a Hustle culture and work motivation and productivity, as well as the influence on mental health. The relationship between a hustle culture with work motivation and on mental health. The workaholic culture reflects that a person needs to work harder and maximally in every activity so that he ignores his own capacity and health, which can have an impact on increasing the risk of mental health disorders. One of the factors that gave birth to hustle culture is the standard that is indirectly created in the community. These standards require people to achieve success.

Santhosh. (2024) in his article he explained Hustle culture is a contemporary work phenomenon that glorifies the constant pursuit of productivity and

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success, often at the expense of an individual's well-being. Rooted in the belief that busyness equates to progress, hustle culture encourages long working hours, constant multitasking, and the relentless drive to achieve professional goals. The incessant pressure to meet unrealistic expectations can lead to burnout, a state of chronic physical and emotional exhaustion. Employees navigating hustle culture often find themselves on a perpetual treadmill, grappling with stress, anxiety, and a blurred boundary between work and personal life.

Valentina Zhukovsky (2023) the impact of hustle culture on a company is multifaceted and complex. Outcome of the research has shown that a balanced approach is crucial for sustainable growth and a positive work environment. Companies must recognize the importance of work-life balance, mental health support, and flexibility in order to ensure the long-term productivity of their employees. Moving forward, it is essential for companies to implement policies and practices that promote a healthy work culture, support employee well-being, and prioritize organizational success.

Arianna Balkeran (2020) aims to explore hustle culture within the workforce and how employee engagement, or lack of, affects the quality of professional relationships within the workplace. By doing so, we can begin a broader discourse on employee and managerial accountability in the relational aspect of supervisor-employee relationships and work dyads. Researcher also suggested that it is essential to revisit aspects that constitute healthy and sustainable work expectations in the digital age in fear of missing out on career opportunities given increasing global connectivity

Research Gaps:

From the above literature review we can assess the below research gaps:

- ✓ Most existing studies focus on students or workforce samples in specific institutions or regions. There is limited comparative research across different socio-cultural, generational, or professional settings
- ✓ Little attention has been given to its positive outcomes (e.g., skill acquisition, innovation, resilience) or the long-term trade-offs between short-term productivity and sustainable success.
- ✓ Few studies assess organizational outcomes such as turnover, innovation, or long-term performance in relation to hustle culture.
- ✓ There is a lack of longitudinal or experimental studies to assess how hustle culture evolves over time and its cumulative effects on individuals and organizations.

To conclude that there is research gap as very few research conducted on the hustle culture so this paper is an attempt to emphasize on focusing hustle culture in academia.

Statement of Problem

In today's academic environment, achievement is frequently measured by relentless productivity, extended working hours, and constant availability. This phenomenon—often described as “hustle culture” is especially prevalent among graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and early-career faculty. While such practices may yield short-term gains in terms of publications or funding, they also contribute to chronic stress, burnout, and declining mental health.

The normalization of overwork not only diminishes individual well-being but also jeopardizes the long-term sustainability of academic careers. As a result, many promising scholars disengage or leave academia altogether, depriving the field of diverse talent and innovation. Without deliberate intervention, the cycle of overwork and attrition will continue to undermine both the quality of research and the vitality of academic institutions. Therefore, this research is undertaken to investigate the impact of hustle culture on academicians' performance. In addition, the study seeks to examine the relationship between hustle culture and faculty well-being, with particular attention to stress, burnout, and job satisfaction.

Scope of the study

- This study focuses on exploring the influence of hustle culture within academic institutions, with particular emphasis on its impact on faculty performance and well-being.
- The research will primarily examine academicians, including faculty members and teaching staff, across higher education institutions.
- The study will be limited to selected universities/colleges of Bengaluru city.
- Lastly The research will capture current perceptions and experiences of hustle culture rather than long-term historical trends.

Objectives of the Study:

- To explore the prevalence and characteristics of hustle culture among faculty members in higher education institutions in Bangalore.
- To assess the perceived impact of hustle culture on faculty performance in terms of teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and administrative efficiency
- To examine the relationship between hustle culture and faculty well-being, including stress, burnout, and job satisfaction.
- To identify institutional and personal factors that may moderate the impact of hustle culture on academic performance.

Limitation of the Study

1. The study may be limited to 60 faculty members from selected institutions.
2. Findings may not fully represent the experiences of all academicians across different regions, disciplines, or institutional types.

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The research will capture current perceptions and experiences of hustle culture rather than long-term historical trends.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data collected through structured questionnaires using convenience sampling method determining sample size of 60 academicians working in different higher educational institutions across Bengaluru city. The data collected are analysed through SPSS using statistical tools like Factor Analysis, One Sample T test, ANOVA and Multiple Regression

Analysis and Interpretation

Table: 1 - Reliability Statistics

Chronbach's Alpha	N of items
0.746	23

Sources: Primary

Interpretation: The reliability check of Cronbach's Alpha of 23 items is 0.746, which demonstrate good internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire and the collected data. It indicates that the number of items measure the construct in a consistent manner and the instrument are statistically reliable for the future analysis.

OBJECTIVES

◆ Objective 1: To explore the prevalence and characteristics of hustle culture among faculty members in higher education institutions in Bangalore.

Hypothesis:

H0: There is no significant relationship between hustle culture among faculty members towards institutional support, organizational alignment, workload intensity, and hierarchical structures.

H1: There is a significant relationship between hustle culture among faculty members towards institutional support, organizational alignment, workload intensity, and hierarchical structures.

Table: 2 - Factor Analysis - Rotated Component Matrix

Particulars	Component						
I frequently work beyond official working hours to meet institutional expectations.	.018	.655	-.442	.125	-.020	.019	.391
Being constantly busy is considered a sign of success in my academic environment.	.287	.607	.065	-.455	-.119	-.294	.242
I feel pressured to always be available for work-related tasks, even during personal time.	.233	.474	-.173	.316	.549	-.293	-.141
Faculty at my institution often sacrifice personal time for professional commitments.	.240	.391	-.419	.144	.613	.125	-.179
The culture in my institution promotes working harder rather than working smarter.	-.048	.499	-.068	.510	.241	-.337	-.321
My academic designation (e.g., Assistant Professor, Professor) affects how hustle culture impacts me.	-.503	.615	.068	.105	-.287	.170	-.275

Source: Primary

Interpretation: The factor analysis reflecting faculty experiences with hustle culture. The Institutional support, organizational alignment, workload intensity, mechanism, wellbeing and influence are the influential factors. In Rotated Component Matrix, components in each factor shows more than 0.4 indicates a moderate association between variables and those factors shows 0.5 or more than indicates strong association with each factors. The above mentioned factors (Characteristics) are associate with higher education hustle culture, so null hypothesis are reject and accept the alternative one.

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◆ Objective 2: To assess the perceived impact of hustle culture on faculty performance in terms of teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and administrative efficiency.

Hypothesis:

H₀: There is no significant association among faculty performance with hustle culture in higher education institutions.

H₁: There is a significant association among faculty performance with hustle culture in higher education institutions.

Table: 3- One Sample T – Test

Particulars	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
I frequently work beyond official working hours to meet institutional expectations.	19.132	.000	1.85185	1.6577	2.0460
My research output is directly influenced by the competitive work culture.	22.619	.000	2.51852	2.2952	2.7418
Administrative workload often affects my ability to focus on core academic responsibilities	17.030	.000	2.25926	1.9932	2.5253

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: The factors such as work beyond official hours, the research output and administrative workload are affecting the academic performance. The above factors shaping faculty performance towards hustle culture of the institutions. The one-sample t-test revealed that all the above-mentioned factors were significantly associated with each factor. The P value (0.000) is less than the 5% significance value, so there is a strong association with each factor and it is proved that null hypothesis denied and accept the alternative one.

◆ Objective 3: To examine the relationship between hustle culture and faculty well-being, including stress, burnout, and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no substantial correlation among occupational wellbeing of faculty fraternity towards hustle culture of higher education institutions of Bangalore.

H₁: There is a substantial correlation among occupational wellbeing of faculty fraternity towards hustle culture of higher education institutions of Bangalore.

Table: 4 - Linear Regression

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2.780	5	.556	2.659	.034b
Residual	10.035	48	.209		
Total	12.815	53			

Source: Primary data

Interpretation: In the above occupational wellbeing factors, the p-value (0.034) is less than the conventional threshold of 0.05 (5% significant level), The factors such as Stress, Burnout, and Job Satisfaction are substantially correlate with hustle culture of higher education institution in Bangalore. The one-sample t-test revealed that all the above-mentioned factors were significantly associated with the each factors. With the help of analysis, the null hypothesis can reject and accept the alternative.

◆ **Objective 4:** To identify institutional and personal factors that may moderate the impact of hustle culture on academic performance.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no association between work life balance of faculty member and hustle culture of institutions in Bangalore.

H₁: There is an association between work life balance of faculty members and hustle culture of institutions in Bangalore.

Table 5 - Chi-Square

Factors	A healthy work-life balance can enhance overall academic performance	Hustle culture has improved my productivity as a faculty member	Institutions should implement formal policies to support faculty well-being.
Chi-Square	7.444	7.926	12.444
Df	2	3	2
Asymp. Sig.	.024	.048	.002

Source: Primary

Interpretation: Under a Chi-Square test, the P-value (sig.) is less than the calculated value at 5% significance level. The chi-square test revealed a significant association among three factors such as work–life balance and academic performance, hustle culture and productivity and institutional policies towards the hustle culture of higher education institutions in Bangalore. Based on analysis it is inferred that the null hypothesis is refuted, and we believe there is an association between the factors.

Key findings

This study investigates the prevalence, impact, and moderating factors of hustle culture among faculty members in higher education institutions in Bangalore. Using a structured questionnaire with 23 items (Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.746, indicating good reliability), the research provides robust insights into how institutional expectations and organizational dynamics shape faculty experiences.

Objective 1: Prevalence & Characteristics: Factor analysis revealed that hustle culture is strongly associated with institutional support, organizational alignment, workload intensity, and faculty well-being. Faculty frequently work beyond official hours, feel pressured to remain constantly available, and often sacrifice personal time for professional commitments. Academic designation further influences the degree of impact.

Objective 2: Impact on Performance: One-sample t-tests confirmed that hustle culture significantly affects teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and administrative efficiency. Competitive work environments drive research output but also increase administrative burdens that detract from core academic responsibilities.

Objective 3: Impact on Well-being: Regression analysis demonstrated a significant correlation between hustle culture and occupational well-being. Stress, burnout, and reduced job satisfaction are strongly linked to the demands of hustle culture, highlighting its detrimental effects on faculty health and morale.

Objective 4: Moderating Factors: Chi-square tests showed that work-life balance and institutional policies play a critical role in moderating the effects of hustle culture. Supportive policies and formal well-being initiatives can mitigate negative outcomes, while their absence exacerbates stress and overwork.

CONCLUSION

Hustle culture is a pervasive and influential force in higher education institutions in Bangalore. While it can enhance productivity and research output, it simultaneously undermines faculty well-being and long-term sustainability. The hustle culture has both positive and negative impact in academia. The higher educational institutions should address the negative impact like stress, burn-out and physical well-being of the employees immediately to reduce the adverse effects like attrition and it’s suggestable underscore the urgent need for institutional interventions—including workload redistribution, flexible scheduling, and formal well-being policies—to balance productivity with the health and satisfaction of faculty members.

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