

Sustainable Well-being Practices at Work: Reducing Employee Stress and Enhancing Performance in the Education Sector

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Abstract: The education sector is undergoing a profound transformation driven by digitalization, heightened accountability, and systemic reforms, particularly in developing economies. These changes have intensified occupational stress among academic and professional staff, affecting employee well-being, teaching quality, and institutional sustainability. Although well-being is increasingly recognized within sustainability discourse, its strategic role in higher education remains under-theorized. Drawing on SHRM, Job Demands–Resources theory, Perceived Organizational Support, and Psychological Safety frameworks, this conceptual study examines how sustainable well-being practices—supportive and ethical leadership, work–life balance and flexible work practices, and mental health and psychosocial support—reduce employee stress and enhance sustainable employee performance. The proposed study explains these relationships by identifying stress reduction as the central mechanism through which organizational well-being practices influence performance, with perceived organizational support and psychological safety acting as important enabling factors. The framework is further discussed in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 3, 4, and 8) and India’s National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, bridging global sustainability theory with national policy priorities. The study advances SHRM and higher education literature by positioning employee well-being as a strategic sustainability capability and offers actionable insights for academic leaders and policymakers to build resilient, human-centric and friendly education systems.

Keywords: Sustainable Well-Being, Occupational Stress, Sustainable Performance, Education Sector, SHRM, Psychological Safety, SDGs; NEP 2020

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