

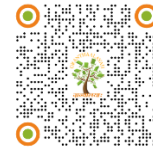
Original Article

## MEDITATION AS A PERSONAL RESOURCE IN ACADEMIA: A JD-R THEORY-BASED REVIEW OF BURNOUT, WORK ENGAGEMENT, AND FACULTY EFFECTIVENESS

Sreenivas Peddi <sup>1\*</sup> , Neha Pandey <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Research Scholar, Manipur International University, Manipur, India

<sup>2</sup> Professor and Director, Institute of Rural Management, Jaipur, India



### ABSTRACT

This review is based on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory and looks at meditation as a self-resource within an academic context and its application in faculty burnout, work-engaging interest, and general efficiency. The paper is based on the recent empirical and conceptual research published during the period of 2021-2025 and is used to synthesize the evidence regarding the way meditation-based interventions, including mindfulness, focused attention, and contemplative interventions, can assist faculty members to manage their stress, restore psychological resources, and address mounting job pressures in higher education. The review puts forward the current methodological trends, major gaps in the research, and a future research agenda that combines both theory-driven and longitudinal studies. It also addresses practical and policy implications, and how universities can institutionalize meditation-based well-being programs as sustainable human resource and faculty development programs. All in all, the paper adds to the existing body of literature concerning occupational well-being by placing meditation as a strategic individual tool towards healthier, more engaged, and effective academic working environments.

**Keywords:** Meditation, Job Demands, Resources Theory, Faculty Burnout, Work Engagement, Higher Education

### INTRODUCTION

The rising nature and level of academic tasks have heightened the issues of faculty health and organizational performance in the higher educational systems. Faculty peers are faced with increased workload, administrative duties and performance demands that may result in psychological pressure and burnout, which eventually compromises involvement and performance in teaching, research and service capacities [Karadjova-Kozhuharova, K. \(2025\)](#). In this regard, Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model offers a solid conceptual framework of understanding how the disproportions between job demands and resources cause burnout and other motivational outcomes like work engagement [Bakker and Demerouti \(2007\)](#); [JD-R Model. \(2025\)](#). JD-R theory explains that job demands are the physical, psychological, social, or organizational factors of work which need prolonged efforts and may lead to strain, whereas job resources are those factors that assist in the achievement of work goals, mitigate the burden of job demands, and enhance personal growth and development [JD-R Model. \(2025\)](#).

Over the past few years, there has been an emergence of interest in studying the role of meditation and mindfulness practices as a personal resource in the JD-R model, which may help to reduce burnout and increase positive work outcomes in the workplace. Mindfulness, which can be described as the skill to be non-judgmentally present-centered, has been theorized as an individual tool to enable people to control attention, emotion, and thinking when facing job demands [Lyddy et al. \(2025\)](#); [JD-R Model. \(2025\)](#).

#### \*Corresponding Author:

Email address: Sreenivas Peddi ([bksrinu53@gmail.com](mailto:bksrinu53@gmail.com))

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Empirical studies show that mindfulness has the potential to influence job demands and resources, which also leads to reduced burnout and increased work engagement among various occupational groups [Lyddy et al. \(2025\)](#); [Han \(2025\)](#). The studies of educators also confirm this connection, with the trait mindfulness being related to lower levels of emotional exhaustion and greater involvement among teaching professionals [Bi \(2021\)](#).

Emotional fatigue, cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy, which are characteristic of burnout, pose a serious problem in the sphere of higher education and negatively influence the well-being of faculty members and their performance [Cadena-Povea \(2025\)](#). Work engagement, on the other hand, which is defined as vigor, dedication, and absorption, has a positive relationship with job satisfaction, quality of teaching and organizational commitment. The JD-R model assumes the presence of two processes: health impairment process, in which a high level of demands consumes the psychological resources, resulting in burnout, and motivational process, in which job resources and personal resources enhance motivation and engagement [JD-R Model. \(2025\)](#). In this regard, meditation and other mindfulness techniques can be seen as stabilizing individual resources to dampen demand-based strain and enhance the motivation processes that facilitate faculty participation and performance.

Although the interest has grown, the study of meditation as a personal source in academia is still in pieces, and little integrative review has been conducted that applies the JD-R theory to faculty performance in a direct manner. Thus, the paper critically examines the recent empirical and theoretical contributions that have placed meditation in the JD-R framework in terms of its effects on burnout, engagement in work, and faculty effectiveness. This synthesis of existing evidence helps to clarify theoretical connections, identify the main processes that can be used to support interventions targeting the improvement of the well-being of the faculty and performance of the institutions.

## **THEORETICAL FOUNDATION: JOB DEMANDS -RESOURCES (JD-R) MODEL**

Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model offers an inclusive model of explaining the causes and effects of occupational stress, motivation, and performance in various professional settings, including higher education. The JD-R model is the creation of Arnold Bakker and Evangelia Demerouti, which states that any job is associated with certain job demands and job resources that interact to determine the well-being and performance of employees. Job demands are work-related factors that involve prolonged physical or psychological effort and hence are related to physiological and psychological costs, and job resources make it easier to achieve goals, have a lower demand, and enable learning and growth.

Newer developments of the JD-R model highlight the potential of personal resources, including resilience, self-regulation, and mindfulness, in defining how individuals think and react to job demands [Bakker and Demerouti \(2022\)](#); [Lyddy et al. \(2025\)](#). In academic settings, professors experience a high cognitive load, emotional work, time pressure, and performance assessment stress, which is why the JD-R framework is especially applicable to the investigation of the dynamics of burnout and engagement [Cadena-Povea \(2025\)](#).

The JD-R model suggests two processes that occur concurrently, including a health impairment process, where excessive job demands cause burnout and strain, and a motivational process, where job and personal resources result in work engagement and performance. When defined as a personal resource, meditation is theorized to work in both processes by aiming to buffer the effect of the demands and enhance motivational pathways.

## **MEDITATION AS A PERSONAL RESOURCE UNDER JD-R FRAMEWORK.**

In occupational health psychology, meditation, especially, mindfulness-based meditation, has been conceptualized as a personal resource. Meditation as a self-regulatory strategy improves attentional control, emotional regulation and awareness of the present moment allowing people to react more adaptively to stress in the workplace. Recent studies that use JD-R propose that mindfulness changes how employees perceive job demands, lessening perceived strain and increasing access to personal and job resources [Bi \(2021\)](#); [Lyddy et al. \(2025\)](#).

Meditation could also be used in academic settings as a stabilizing tool, which enables faculty members to manage workload pressures, role ambiguity and emotional exhaustion. A consistent pattern of research published between 2021 and 2025 shows that mindfulness and meditation have negative relationships with the dimensions of burnout, including emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and positive relationships with engagement and psychological well-being [Han \(2025\)](#), [Karadjova-Kozhuharova \(2025\)](#). These results are consistent with the JD-R hypothesis that the personal resources may have a direct impact on the well-being and indirect impact on the motivational performance.

Notably, meditation contrasts with traditional job resources by virtue of the fact that it is internally developed and thus it becomes especially helpful in a learning institution where structural job resources might be limited. Meditation, therefore, is an individual resource that is scalable and sustainable, which supplements institutional supporting mechanisms.

### **FACULTY MEMBERS BURNOUT: A JD-R PERSPECTIVE.**

Faculty burnout has become a problem of serious concern in the field of higher education, and recent research has indicated increased rates of emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and decreased professional efficacy. In the JD-R approach, burnout is a consequence of being exposed to high job demands, including the excessive workload in teaching, pressure to publish, administrative workload, and job insecurity, without the resources necessary to counterbalance these demands [Cadena-Povea \(2025\)](#).

Recent empirical data indicate that meditation moderates job demands/burnout relationship through improving emotional regulation and cognitive flexibility. Members of the faculty who meditate have lower stress reactivity and enhanced recovery of strain at work, which disrupts the health impairment process described in the JD-R model [Bi \(2021\)](#) [Han \(2025\)](#). Interventions based on meditation have also been found to lower the emotional exhaustion and perceived ability to control work demand in educators [Karadjova-Kozhuharova \(2025\)](#).

The findings have shown that meditation is a personal protective resource that reduces the risk of burnout especially in highly demanding academic settings.

### **WORK ENGAGEMENT, MEDITATION AND FACULTY EFFECTIVENESS.**

The positive motivational result of the JD-R model is work engagement, which is a state of vigor, dedication, and absorption. Being an engaged faculty member is more related to showing commitment to teaching, continuing research work, and being proactive in institutional service. Recent research has pointed out that personal resources, including the mindfulness and meditation, are important to maintain engagement by promoting intrinsic motivation and attentional focus [Lyddy et al. \(2025\)](#); [Bakker and Demerouti \(2022\)](#).

According to the 2021-2025 empirical evidence, meditation shows a positive correlation with work engagement in terms of psychological presence and lessening of cognitive interference due to stress. The teaching effectiveness of engaged faculty members, as well as their higher levels of student interaction, and research productivity are also positively correlated with meditation, and meditation is indirectly related to overall institutional outcomes [Han \(2025\)](#); [Cadena-Povea \(2025\)](#).

In JD-R framework, meditation enhances the process of motivation by allowing the faculty members to harness energy and commitment towards their work despite the high job demands, which in turn increases the overall faculty effectiveness.

### **PROPOSED MODEL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.**

The review suggests a theoretical framework in which meditation is placed as a personal resource, which directly and indirectly has an impact on the outcomes of the faculty, based on the JD-R model and recent empirical evidence. Meditation in the suggested model decreases perceived job demands and undermines the health impairment process, thus decreasing burnout. At the same time, meditation improves individual resources, which increase the motivation process, resulting in an increase in work engagement and faculty effectiveness.

The model also indicates that the burnout and work engagement are the possible mediating variables between meditation and performance-related outcomes. This model combines the theory of occupational stress and motivation and gives a comprehensive explanation of the role of meditation in promoting sustainable performance in academic work.

### **METHODOLOGICAL FASHION IN THE EXISTING RESEARCH.**

An overview of empirical studies on meditation, burnout, work engagement, and faculty effectiveness in the last two years (from 2021 to 2025) demonstrates a number of recurring methodological trends, as well as some significant limitations that define the current body of knowledge.

### **THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY ARE DESCRIBED IN SECTION 4.1.**

The methodological dominant approach adopted in this literature is quantitative and cross-sectional. The majority of the studies utilize survey-based research designs to investigate the relationships between meditation or mindfulness, burnout, work engagement, and other work outcomes [Bi \(2021\)](#), [Han \(2025\)](#), [Cadena-Povea \(2025\)](#). Although these studies are useful in determining relational patterns that are congruent with JD-R theory, they are cross-sectional and thus they are not able to make any causal explanations or determine changes with time.

Intervention-based or quasi-experimental designs are applied in a smaller, but increasingly growing body of research, especially mindfulness or meditation training programs among educators. These researches normally quantify the variations in pre- and post-intervention stress, burnout, or engagement, which are more persuasive in explaining the value of meditation as an individual

resource [Karadjova-Kozhuharova, K. \(2025\)](#). Nevertheless, these designs are still rather few in the context of higher education in comparison to corporate or healthcare ones.

### **SAMPLING AND CONTEXT**

The majority of the literature is based on convenience samples, in which the research subjects are recruited at one university, one department, or country. The faculty members are frequently lumped together with the school teachers or the general academic staff and therefore, this restricts the specificity of the findings about the faculty roles in the university. The sample sizes tend to be moderate and sufficient to regression or structural equation modelling but limit the generalizability [Bi \(2021\)](#), [Lyddy et al. \(2025\)](#).

The literature is geographically clumped in Asia and Europe and there is little cross-cultural or comparative studies that explicitly investigate the role of institutional context on JD-R processes in academia.

### **MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENTS**

Standardized scale of measurement across studies is highly founded on self-reports. Trait mindfulness or mindfulness-at-work scales are generally used in the measurement of meditation or mindfulness, whereas emotional exhaustion or depersonalization dimensions are used in the measurement of burnout. Vigor, dedication, and absorption are constructs that are typically used to operationalize work engagement based on the JD-R theory. The effectiveness of faculty is frequently assessed as an indirect measure based on self-rated performance or activity as opposed to objective measures.

Although these measures exhibit satisfactory psychometric quality, the prevalence of the self-report data sources prompts certain concerns in terms of the common method bias and social desirability.

### **DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES**

Analytically, correlation analysis, multiple regression, mediation and moderation models are commonly used in studies, with more and more studies employing structural equation modeling (SEM) to test JD-R pathways. More theory-based analytical orientation has been reflected in the recent studies that have focused on mediation mechanisms, including burnout or engagement mediating the relationship between personal resources (e.g., meditation) and performance outcomes [Lyddy et al. \(2025\)](#); [Han \(2025\)](#).

Nevertheless, longitudinal modeling, multilevel analysis, and experience sampling methods are not exploited, although they are highly reflective of the dynamic assumptions of JD-R theory.

### **ABSTRACT OF THE TRENDS IN METHODOLOGY.**

On the whole, the literature evidences an increasing theoretical complexity of the application of the JD-R model to the phenomena of meditation and faculty outcomes, but methodological frameworks are very limited. Longitudinal, mixed-method and multi-level designs would be beneficial in future studies because they have the potential to more effectively describe temporal changes, contextual factors and mechanisms behind meditation as a personal resource in academic work settings.

### **RESEARCH GAPS AND FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA.**

Although there is an emerging academic interest in meditation as a personal resource in the Job Demands Resources (JD-R) model, a number of conceptual, methodological, and contextual gaps are still present in the literature.

### **THEORETICAL GAPS**

To begin with, although JD-R theory has been extensively used to study burnout and engagement, meditation is scarcely introduced as a personal resource in JD-R models in the research on higher education. The future research will need to include meditation into the JD-R-based models more systematically, discussing its dual effect on the health-impairment mechanism and the motivational mechanism. Also, very little research has examined the interaction of meditation with conventional job resources (e.g., autonomy, social support) and job demands (e.g., workload, role conflict), which suggests that there is a need to develop interaction and moderation models based on the JD-R theory.

Second, members of faculty are usually viewed as a homogenous group ignoring disciplinary, career-stage, and institutional variations. Future studies need to come up with context sensitive JD-R models that take into consideration differences in academic positions, tenure status, and organizational culture.

## **METHODOLOGICAL GAPS**

Methodologically, the cross-sectional and self-report designs are mostly used limiting the causal interpretation. Further studies need to focus on:

Longitudinal studies to test the effect of meditation on burnout and engagement curves.

Experimental and intervention-based designs to test structured meditation programs among the faculty.

- Combination of quantitative models and qualitative information of lived academic experiences.
- Multilevel analysis to represent individual, departmental, and institutional JD-R dynamics.

In addition, objective performance measures (e.g., teaching review, research output) in addition to the perceptual ones would enhance empirical rigor.

## **FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

The cross-cultural and comparative studies should also be included in the future research agendas to evaluate the influence of institutional norms and national systems of higher education on the effectiveness of meditation as a personal resource. Another potential direction is the exploration of digital and short meditation-based interventions that can be applied to academic professionals. All of these strategies can help to promote a more sophisticated, theoretically informed conception of meditation in academic work settings.

## **INSTITUTIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF PRACTICAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS TO UNIVERSITIES.**

The synthesized results of this review will provide significant implications to the leadership of universities, faculty development programs, and institutional policy. Perceiving meditation as a personal psychological tool instead of a wellness tool on the periphery can be used to make the universities better strategized in dealing with burnout and engagement issues.

At the practical level, institutions may:

- Implement mindfulness and meditation programs in faculty development and orientation programs.
- Provide evidence-based stress-management interventions that are in line with JD-R principles.
- Promote positive academic climates that make self-control and psychological health normal.

These programs can enhance the ability of faculty members to cope with work pressures, thus burnout can be minimized, and interest maintained.

Policy-wise, universities can integrate meditation based interventions into larger occupational health and well-being policies and strategies and coordinate them with workload management, performance assessment and professional growth policies. Advocating meditation as a personal resource that could be scaled with minimal costs may serve as a factor in retaining the faculty, their performance, and the overall effectiveness of the institution. Higher education institutions can enhance sustainable academic performance and healthier working conditions by implementing JD-R-informed strategies, involving structural job resource provision and personal resource development.

## **CONCLUSION**

With this review, meditation has been placed as a useful personal tool in Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) framework of academia. Summarizing the recent evidence (2021-2025), it implies that meditation training can help counter the impact of high job demands, decrease faculty burnout, and promote work engagement and work effectiveness. In spite of promising results, the literature is still disjointed with limited longitudinal, experimental and context-sensitive research. Future studies must be able to combine rigorous designs, theory-based mechanisms, and varied scholarly situations to determine causal mechanisms and boundary conditions. In the case of universities, integrating evidence-based meditation programs into a larger well-being and workload policy is a low cost, scalable approach to managing sustainable faculty performance and institutional resilience.

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