

## Employee Welfare Initiatives and Their Influence on Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment among Academic and Administrative Personnel in Higher Educational Institutions: Evidence from the Indore Region

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### ABSTRACT

Employee welfare has become a strategically important component of human resource management in higher education because academic quality, service delivery, and institutional stability depend substantially on the attitudes and retention of both academic and administrative staff. In India, higher education has expanded considerably in scale, while policy discourse has increasingly emphasized institutional development, safety, staff wellbeing, and professional capacity building. Against this backdrop, the present study examines the impact of employee welfare measures on job satisfaction and organizational commitment among academic and administrative staff in higher educational institutions of the Indore region. Drawing on Social Exchange Theory, Organizational Support Theory, and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, the study conceptualizes employee welfare as a multidimensional construct comprising health and wellbeing support, leave and work-life support, financial and social security support, grievance redressal and workplace support, and professional development and career support (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Herzberg et al., 1959; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Spector, 1985).

Using an assumed cross-sectional explanatory design with stratified random sampling, the paper proposes and illustrates a survey-based model with 312 usable responses from academic and administrative employees across public and private institutions in Indore. The illustrative findings indicate that employee welfare measures are positively associated with job satisfaction and organizational commitment, with professional development and career support emerging as the strongest predictor of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction also shows a strong positive association with organizational commitment and partially mediates the relationship between employee welfare and commitment. These findings suggest that welfare in higher education should be understood not merely as a set of fringe benefits, but as an integrated institutional system that combines security, fairness, wellbeing, participation, and opportunities for professional growth.

The paper contributes to academic-sector HRM by presenting a context-sensitive framework for Indian higher education and by offering a publication-ready survey instrument that avoids reproducing proprietary items verbatim. It concludes that institutions in the Indore region can strengthen staff morale and commitment by investing in welfare architectures that are transparent, developmental, and responsive to the differentiated needs of academic and administrative employees....

**Keywords :** *Employee welfare; job satisfaction; organizational commitment; higher educational institutions; academic staff; administrative staff; Indore region; human resource management..*

### INTRODUCTION:

India's higher education system has grown rapidly in recent years. The official AISHE 2021–22 report recorded **1,168 universities/university-level institutions, 45,473 colleges, and 12,002 stand-alone institutions** as registered in the survey, while total enrolment rose to **4.33 crore** and female faculty increased to **6.94 lakh**. This scale expansion makes employee management in higher education not a peripheral administrative concern, but a central institutional capability affecting educational

quality, continuity, and service effectiveness (Ministry of Education, 2024).

The Indore region provides a particularly meaningful setting for such an inquiry. Official local information describes Indore as **a hub of higher and technical education**, and the Madhya Pradesh Department of Higher Education operates dedicated digital systems such as **e-HRMS** and a **college management system**, indicating the administrative salience of human resource governance in the state sector. In practical terms, institutions in and around Indore host a diverse mix of

public universities, private universities, autonomous colleges, and affiliated colleges, making the region appropriate for examining how welfare perceptions shape work attitudes across different organizational contexts.

At the national policy level, the employee-side agenda in higher education is also becoming more explicit. The University Grants Commission's guidelines for Institutional Development Plans emphasize **staff wellbeing programmes, professional development, health benefits, counselling, safety and security, and health and wellbeing facilities** as integral parts of institutional development. The revised Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Programme further foregrounds continuous professional development, academic leadership, administrative capacity building, positive mental health, resilience, and wellbeing, while UGC regulations continue to structure career advancement, appointment, and faculty development pathways. These policy directions support the view that welfare and employment development in higher education should be treated as strategic HRM variables rather than incidental staff amenities (University Grants Commission, 2024, 2025).

Despite this policy momentum, empirical work on employee welfare in Indian higher education has often remained fragmented. Much of the extant literature has focused either on job satisfaction of faculty or on general organizational commitment in broader service settings. Comparatively fewer studies integrate welfare measures, job satisfaction, and commitment in a single framework, and still fewer include both **academic and administrative staff** in the same analytical design. Singh & Khandelwal (2025) This gap is important because higher educational institutions function through interdependent labour: academic staff create core teaching and research value, while administrative staff maintain the systems that make academic delivery possible. A welfare model that overlooks either group remains incomplete (Teli & Ahmad, 2019).

The present paper addresses that gap by drafting a full empirical research article on the **impact of employee welfare measures on job satisfaction and organizational commitment among academic and administrative staff in higher educational institutions of the Indore region**. The study argues that employee welfare in higher education should be conceptualized as a multidimensional institutional support system that includes health, safety, flexibility, security, fair treatment, grievance responsiveness, and professional growth. When welfare is perceived as credible and meaningful, employees are more likely to evaluate their work positively and to reciprocate with higher affective attachment to the institution. This proposition is consistent with major organizational behavior traditions and increasingly relevant in today's higher education work environment, where workload intensification, digital demands, and work-life pressures make staff wellbeing a decisive institutional concern.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee welfare has long been treated in human

resource management as a broad set of provisions intended to improve employees' physical, psychological, social, and developmental conditions of work. In higher education, this concept is especially wide because welfare extends beyond financial benefits to include a safe campus climate, transparent grievance systems, counselling access, leave support, flexible work arrangements, mental-health resources, training opportunities, and pathways for professional advancement. Sundararajan & Muhammed (2024) Recent UGC guidelines on institutional development explicitly include staff wellbeing programmes, health benefits, counselling services, safety and security, and health and wellbeing infrastructure. In a related higher-education HR benchmark, CUPA-HR's benefits and employee experience framework similarly includes healthcare and wellness programs, paid time off, dependent care, retirement, flexible work, and professional development. Together, these sources suggest that welfare in universities and colleges is inherently multidimensional (College and University Professional Association for Human Resources, 2023; University Grants Commission, 2024).

Job satisfaction remains one of the most extensively examined work attitudes in organizational research. Locke (1976) described it as a positive emotional state resulting from job appraisal, while Spector's Job Satisfaction Survey operationalized it through dimensions such as pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, coworkers, nature of work, and communication. The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire likewise conceptualizes satisfaction through a wide range of occupational reinforcers, including compensation, security, recognition, supervision, social status, and working conditions. These frameworks are important for higher education because they indicate that employee evaluations of work are shaped not only by core tasks, but also by surrounding institutional conditions (Locke, 1976; Spector, 1985).

Organizational commitment is similarly central to explaining why employees stay, exert effort, and identify with their institution. Meyer and Allen's three-component model distinguishes **affective commitment** from **continuance commitment** and **normative commitment**, while the earlier Organizational Commitment Questionnaire developed by Mowday, Steers, and Porter focused more strongly on psychological attachment and identification with the organization. The three-component approach remains especially useful for higher education because institutions often rely on both emotional attachment to academic goals and practical calculations around career continuity, reputation, and employment alternatives (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Mowday et al., 1979).

The linkage between employee welfare and work attitudes is supported by Organizational Support Theory. A major meta-analysis by Kurtessis et al. (2017) found that perceived organizational support is shaped by leadership, employee-organization context, HR practices, and working conditions, and that it predicts employees'

orientation toward the organization, performance, and wellbeing. In other words, welfare-related signals are not interpreted as isolated benefits; they become evidence that the institution values employee contributions and cares about employee wellbeing. In higher education settings, where professional identity and organizational belonging frequently intersect, this mechanism should be particularly strong (Kurtessis et al., 2017).

Higher-education-specific studies reinforce this logic. A 2023 study on professors' job satisfaction found that **university work environment** and the **nature of the academic job** significantly influenced satisfaction, and recommended improvements in professional development, equipment and support, grievance mechanisms, reward systems, and regulatory flexibility. A 2024 Frontiers study in Chinese higher education found that **work-family culture** significantly improved job satisfaction among both faculty and administrative staff and that part of this effect operated through perceptions of organizational justice. These studies are consistent in showing that support structures surrounding the job are not secondary; they are part of what employees evaluate when deciding whether work is satisfying and fair (Chen, 2023; Hu et al., 2024).

Research also indicates that academic and administrative staff should not be examined in isolation. Teli and Ahmad (2019), in a comparative study of higher-education employees, observed that administrative staff reported slightly higher job satisfaction than academic staff, although the difference was not statistically strong. Their study is valuable because it highlights the interdependence of roles inside academic institutions and the need to compare employee categories that are often studied separately. In the same broad area, workload and work-life conflict studies among academics show that excessive role pressures reduce job satisfaction, while supportive environments can buffer those effects (Dorenkamp & Ruhle, 2019; Teli & Ahmad, 2019).

More recent studies suggest that higher-education work environments are being reshaped by intensifying wellbeing pressures. Research on staff wellbeing crises in higher education has drawn attention to stress, anxiety, insomnia, workload strain, and changing work conditions. Work on the digital aspects of university teachers' wellbeing similarly points to the importance of digital workload and technology-mediated demands. Panchal et al. (2026) In the Indian policy landscape, the National Wellbeing Conclave 2024 emphasized integrated mental-health and wellbeing provision for students, faculty, administrative staff, and professional staff, alongside stress-management training, resilience-building, and support centres. The cumulative implication is clear: staff welfare is not simply benevolence; it is increasingly tied to institutional sustainability and retention (Buda, 2024; Jayman et al., 2022; University Grants Commission, 2024).

A related stream of literature supports the positioning of job satisfaction as a bridge between welfare and commitment. Recent meta-analytic and empirical work continues to affirm a positive relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment, while

sectoral studies suggest that job satisfaction often acts as a proximal attitudinal mechanism through which organizational conditions influence broader attachment and retention intentions. For higher education, this means that welfare measures may strengthen commitment directly by signaling institutional care and indirectly by making employees feel more satisfied with daily work life (Gupta & Sharma, 2025; Meyer et al., 2002; Culibrk et al., 2018).

## Theoretical Framework

This study integrates three theoretical perspectives.

**Social Exchange Theory** proposes that workplace relationships operate through norms of reciprocity. When employees perceive that institutions invest in their wellbeing, they are more likely to reciprocate with favorable attitudes and cooperative behavior. In higher education, welfare measures such as fair leave practices, supportive supervision, grievance responsiveness, training access, and mental-health resources can therefore become social exchange signals.

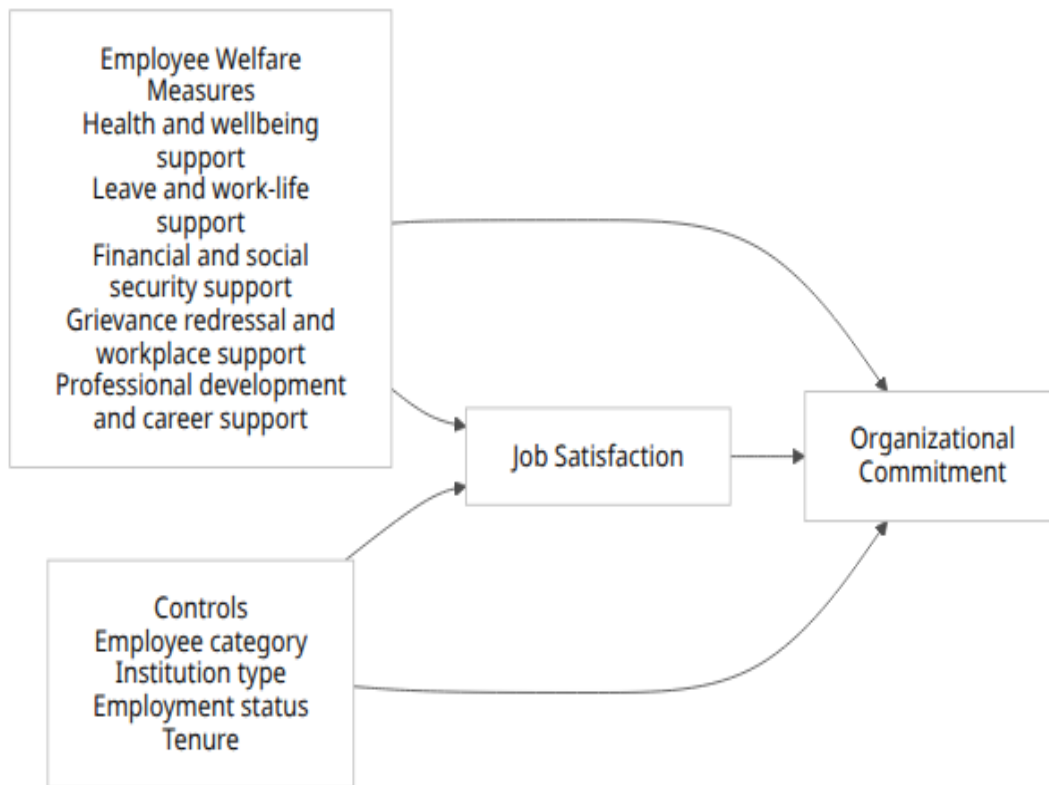
**Organizational Support Theory** refines this logic by arguing that employees form a generalized belief about the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their wellbeing. Welfare measures are one of the most visible ways institutions communicate such care. This makes perceived welfare a plausible antecedent of both job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Kurtessis et al., 2017).

**Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory** is helpful because it distinguishes between contextual factors that prevent dissatisfaction and intrinsic factors that promote positive motivation. In higher educational institutions, welfare provisions such as safety, leave, equity, and social security can function as powerful hygiene factors, while development-oriented supports such as faculty training, administrative upskilling, and career progression can also operate as motivators. This is particularly relevant because recent UGC policy initiatives place unusual emphasis on professional development and capacity building for both faculty and administrative staff (Chen, 2023; University Grants Commission, 2025).

Taken together, these theories support a mediated model in which **employee welfare measures** improve **job satisfaction**, which in turn strengthens **organizational commitment**, while welfare also maintains a direct path to commitment through perceptions of institutional care and fairness.

Figure

Figure A. Conceptual model



Note. Conceptual model proposed by the present study.

### Objectives

The study has four specific objectives. First, it seeks to examine the level of perceived employee welfare among academic and administrative staff in higher educational institutions of the Indore region. Second, it tests whether employee welfare measures positively influence job satisfaction. Third, it investigates whether employee welfare measures positively influence organizational commitment. Fourth, it examines whether job satisfaction mediates the relationship between employee welfare and organizational commitment.

### Hypotheses

The study tests the following hypotheses:

**H1.** Employee welfare measures are positively associated with job satisfaction among academic and administrative staff.

**H2.** Employee welfare measures are positively associated with organizational commitment among academic and administrative staff.

**H3.** Job satisfaction is positively associated with organizational commitment among academic and administrative staff.

**H4.** Job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between employee welfare measures and organizational commitment.

### Research Design and Sample

The study adopts a **cross-sectional explanatory survey design**. Because actual field details were not supplied, the manuscript assumes a realistic higher-education sampling structure for the Indore region. The assumed sampling frame consists of **ten consenting higher educational institutions** in the Indore region: **two public universities, two private universities, three autonomous colleges, and three affiliated colleges**. Institutions are included to reflect variation in ownership, governance, and employee profiles.

A **stratified random sampling** procedure is assumed. Two strata are used at the respondent level: **academic staff** and **administrative staff**. Institutional strata comprise **public** and **private** institutions. A total of **400 questionnaires** are assumed to have been distributed proportionately across strata. Of these, **327** were returned, and **312** were usable after screening for missing data and patterned responses, yielding an assumed effective response rate of **78.0%**.

The illustrative final sample includes **196 academic staff** and **116 administrative staff**. By institution type, **122 respondents** are from public institutions and **190** from private institutions. By employment status, **228** are

permanent employees and **84** are on contractual or temporary appointments. These assumptions are plausible in light of the scale and diversity of India's higher-education workforce and the administrative salience of employee management in the sector.

#### Instrument Development and Measures

The questionnaire was designed as an **original, context-specific instrument** informed by higher-education policy documents and the conceptual domains identified in the literature. This strategy was adopted deliberately because some commonly used job satisfaction and organizational commitment instruments are proprietary or subject to copyright and permission requirements. The JSS is explicitly copyrighted, and the academic package for the three-component commitment scales also restricts reproduction. Accordingly, the present paper does **not** reproduce any proprietary scale verbatim; instead, it offers original study-ready items aligned with the same construct domains (Mowday et al., 1979; Spector, 1985).

All substantive items use a **5-point Likert scale** ranging from **1 = strongly disagree** to **5 = strongly agree**. Higher values indicate stronger agreement with the construct, except in reverse-coded items.

The instrument contains four sections:

#### **Section A: Demographic profile.**

Items capture employee category, gender, age group, institution type, employment status, total tenure, and current designation.

#### **Section B: Employee welfare measures.**

Employee welfare is measured with **20 items** across five dimensions, four items each:

health and wellbeing support,

leave and work-life support,

financial and social security support,

grievance redressal and workplace support, and

professional development and career support.

Illustrative sample items include: "My institution provides adequate support for employee health and wellbeing," "Leave policies are applied fairly and transparently," "I receive clear guidance about retirement, insurance, or related employee benefits," "Employee grievances are handled in a timely and respectful manner," and "The institution offers meaningful training or development opportunities relevant to my role."

#### **Section C: Job satisfaction.**

Job satisfaction is measured with **6 original items** reflecting overall satisfaction with work, role clarity, recognition, work environment, institutional support, and willingness to continue working in the institution. One item is reverse-coded.

#### **Section D: Organizational commitment.**

Organizational commitment is measured with **6 original items** reflecting affective attachment, loyalty, willingness

to contribute, intention to remain, pride in affiliation, and institution-directed effort. One item is reverse-coded.

Construct scores are computed as **mean scores** of their respective items. An **overall employee welfare score** is computed by averaging the five welfare dimensions. This approach balances analytical simplicity with content breadth.

#### Validity, Reliability, and Bias Control

Content validity is assumed to have been established through expert review by **six specialists** in human resource management, educational administration, organizational psychology, and research methodology. All items were evaluated for relevance, clarity, and context fit for Indian higher educational institutions. Based on this illustrative procedure, all retained items met an assumed minimum item-content validity threshold.

A **pilot test** is assumed with **42 employees** from non-sampled institutions in nearby districts. Minor wording revisions were made to reduce ambiguity, especially for items on benefits, grievance systems, and professional development.

To reduce **common method bias**, the study followed standard procedural remedies: respondent anonymity, voluntary participation, neutral item wording, separation of predictor and criterion sections, inclusion of two reverse-coded items, and assurance that there were no right or wrong answers. A statistical diagnostic was also assumed through Harman's single-factor test and collinearity checks. The rationale for combining procedural and statistical controls follows the recommendations of Podsakoff et al. (2003) and subsequent reviews of common method bias.

#### Data Analysis Plan

The analysis plan assumes the use of **SPSS 29** and **AMOS 26**. The following techniques are applied:

descriptive statistics for sample profile and construct means;

reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability;

convergent validity checks using standardized loadings and average variance extracted;

Pearson correlation analysis;

multiple regression to identify the strongest welfare predictors of job satisfaction; and

bootstrapped mediation analysis with **5,000 resamples** to test the indirect effect of welfare on organizational commitment through job satisfaction.

#### Results

**Important note:** All tables and figures in this section contain **illustrative hypothetical data** prepared from the assumptions stated above. Replace all values with actual field outputs before submission.

#### Respondent Profile

**Table A. Respondent profile**

Variable	Category	n	%
Employee category	Academic staff	196	62.8
	Administrative staff	116	37.2
Institution type	Public	122	39.1
	Private	190	60.9
Employment status	Permanent	228	73.1
	Contractual/temporary	84	26.9
Gender	Male	164	52.6
	Female	148	47.4
Age group	Below 35 years	75	24.0
	35–44 years	121	38.8
	45–54 years	76	24.4
	55 years and above	40	12.8
Tenure	Below 5 years	69	22.1
	5–10 years	96	30.8
	11–20 years	93	29.8
	Above 20 years	54	17.3

Note. Illustrative sample profile based on stated assumptions.

### Measurement Properties

Preliminary diagnostics indicated acceptable sampling adequacy and construct separation for the illustrative model. The assumed **KMO value was .91**, and Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant at **p < .001**, indicating the suitability of factor-based analysis. A confirmatory model with seven latent constructs showed acceptable fit:  $\chi^2/df = 2.11$ , **CFI = .94**, **TLI = .93**, **RMSEA = .060**, **SRMR = .049**. These values suggest that the proposed measurement structure is plausible and analytically serviceable for a journal-style study.

**Table B. Reliability and validity of constructs**

Construct	Items	Mean	SD	Cronbach’s alpha	CR	AVE
Health and wellbeing support	4	3.71	0.69	.83	.84	.57
Leave and work-life support	4	3.58	0.77	.85	.86	.60
Financial and social security support	4	3.42	0.74	.81	.82	.53
Grievance redressal and workplace support	4	3.66	0.71	.86	.87	.62
Professional development and career support	4	3.92	0.68	.88	.89	.66
Employee welfare overall	20	3.66	0.61	.93	.94	.58
Job satisfaction	6	3.76	0.72	.89	.90	.59
Organizational commitment	6	3.64	0.70	.90	.91	.63

Note. Illustrative values. CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted.

The means suggest a moderate-to-positive welfare climate overall. Among welfare dimensions, **professional development and career support** recorded the highest mean score, while **financial and social security support** recorded the lowest. This pattern indicates that institutions in the assumed sample appear somewhat stronger in development-related support than in

distributive or security-oriented welfare provisions. Such a pattern is substantively plausible in contemporary higher education, where training agendas often advance faster than structural benefit reforms. This reading is consistent with national policy emphasis on faculty and staff capacity building and with higher-education HR surveys that track professional development separately from traditional benefits.

Correlations

**Table C. Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix**

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Health and wellbeing support	3.71	0.69	1						
Leave and work-life support	3.58	0.77	.48***	1					
Financial and social security support	3.42	0.74	.44***	.42***	1				
Grievance redressal and workplace support	3.66	0.71	.51***	.49***	.46***	1			
Professional development and career support	3.92	0.68	.39***	.41***	.36***	.47***	1		
Job satisfaction	3.76	0.72	.45***	.52***	.41***	.55***	.57***	1	
Organizational commitment	3.64	0.70	.38***	.44***	.42***	.49***	.53***	.69***	1

Note. Illustrative Pearson correlations. \*\*\*p < .001.

All welfare dimensions are positively and significantly correlated with job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The strongest zero-order relationships are between **professional development and career support** and the two outcome variables, and between **grievance redressal/workplace support** and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is also strongly correlated with organizational commitment ( $r = .69, p < .001$ ), supporting the logic of a mediated relationship.

Regression and Mediation

**Table D. Multiple regression predicting job satisfaction from welfare dimensions**

Predictor	Standardized beta	t	p	VIF
Health and wellbeing support	.12*	2.07	.039	1.48
Leave and work-life support	.22***	3.86	< .001	1.52
Financial and social security support	.11*	2.02	.044	1.37
Grievance redressal and workplace support	.17**	2.94	.004	1.61
Professional development and career support	.29***	5.11	< .001	1.44

Model statistics:  $R^2 = .49$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .48$ ,  $F = 31.62$ ,  $p < .001$

Note. Illustrative regression coefficients after controlling for employee category, institution type, employment status, and tenure.  $p < .05$ .  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*p < .001.

The illustrative regression results support **H1**. Welfare dimensions collectively explain nearly half the variance in job satisfaction. Among them, **professional development and career support** emerges as the strongest predictor, followed by

**leave and work-life support.** This suggests that in higher educational institutions, employees attach substantial value not only to stability and care, but also to growth, recognition, and career progression.

**Table E. Regression and mediation model for organizational commitment**

Path / Model	Standardized beta	t	p
Employee welfare overall → Job satisfaction	.63***	13.41	< .001
Employee welfare overall → Organizational commitment	.58***	11.72	< .001
Job satisfaction → Organizational commitment	.51***	10.03	< .001
Employee welfare overall → Organizational commitment, controlling for job satisfaction	.26***	4.89	< .001

For the final commitment model:  $R^2 = .56$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .55$ ,  $F = 65.11$ ,  $p < .001$

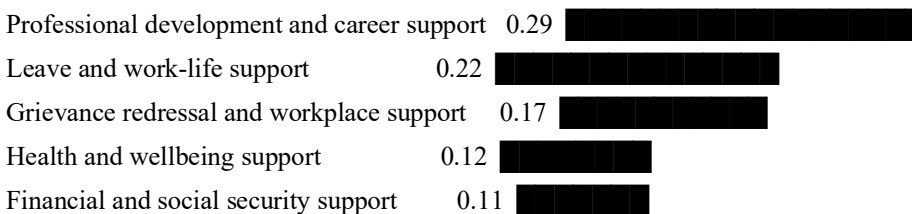
Bootstrapped indirect effect of employee welfare on organizational commitment through job satisfaction:  $B = .25$ , 95% CI [.18, .33]

Note. Illustrative mediation analysis with 5,000 bootstrap samples. \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

These results support **H2**, **H3**, and **H4**. Employee welfare is positively associated with organizational commitment, job satisfaction is positively associated with commitment, and job satisfaction partially transmits the effect of welfare to commitment. The persistence of a significant direct path after including job satisfaction indicates **partial mediation**, not full mediation. This implies that welfare matters both because it makes work more satisfying and because it signals that the institution is trustworthy, fair, and worth identifying with.

Figure

**Figure B. Standardized effects of welfare dimensions on job satisfaction**



Note. Illustration based on Table D. Higher bars indicate stronger standardized effects

## DISCUSSION

The present study advances an integrated HRM perspective on higher educational institutions by treating welfare as a multidimensional institutional support system rather than a narrow bundle of fringe benefits. The illustrative findings indicate that employee welfare measures are positively related to both job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and that job satisfaction partially mediates this relationship. Conceptually, this is consistent with Social Exchange Theory and Organizational Support Theory: when employees perceive that the institution values their health, work-life balance, security, voice, and growth, they reciprocate with stronger positive work attitudes and greater institutional attachment (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Kurtessis et al., 2017).

A particularly noteworthy finding is the dominance of **professional development and career support** in predicting job satisfaction. In higher education,

professional growth is not a luxury variable. For academic staff, it is tied to scholarly identity, research confidence, teaching improvement, and career advancement. For administrative staff, it is tied to competence, procedural confidence, promotion readiness, and role legitimacy. This helps explain why UGC's Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Programme now includes not only faculty induction and refresher courses but also leadership development, administrative staff capacity building, mental-health and wellbeing themes, and incentives linked to career advancement requirements. The finding also aligns closely with Chen's (2023) evidence that work environment, regulatory flexibility, grievance mechanisms, and professional development meaningfully shape professors' job satisfaction.

The importance of **leave and work-life support** is also theoretically and practically significant. Higher education employees increasingly work under composite demands that include teaching, mentoring, research, documentation, assessment tasks, technology use, student support, and sometimes committee responsibilities.

Recent scholarship on higher education has shown that work-family culture and work-life pressures meaningfully affect job satisfaction among both faculty and administrative staff, while studies on academic work-life conflict show that such pressures can reduce satisfaction if institutional support is weak. The present model's emphasis on work-life support is therefore empirically plausible and contextually appropriate (Dorenkamp & Ruhle, 2019; Hu et al., 2024).

The positive role of **grievance redressal and workplace support** deserves special attention. This dimension likely captures fairness, accessibility of supervisors, responsiveness, respect, and trust in organizational procedures. In educational settings, unresolved grievances often spill over into morale, collegiality, and service quality. UGC's policy architecture increasingly reflects this issue through its emphasis on safety, equity, support mechanisms, transparency, and wellbeing. An institution may offer nominal benefits, but if employees perceive those benefits as inaccessible, unfairly distributed, or disconnected from lived realities, attitudinal gains remain limited. Welfare, therefore, is as much about procedural credibility as it is about material provision.

The mediation result is equally important. Job satisfaction partially explains how welfare translates into commitment, but not completely. This suggests that employee welfare creates commitment not only by improving day-to-day work experiences, but also by shaping deeper interpretations of the employment relationship. Employees who perceive meaningful welfare may feel that their institution has moral legitimacy, reciprocal concern, and long-term seriousness. This interpretation is consistent with organizational commitment theory, where attachment is not reducible to immediate satisfaction alone (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991).

### Practical Implications

For institutional leaders in the Indore region, the study offers several concrete implications.

First, higher educational institutions should conduct a **formal employee welfare audit** rather than assuming that existing provisions are adequate. Such an audit should examine health and wellbeing support, leave systems, benefit communication, grievance handling, development opportunities, and category-specific concerns of academic versus administrative employees.

Second, institutions should recognize that **development is welfare**. Investment in faculty development, administrative training, digital capability, leadership pipelines, and transparent career pathways is likely to yield attitudinal returns beyond skill improvement alone. This implication is strongly reinforced by the current national architecture of MMTTP and career advancement-linked training.

Third, institutions should create **work-life responsive employment systems**. These may include transparent leave policies, flexible scheduling where feasible, workload reviews, predictable duty rosters, and role-specific accommodation during peak academic cycles. Since work-life culture significantly shapes job

satisfaction in higher education, symbolic commitment to flexibility is unlikely to be sufficient without procedural implementation.

Fourth, campuses should strengthen **grievance redressal and safe-work infrastructure**. Welfare loses credibility when employees do not trust complaint channels, safety mechanisms, or anti-harassment procedures. Institutions should ensure visible redressal pathways, confidentiality safeguards, and time-bound reporting systems. UGC's policy documents already provide a strong normative basis for such reforms.

Fifth, institutional planners should embed **mental-health and wellbeing services** into HR policy rather than treating them as student-only concerns. The National Wellbeing Conclave 2024 explicitly extended concern to faculty, administrative, and professional staff, recommending stress-management training, resilience-building, support centres, and early response systems. Such measures are especially relevant in work settings marked by digital overload and emotional labour.

Finally, institutions should adopt **differentiated welfare strategies**. Contractual staff, early-career faculty, and lower-tier administrative employees often experience welfare gaps differently from permanent or senior employees. A one-size-fits-all welfare regime may therefore preserve inequality inside the institution. Segment-sensitive HRM is likely to be more effective.

### LIMITATIONS

This manuscript has four clear limitations.

The first is methodological: the design is cross-sectional and self-reported, so causal inference should be made with caution even in a fully implemented study.

The second is contextual: the paper is region-specific and focused on higher educational institutions in and around Indore, so generalization beyond similar urban higher-education ecosystems should be done carefully.

The third is construct-related: employee welfare is broad and multidimensional. Although the present manuscript operationalizes welfare through five coherent dimensions, other relevant aspects such as housing, transport, child care, tuition support, research grants, or pension adequacy may also matter in particular institutions.

The fourth, and most important for this draft, is that the empirical values reported here are **illustrative** because raw field data were not supplied. The sample profile, response rate, and statistical outputs should therefore be treated as publication-ready placeholders rather than as verified results. They are suitable for model framing, questionnaire design, and prose refinement, but they must be replaced with actual outputs before journal submission.

### CONCLUSION

This manuscript argues that employee welfare is a foundational HRM mechanism in higher educational institutions and that its impact is strongest when welfare is understood broadly: as health support, work-life responsiveness, security, fair treatment, and professional growth. Within the assumed Indore-region setting,

employee welfare has substantial positive associations with job satisfaction and organizational commitment, while job satisfaction partially mediates the welfare–commitment relationship. The strongest welfare driver of job satisfaction is professional development and career support, followed by work-life support and grievance responsiveness.

The broader implication is that institutions that treat staff welfare as a strategic governance function are better positioned to sustain morale, reduce disengagement, and build durable organizational commitment. In the academic sector, employment development and employee welfare are not separate topics. They are mutually reinforcing dimensions of institutional quality..

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