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Faculty Engagement In Indian Heis: Why Workplace Environment And Institutional Support Matter

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ABSTRACT

HEIs have long guided the growth of India. Today, they face rising expectations to enhance their teaching, strengthen their research, and, of utmost importance, improve their student outcomes. These efforts of HEIs of India are central to the Viksit Bharat 2047 vision of emerging as a global education powerhouse in the world. Against this background, a faculty member's day-to-day workplace experience and the support they sense from their institution are crucial. This study explores whether a conducive workplace environment and a stronger perception of support from the institution shape how engaged they are at their workplace.

The study draws on the author's doctoral research on what leads to faculty members' engagement, narrowing the lens on two key, manageable factors. Faculty members from selected HEIs were asked to fill out a structured questionnaire; the responses were thereafter analyzed using regression techniques. The study looks at a faculty member's workplace environment and their perception of organizational support as the main factors that predict how engaged they are. Faculty engagement is treated as the main outcome, while relevant demographic and institutional characteristics are kept under control in the model. Guided by the past research, the study expects that a better workplace environment and stronger support from the organization will have a clear positive impact on the engagement of faculty members.

To effectively achieve the vision "Viksit Bharat 2047," this study highlights how crucial it is to retain faculty members who are actively engaged in their work. It connects this to the New Education Policy 2020,

which stresses raising quality and innovation and making HEIs of India globally competitive. The findings are expected to offer clear, practical suggestions for academic leaders and policymakers on setting up supportive work systems and governance practices that keep faculty engaged in HEIs of India.

Keyword: Faculty engagement, Workplace Environment, Institutional Support, Higher Education Institutions, Viksit Bharat 2047, New Education Policy 2020.

1. INTRODUCTION

As India approaches its centennial of independence, the ambitious goal of Viksit Bharat @ 2047 is to transform the country's economy into one that is developed, open to all, powered by innovation, and competitive on a global scale. In this vision, higher education is a basic component, and it is also one of the most significant components that make up this vision. Teaching faculty is positioned at the core of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020's ambition to achieve high-quality learning outcomes and create an advanced knowledge society by 2047. As conditions for achieving these objectives, it places an emphasis on academic leadership, the reinforcement of institutional capacity, and the development of faculty members. To meet Viksit Bharat @ 2047 desired outcomes, India's higher education institutions (HEIs) need to invest the organization into exceptional research, technological advancement, and advancement of society. The present study, assessed against this background, draws attention to the significance of Faculty Engagement as an organizational framework which ties institutional performance directly to the broader development goals of the nation.

Employee engagement – an improved cognitive, emotional, and behavioral relationship between workers and their place of work and organizations – has been widely explored in human resource management research. As a result of this connection, workers are more likely to be prompt in their engagement, persistent in their efforts, and take responsibility for themselves. In the context of higher education institutions (HEIs) in India, the term 'faculty engagement' refers to the extent to which faculty members are devoted emotionally to their respective institutions, cognitively engaged in their work, and willing to "go the extra mile" in terms of mentoring, teaching, research, and facilitating the institution. Engaged faculty exhibit more profound expertise in their fields, better moral standards, a higher interest towards students' holistic development, and an endless inclination for innovation in both teaching and research. Each of these aspects affects the higher

education system as a whole, as well as student accomplishment and the institution's standing in the wider community. For a while, engagement research has centered on industrial and business contexts, overlooking service-oriented higher education. Despite the fact there exists a significant risk that faculty disengagement could pose to educational accomplishments, institutional performance, and ultimately the essential human capital that is necessary for Viksit Bharat @ 2047, the current condition continues to thrive.

A growing body of research suggests that employee engagement is not arbitrary, but rather influenced by specific factors. For higher education faculty, the Workplace Environment (WE) and Institutional Support (IS) are crucial. The Workplace Environment (WE) includes an institution's physical environment, societal norms, and cultural practices, as well as the extent to which employees trust and respect each other, feel psychologically safe in their roles, and maintain positive relationships within the institution. Institutional Support (IS), often perceived by faculty as organizational backing, opportunities for professional growth, fair compensation, transparent communication, and meaningful recognition, signals that the institution values their contributions and prioritizes their expertise, well-being, and mental health. Given the curriculum changes driven by the National Education Policy (NEP), the digitalization of teaching and learning, and heightened expectations of society and students, fostering supportive workplaces and strong institutional support systems is essential for sustaining faculty engagement. It is absolutely necessary that this be executed with the objective to develop the knowledge economy that Viksit Bharat @ 2047 intends to establish, which relies heavily on innovation.

Based on research conducted in Indian Higher Education, particularly in Uttar Pradesh, the most populous Indian state and the one with the most colleges, this study argues that understanding the faculty engagement in Indian higher educations (HEIs) requires a scholarly approach and is also crucial for effective policy. This understanding should consider both the workplace environment and the level of institutional support. This study aims to explore, both theoretically and through research, how these factors affect current faculty engagement. It will also examine how engaged faculty contribute to better academic performance, a stronger research culture, reduced turnover, and more resilient institutions, all in line with the long-term goals of Viksit Bharat @ 2047. This study seeks to provide evidence-based insights for institutional leaders, regulators, and policymakers by systematically investigating the significance of workplace environment (WE) and institutional support (IS) in fostering

faculty engagement within Indian higher education institutions (HEIs). The ultimate goal is to inform the design of supportive ecosystems that facilitate faculty success, thereby strengthening the capacity of higher education to serve as a genuine catalyst for national development during the AMRIT KAAL, culminating in 2047.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The research on employee engagement provides a good conceptual platform for analyzing faculty engagement in Indian higher education institutions. Kahn's early work defined engagement as using and expressing one's chosen personality at work. The psychological qualities of meaningfulness, security, and accessibility influence this concept (Kahn, 1990). Subsequent theorists have elaborated engagement as a positive, work-related state of vigor, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002), as the positive antithesis of burnout (Maslach et al., 2001), and as a multi-dimensional construct encompassing cognitive, emotional and behavioural components (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Saks, 2006). Empirical investigations consistently reveal that engagement serves as a predictor of crucial outcomes, including performance, customer satisfaction, safety, and decreased turnover (Harter et al., 2002; Rich et al., 2010), thereby highlighting its strategic significance for knowledge-intensive institutions like colleges and universities. In the context of higher education, faculty-specific models and research emphasize institutional attachment, involvement, recognition, career orientation, and credibility as fundamental dimensions of faculty engagement, thereby linking engaged faculty to improved academic quality and institutional effectiveness (Barman, 2011; Hakeem & Gulzar, 2015; Regy & Malini, 2017). Consequently, this body of work establishes faculty engagement as a crucial mechanism through which higher education institutions (HEIs) can convert academic labor into the human capital and innovation outcomes essential for a Viksit Bharat @ 2047.

This study highlights the importance of institutional support (IS) and the workplace environment (WE) in determining engagement. These findings are especially relevant for Indian higher education institutions (HEIs). Research on the workplace environment (WE) shows that emotional and cognitive engagement is significantly influenced by factors like autonomy, support from supervisors, teamwork, physical and psychological safety, and a positive view of work life. On the contrary, unfavourable conditions reduce engagement (Anitha, 2014; Kumar & Sia, 2012; Sadia et al., 2016; Tyagi, 2017). Studies on Institutional

Support (IS) reveal that employees who perceive equitable treatment, advancement opportunities, fair performance assessments, and supportive leadership tend to exhibit higher engagement with their work and the organization (Bhatnagar, 2013; Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2014; Dai & Qin, 2016; Othman & Nasuridin, 2013). Research in Indian higher education has shown a favourable relationship between institutional support – specifically autonomy, a collaborative environment, procedural fairness, and human resource policies that emphasize employee welfare – and heightened faculty engagement and institutional commitment (Ahuja & Gupta, 2019; Gupta et al., 2015; Mercy & Choudhary, 2019; Nazir & Islam, 2017; Sweta & Wadhwa, 2020). These findings imply that faculty engagement within Indian higher education institutions (HEIs) is not exclusively determined by individual attributes; instead, it represents a socially constructed response to prevailing workplace conditions and the extent of institutional support. Therefore, if these conditions are deliberately structured and executed on a broader scale, they could enable the higher education system to develop the skilled, committed, and future-oriented faculty essential for realizing the goals of Viksit Bharat @ 2047.

3. CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESIS

In accordance with the previous studies reviewed and logical reasoning, this study puts forward a straightforward conceptual model where the workplace environment (WE) and Institutional Support (IS) are considered independent predictors of faculty engagement. The following hypothesis is proposed in accordance with previous empirical findings:

H1. The Workplace Environment (WE) and Institutional Support (IS) combined together significantly influence faculty engagement in HEIs.

4. RESEARCH METHODS

The study makes use of an analytical research design based on primary data gathered from faculty members functioning in prestigious higher education institutions (HEIs) in Agra, Kanpur and Prayagraj, three of Uttar Pradesh's major academic centers of learning. A sample size of 511, sufficient enough for a reliable multivariate analysis was obtained using a purposive sampling technique to target full-time faculty in HEIs. The data was collected using a self-developed, structured questionnaire that analyzed workplace environment (WE), institutional support (IS), and faculty engagement (FE) through 21 items across three subscales.

The tool was standardized using reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha) and descriptive statistics.

SPSS was employed to compile and evaluate the responses. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the characteristics of the sample and look at statistical patterns, and then inferential approaches were used. Multiple regression analysis was employed as the main analytical test to investigate to what extent to which workplace environment and institutional support influence faculty engagement. This made it possible to identify significant predictors to leads to faculty engagement in higher education institutions (HEIs) in India.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

A multiple regression analysis, centered at both prediction and explanation (Hair et al., 2014), was used to accurately forecast the dependent variable, faculty engagement (FE), using a set of precursors: workplace environment (WE) and institutional support (IS). The study utilised both the Enter and the Stepwise Regression analysis to come to a better understanding.

The regression analysis demonstrates that workplace environment and institutional support together explain a substantial share of the variance in faculty engagement among the 511 respondents from HEIs in Agra, Prayagraj, Lucknow, and Kanpur. The model depicted in Table 01 shows an R square of 0.425 indicating that the two precursors jointly account for 42.5 percent explanation in the faculty engagement scores. The ANOVA results in Table 02 indicate that the overall regression model is highly significant ($F = 187.683, p < 0.001$), confirming that the combined effect of workplace environment and institutional support on faculty engagement is significant. These findings indicate that the discernible pattern in the sample is representative of structured relationship between the independent organizational traits i.e., workplace environment and institutional support and engagement, rather than being due to random chance. The adjusted R-squared value of 0.423 suggests that the model preserves its explanatory effectiveness even after taking into account the total number of precursors. This suggests that both precursors provide significant contributions rather than artificially boosting the model through overfitting.

To create an understanding as to which precursor plays a more decisive role in shaping faculty engagement a stepwise regression analysis was run. In the initial step given in Table 03, only institutional support was

entered into the model, and it emerged as a very strong predictor with an R-square = 0.392, indicating that institutional support itself explains about 39.2 percent of the faculty engagement. The coefficient for institutional support in the first model given in Table 05 is positive and highly significant (standardized beta = 0.626, t = 18.122, p < 0.001), with a narrow 95 percent confidence interval for the unstandardized coefficients (0.164 to 0.203), underscoring the stability of this effect. In the second step, workplace environment was added to the model shown in table 03, and the overall fit improved to R-sqaure = 0.425, meaning that together institutional support and workplace environment explain 42.5 percent of faculty engagement, with workplace environment contributing an additional 3.3 percent beyond what institutional support already explains (R square change = 0.033, F change = 28.936, p < 0.001). In the final model given in table 03, both precursors remain significant statistically and related to faculty engagement positively, but institutional support continues to have the stronger standardized beta ($\beta = 0.496$) compared to workplace environment ($\beta = 0.223$), indicating that institutional support exerts roughly twice the impact of workplace environment on faculty engagement when both are considered simultaneously.

Overall, through the employment of stepwise regression procedure, it was confirmed that institutional support plays a primary role in explaining faculty engagement, in this sample while a positive workplace environment adds a meaningful but a smaller incremental boost comparatively. Thus, the null hypothesis (H0), which states that “The Workplace Environment (WE) and Institutional Support (IS) combined together do not significantly influence faculty engagement in HEIs”, is rejected and the alternate hypothesis (H1), which states that “The Workplace Environment (WE) and Institutional Support (IS) combined together significantly influence faculty engagement in HEIs”, is accepted.

Model Summary ^b						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics	
					R Square Change	F Change
1	.652 ^a	.425	.423	.22263	.425	187.683
a. Predictors: (Constant), IS (Institutional Support), WE (Workplace Environment)						
b. Dependent Variable: FE (Faculty Engagement)						

Table 01 Enter Method Regression Analysis

Source: Author Compiled

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18.605	2	9.303	187.683	.000 ^b
	Residual	25.179	508	.050		
	Total	43.784	510			
a. Dependent Variable: FE (Faculty Engagement)						
b. Predictors: (Constant), IS (Institutional Support), WE (Workplace Environment)						

Table 02 Enter Method Regression ANOVA

Source: Author Compiled

Model Summary ^c						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics	
					R Square Change	F Change
1	.626 _a	.392	.391	.22866	.392	328.406
2	.652 _b	.425	.423	.22263	.033	28.936
a. Predictors: (Constant), IS (Institutional Support)						
b. Predictors: (Constant), IS, WE (Workplace Environment)						
c. Dependent Variable: FE (Faculty Engagement)						

Table 03 Stepwise Method Regression

Source: Author Compiled

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17.171	1	17.171	328.406	.000 ^b
	Residual	26.613	509	.052		
	Total	43.784	510			
2	Regression	18.605	2	9.303	187.683	.000 ^c
	Residual	25.179	508	.050		

	Total	43.784	510		
a. Dependent Variable: FE (Faculty Engagement)					
b. Predictors: (Constant), IS (Institutional Support)					
c. Predictors: (Constant), IS (Institutional Support), WE (Workplace Environment)					

Table 04 Stepwise Method Regression ANOVA

Source: Author Compiled

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardize d Coefficients		Standardize d Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.286	.010		324.848	.000
	IS (Institutional Support)	.183	.010	.626	18.122	.000
2	(Constant)	3.286	.010		333.643	.000
	IS (Institutional Support)	.145	.012	.496	11.956	.000
	WE (Workplace Environment)	.065	.012	.223	5.379	.000
a. Dependent Variable: FE (Faculty Engagement)						

Table 05 Stepwise Method Regression Coefficients

Source: Author Compiled

6. CONCLUSION

The study focused on the significance of workplace environment and institutional support for faculty engagement in Indian HEIs, revealing convincing indications that both factors are essential. An enter-method regression demonstrated that workplace environment and institutional support explained 42.5 percent of faculty engagement among 511 faculty members, proving that faculty engagement is significantly impacted by organizational factors rather than human characteristics. Additionally, the incorporation of stepwise regression analysis further illustrated the

hierarchy of precursors, strengthening the understanding. The results demonstrated that institutional support influences faculty engagement, accounting for 39.2 percent of the variance. The explained variance improved to 42.5 percent after the addition of workplace environment in the subsequent stage, adding an extra 3.3 percent.

These results are important for Indian HEIs, especially those that are committed to the national vision of “Viksit Bharat @ 2047.” Faculty engagement, which is necessary for enhancing the quality of teaching, research effectiveness, innovation, and participation in the community, cannot be merely advanced by motivational rhetoric or welfare activities. It entails purposeful and ongoing investment in both formal institutional support systems and workplace environment. Institutions need to make the “fundamental framework” of engagement stronger by guaranteeing certainty that governance is clear and fair, leadership is consistent and helpful, career paths are clear, recognition systems are in place, and there are plenty of chances for academic and professional growth. They also need to make sure that their departments are safe, well-equipped, polite, and friendly places to work, so that the faculty members can see the goals of their institution in their routine.

Achieving knowledge, innovation, and inclusive development are the three pillars upon which the Viksit Bharat @ 2047 vision rests, and this study’s dual focus is essential to that vision. Institutions that embrace this durable national objective must engage in continuous action. Faculty may improve scholarly effectiveness through holistic engagement strategies that connect institutional policies, leadership behaviors, and workplace practices. When their institution and workplace offer structure and experience, faculty members are more inclined to exert effort in teaching, research, mentorship, and involvement in the community. By 2047, this would have had a substantial impact on Indian higher education and growth.

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