

Building Service-Oriented Higher Education Institutions through Authentic Leadership and Change Management: A Qualitative Study

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HOW TO CITE: ABSTRACT

Vaibhav Sharma, Saurabh Gupta, Dr Basavaraj Gaddigal, Saket Jeswani, Nihar Ranjan Agasti (2026). Building Service-Oriented Higher Education Institutions through Authentic Leadership and Change Management: A Qualitative Study International Journal of Special Education, 41(20s), 1409 - 1439

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are undergoing significant transformation driven by quality assurance reforms, digitalization, stakeholder expectations, and the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, making authentic leadership and effective change management essential for institutional success. Despite growing scholarly interest in educational leadership, limited qualitative research has been conducted on authentic leadership, faculty engagement and service orientation within the Indian higher education context. Drawing upon the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Theory and Social Exchange Theory (SET), this study explores how authentic leadership practices and institutional change initiatives shape faculty engagement and promote service-oriented behaviours. JD–R Theory provides the foundation for understanding how authentic leadership and effective change management function as critical organizational resources that enhance faculty engagement, whereas Social Exchange Theory explains how faculty members reciprocate supportive leadership and well-managed organizational change through increased commitment, discretionary effort, and service-oriented behaviours. A qualitative research design was adopted using semi-structured interviews with 30 faculty members of HEIs

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across diverse academic disciplines in India. The interview data were analysed using thematic analysis supported by NVivo 15 to identify recurring themes related to authentic leadership, change management, faculty engagement, and service orientation. The findings show that authentic leadership and effective change management enhance faculty engagement by providing trust, support, participation, empowerment, and organizational resources. Consistent with JD–R Theory and SET, engaged faculty reciprocate positive organizational experiences through greater commitment, discretionary effort, and service-oriented behaviours toward multiple stakeholders. By integrating the explanatory perspectives of JD–R Theory and SET, the study contributes to the higher education leadership literature and offers practical guidance for university leaders and policymakers seeking to strengthen faculty engagement, effectively manage organizational change, and cultivate sustainable service-oriented academic institutions.

Keywords: Authentic Leadership; Change Management; Faculty Engagement; Service Orientation; Job Demands–Resources Theory; Social Exchange Theory; Thematic Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are experiencing unprecedented transformation in response to globalization, rapid technological advancements, increasing competition, changing stakeholder expectations, and policy reforms. Universities are no longer viewed merely as centres for teaching and research but are increasingly expected to function as service-oriented institutions that create value for students, industry, government, and society through high-quality education, innovation, community engagement, and sustainable development. In India, the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the emphasis on Outcome-Based Education (OBE), digital transformation, accreditation frameworks such as NAAC and NBA, and internationalization have significantly reshaped institutional priorities, placing greater emphasis on leadership effectiveness, organizational adaptability, faculty commitment, and stakeholder-centric governance (Government of India, 2020; UNESCO, 2024). Consequently, higher education leaders are expected to foster organizational cultures that encourage

innovation, collaboration, engagement, and service excellence while effectively managing continuous institutional change (OECD, 2024).

Among the various organizational resources available to universities, faculty members constitute the most valuable intellectual capital, directly influencing teaching quality, research productivity, student development, and institutional reputation. The effectiveness of faculty largely depends upon the organizational environment created by institutional leaders. In recent years, Authentic Leadership has emerged as an influential leadership approach characterized by self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced information processing, and an internalized moral perspective (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Authentic leadership cultivates trust, openness, ethical decision-making, and psychological safety, thereby creating an environment in which employees feel valued and motivated to contribute beyond their formal responsibilities (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Simultaneously, universities are confronted with continuous organizational changes arising from curriculum reforms, technological innovations, quality assurance

mechanisms, and evolving stakeholder expectations. Effective Change Management therefore becomes essential to facilitate faculty acceptance of institutional reforms, reduce resistance, and maintain organizational effectiveness (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999; Burnes, 2020). Faculty members who perceive supportive leadership and well-managed organizational change are more likely to remain cognitively, emotionally, and behaviourally engaged, ultimately demonstrating stronger Service Orientation through student mentoring, institutional responsiveness, collaborative practices, and stakeholder engagement (Saks, 2022).

The present study is theoretically anchored in the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2017) and Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964). JD–R Theory proposes that organizational resources enhance employee motivation and engagement by reducing the adverse effects of job demands and promoting personal growth. Within higher education, authentic leadership and effective change management represent critical organizational resources that strengthen faculty engagement despite increasing academic workloads, administrative responsibilities, and accountability pressures. Complementing this perspective, Social Exchange Theory explains that employees reciprocate organizational support, fairness, and trust through positive attitudes and discretionary behaviours. Faculty members who experience transparent leadership, ethical governance, empowerment, and effective institutional support are therefore more likely to reciprocate through enhanced engagement and service-oriented behaviours that benefit students, colleagues, and the institution. The integration of these two theories provides a comprehensive explanation of how authentic leadership and change management jointly influence faculty engagement and subsequently contribute to service orientation within higher education institutions.

Despite substantial research on leadership and employee engagement, several important gaps remain. First, most empirical studies have

examined authentic leadership within corporate settings, with comparatively limited investigation in higher education, particularly in emerging economies such as India (Banks et al., 2016; Hallinger, 2020). Second, existing studies have predominantly explored authentic leadership, change management, faculty engagement, and service orientation as independent constructs, with limited qualitative evidence explaining their interconnected relationships. Third, while previous research has demonstrated the importance of faculty engagement for institutional effectiveness, insufficient attention has been given to understanding how authentic leadership and change management collectively foster service-oriented behaviours among faculty members during periods of organizational transformation. Addressing these gaps is particularly important in the Indian higher education context, where universities continue to navigate extensive policy reforms, accreditation requirements, and digital transformation initiatives.

Against this background, the present study aims to explore how authentic leadership and change management influence faculty engagement and promote service orientation in Indian Higher Education Institutions. Specifically, the study seeks to understand faculty perceptions of authentic leadership, examine the role of change management in facilitating engagement, and explore how engaged faculty members contribute to service-oriented academic cultures. To achieve these objectives, a qualitative research design was adopted using semi-structured interviews with faculty members from public universities, private universities, and autonomous colleges across India. The interview data were analysed through thematic analysis using NVivo 15 to identify recurring themes and generate a context-specific understanding of the relationships among authentic leadership, change management, faculty engagement, and service orientation.

The study contributes to the higher education and leadership literature in several ways. Theoretically, it extends the application of JD–R Theory and SET by demonstrating how

authentic leadership and effective change management function as complementary organizational resources that enhance faculty engagement and encourage reciprocal service-oriented behaviours. It also enriches the emerging literature on authentic leadership in higher education by providing qualitative evidence from the Indian context. Practically, the findings offer valuable guidance for university administrators, policymakers, and quality assurance agencies by emphasizing the importance of transparent leadership, faculty empowerment, participative change management, and supportive organizational cultures in strengthening engagement and fostering sustainable service orientation. These insights are particularly relevant for institutions striving to achieve excellence under NEP 2020 while responding effectively to evolving national and global expectations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are operating in an increasingly dynamic environment characterized by technological advancement, accreditation requirements, curriculum reforms, changing stakeholder expectations, internationalization, and growing demands for institutional accountability. These transformations have increased expectations from faculty members beyond their traditional teaching and research responsibilities. Faculty are increasingly required to participate in quality assurance, mentoring, institutional development, community engagement, and other service-oriented activities. Consequently, maintaining faculty engagement during continuous organizational change has become an important concern for HEIs.

Within this context, leadership and change management represent critical organizational factors influencing how faculty perceive and respond to institutional demands. Authentic leadership, characterized by transparency, ethical behaviour, fairness, consistency, and meaningful faculty involvement, can provide the trust and professional support required for sustained

engagement. Similarly, effective change management, through communication, participation, empowerment, training, role clarity, and adequate resources, can facilitate faculty adaptation to institutional change. Drawing upon Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Theory, the study considers these practices as organizational resources that foster faculty engagement. Social Exchange Theory (SET) further explains how faculty may reciprocate supportive leadership and well-managed change through greater commitment, discretionary effort, and service-oriented behaviours toward students, colleagues, institutions, and external stakeholders.

Authentic leadership has become increasingly relevant to higher education because universities require leaders who can maintain trust, ethical credibility, and faculty commitment while responding to rapid institutional change. Authentic leadership is generally characterized by self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing of information, and an internalized moral perspective (Gardner et al., 2011). Within HEIs, these behaviours are particularly important because faculty work is knowledge-intensive, relatively autonomous, and dependent on professional trust. Recent evidence supports this relevance. A cross-cultural study of 533 university employees found that authentic leader behaviours contributed to digital capability, preparedness, and productivity in higher education (Hughes et al., 2025). Similarly, research in UAE higher education found that authentic leadership positively influenced knowledge sharing, organizational learning, and employee performance. Thus, authentic academic leaders may enhance faculty engagement by establishing transparency, professional respect, fairness, trust, and supportive relationships, making leadership an important relational resource in demanding academic environments.

HEIs face continuous transformation arising from digitalization, accreditation, curriculum reforms, changing student expectations, internationalization, artificial intelligence, and evolving regulatory requirements. Consequently,

effective change management has become central to institutional sustainability. A recent integrative review of organizational change in HEIs demonstrates that research increasingly focuses on institutional culture, governance, structure, technology, leadership, and stakeholder responses to transformation (Alzahmi et al., 2025). Effective change management in universities requires clear communication, faculty participation, empowerment, adequate resources, training, role clarity, and structured implementation. Empirical research comparing UAE and UK universities further demonstrates that change-management practices influence faculty commitment to curriculum change, although these relationships may vary across institutional and cultural contexts. Because academic professionals possess specialized knowledge and considerable autonomy, participative rather than exclusively top-down change processes are particularly important for generating ownership and reducing resistance.

Faculty engagement represents the degree of energy, dedication, involvement, commitment, and discretionary effort faculty invest in their academic and institutional roles. It is especially important because contemporary faculty responsibilities extend beyond teaching to research, mentoring, administration, accreditation, innovation, and community engagement. Hanley et al. (2024) found that the quality of faculty–academic chair leader-member exchange was positively associated with faculty engagement. More recently, Rawat et al. (2026), reviewing 70 studies, concluded that faculty engagement is shaped by diverse individual and organizational antecedents and emphasized the continuing need for an integrated conceptual framework specifically for HEIs. Emerging research also suggests that changing work arrangements make leadership increasingly consequential for maintaining faculty connection with institutions (Maa et al., 2026). Accordingly, supportive leadership and well-managed organizational change may function as critical job resources that promote faculty

engagement, consistent with the motivational logic of Job Demands–Resources Theory.

Service orientation in HEIs can be conceptualized broadly as faculty members' willingness to provide responsive, constructive, and often discretionary contributions to students, colleagues, the institution, professional communities, industry, alumni, and society. This perspective overlaps with academic citizenship and organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB). Academic service has been conceptualized across student, collegial, institutional, disciplinary, and public domains, demonstrating the multi-stakeholder nature of academic contribution. Recent Indian evidence shows that academic leadership can enhance faculty performance through OCB, emphasizing the importance of discretionary behaviour beyond formally prescribed academic roles. Likewise, research among university faculty demonstrates that work-life quality, role stress, psychological well-being, and citizenship behaviour are interconnected (Dewangan & Goswami, 2025). Recent studies also highlight transparency, recognition, organizational climate, and positive leader–faculty relationships as conditions supporting faculty citizenship behaviour. From a SET perspective, faculty who experience fair, supportive, and respectful organizational relationships may reciprocate through stronger commitment, mentoring, helping behaviours, institutional citizenship, and service beyond formal role requirements. Consequently, faculty engagement provides a theoretically meaningful mechanism through which authentic leadership and effective change management may ultimately generate broader service-oriented behaviour in HEIs.

Relationships among Authentic Leadership, Change Management, Faculty Engagement, and Service Orientation

Higher education institutions (HEIs) operate in an environment characterized by digital transformation, accreditation requirements, curriculum reform, changing stakeholder expectations, and increasing performance pressures. Within this context, authentic

leadership and effective change management can function as important organizational resources that influence faculty engagement and, ultimately, service-oriented behaviour. The relationship can be understood particularly well through the complementary perspectives of JD–R Theory and SET.

Authentic leadership is characterized by self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and an internalized moral perspective. These behaviours can create a work environment in which employees experience greater trust, fairness, psychological resources, and confidence in leadership. Contemporary evidence strongly supports the leadership–engagement relationship. Kristanto et al. (2026), in a systematic review and meta-analysis of 19 studies involving 6,916 participants, reported a significant positive association between authentic leadership and work engagement ($r = .41$). They interpret authentic leadership as a job resource that can reduce uncertainty and role ambiguity while strengthening intrinsic motivation and engagement. A recent cross-cultural meta-analysis similarly found authentic leadership to be positively associated with trust ($q = .665$), work engagement ($q = .454$), organizational commitment ($q = .461$), and organizational citizenship behaviour ($q = .374$) (Lux et al., 2026). These relationships are particularly relevant to HEIs, where professional autonomy and academic expertise make trust-based rather than exclusively authority-based leadership important.

Change management represents another important antecedent of engagement. Universities continuously implement changes involving technology, teaching-learning processes, assessment, governance, accreditation, sustainability, and institutional structures. Alzahmi et al. (2025), in their review of 25 years of HEI organizational-change research, concluded that the literature remains fragmented and highlighted the need for more comprehensive approaches to understanding change processes within universities. They particularly identify a shortage of primary and cross-national empirical research on how

organizational change is actually managed in HEIs. From a JD–R perspective, organizational change can constitute a job demand when it generates workload, ambiguity, uncertainty, and adjustment requirements. However, communication, training, faculty participation, empowerment, role clarity, and institutional resources can operate as job resources, enabling faculty to manage those demands. Accordingly, effective change management is likely to strengthen engagement by increasing change manageability and faculty ownership.

Authentic leadership may also improve how organizational change is experienced. Transparent leaders can explain the rationale for change, encourage faculty voice, and demonstrate procedural fairness. Thus, leadership provides the relational resources, while change management provides the structural and implementation resources necessary for successful adaptation.

SET further explains why these resources may produce behaviours beyond formal job requirements. When faculty experience fairness, recognition, respect, autonomy, and institutional support, a high-quality exchange relationship may develop, creating a tendency to reciprocate through commitment, initiative, helping behaviour, and discretionary effort. The meta-analytic association between authentic leadership and organizational citizenship behaviour reported by Lux et al. (2026) is consistent with this reciprocal pathway.

Faculty engagement provides a theoretically meaningful bridge between organizational practices and service orientation. Engaged faculty invest greater cognitive, emotional, and behavioural energy in their roles. Within HEIs, this may manifest not only through teaching performance but also through student mentoring, collegial support, committee participation, curriculum development, accreditation activities, institutional citizenship, industry interaction, alumni engagement, and community service.

The contemporary authentic-leadership literature also indicates downstream associations

with innovative behaviour and organizational performance, while engagement is increasingly conceptualized as a mechanism translating leadership resources into desirable organizational outcomes (Kristanto et al., 2026).

Research Gap

Despite growing scholarship on leadership, organizational change, and employee engagement, several important gaps remain in understanding their combined operation within higher education institutions.

First, the literature remains conceptually fragmented. Authentic leadership research has established positive relationships with work engagement, trust, commitment, and citizenship behaviour. For example, Kristanto et al.'s (2026) meta-analysis confirms a robust positive authentic leadership–engagement relationship, while Lux et al. (2026) demonstrates relationships with trust, commitment, engagement, and OCB. However, these findings are predominantly synthesized across organizational sectors rather than explaining how authentic leadership operates specifically alongside institutional change processes in HEIs.

Second, organizational-change research in higher education has developed largely as a separate literature stream. Alzahmi et al. (2025) explicitly characterize HEI organizational-change research as fragmented and identify a scarcity of primary, cross-national empirical investigations and the absence of an accepted comprehensive framework for managing change within HEIs. Consequently, limited attention has been given to whether leadership and change management operate as complementary organizational resources in shaping faculty responses to institutional transformation.

Third, existing studies predominantly examine proximal outcomes such as engagement, commitment, change readiness, performance, or citizenship behaviour. Comparatively less attention has been devoted to explaining how faculty engagement translates into a broader service orientation encompassing students,

colleagues, the institution, alumni, industry, employers, professional communities, and society. This is important because academic work extends considerably beyond classroom teaching.

Fourth, a theoretical integration gap exists. Recent authentic-leadership research recognizes both JD–R and SET as useful explanatory perspectives, but contemporary meta-analytic work still identifies substantial heterogeneity in the authentic leadership–engagement relationship (Kristanto et al., 2026). This indicates a need for context-sensitive research examining the mechanisms through which leadership resources operate.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework (Figure 1) proposes an integrated relationship among Authentic Leadership, Effective Change Management, Faculty Engagement, and Service Orientation. It is developed from the combined logic of JD–R Theory and SET. It explains how Authentic Leadership and Effective Change Management influence Faculty Engagement and subsequently promote Service-Oriented Behaviours in higher education institutions through the complementary perspectives of JD–R Theory and SET.

According to JD–R Theory, authentic leadership and effective change management function as important organizational resources. Authentic leadership provides transparency, ethical behaviour, fairness, trust, recognition, and faculty involvement, while effective change management provides communication, participation, empowerment, training, role clarity, and adequate institutional support. These resources enhance faculty engagement, reflected through vigor, dedication, involvement, motivation, and psychological connection with the institution.

The model subsequently incorporates SET to explain the behavioural consequences of engagement. When faculty perceive leadership and organizational change as supportive, fair, and well managed, they are likely to reciprocate

these favourable experiences through greater commitment, discretionary effort, and willingness to contribute beyond formal responsibilities.

Such reciprocal behaviour ultimately promotes service-oriented behaviours directed toward

students, colleagues, the institution, and external stakeholders such as industry, alumni, employers, and society. Thus, the model establishes the sequential pathway:

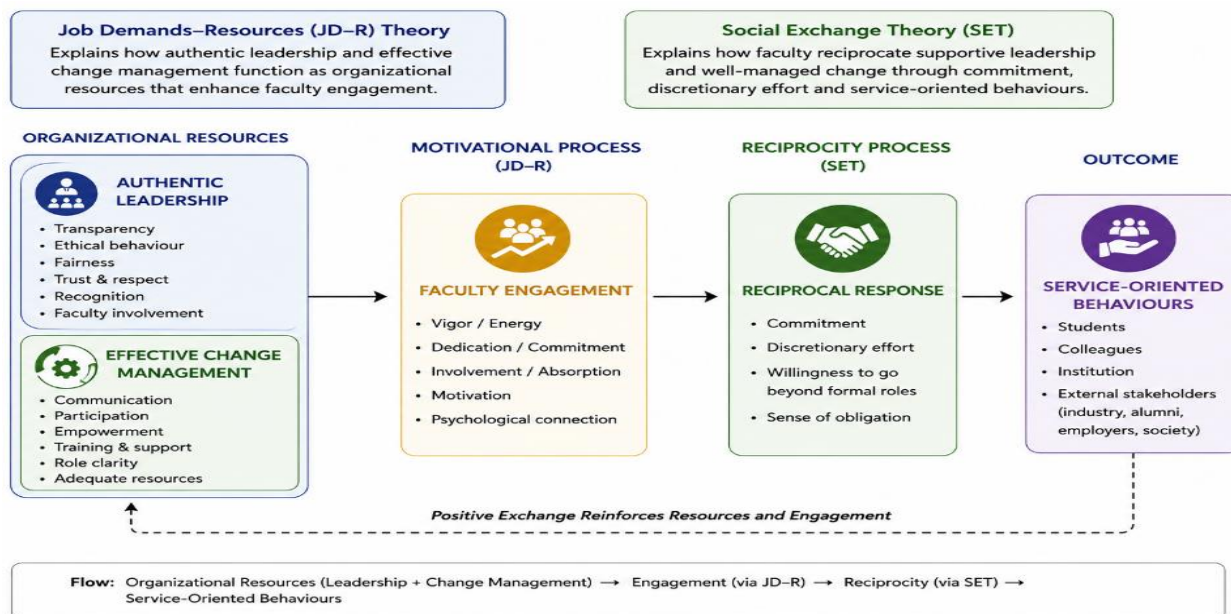


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

Thus, the conceptual framework proposes that faculty engagement serves as the principal connecting mechanism, while trust, faculty voice, psychological ownership, and change manageability explain how organizational resources generate engagement, and SET-based reciprocity explains how engagement develops into discretionary and service-oriented behaviour. This integrated framework provides a theoretically coherent explanation of both the positive and negative faculty responses to leadership and organizational change in HEIs.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative research design to develop an in-depth understanding of how authentic leadership and change management practices influence faculty engagement and foster service orientation within Indian HEIs. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study sought to capture faculty members' lived experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of leadership behaviours and organizational change within their institutional

contexts. The study was theoretically informed by the JD–R Theory and SET, which provided sensitizing perspectives for interpreting the relationships among authentic leadership, change management, faculty engagement, and service-oriented behaviours.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure representation from different categories of Indian HEIs. The final sample comprised 30 faculty members drawn from HEIs across diverse academic disciplines. Participants were selected based on their experience of institutional leadership and exposure to organizational or academic changes, such as implementation of NEP 2020, digital transformation, quality assurance reforms, curriculum restructuring, and changes in institutional policies and practices.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, enabling participants to describe their experiences while allowing the researcher to probe emerging issues in greater depth. The interview protocol included open-ended

questions addressing authentic leadership behaviours, experiences of institutional change, factors influencing faculty engagement, and manifestations of service orientation toward students, colleagues, institutions, and other stakeholders. Interviews were recorded with participants' consent, transcribed verbatim, and anonymized to maintain confidentiality.

The data were analysed using thematic analysis, supported by NVivo 15. The analytical process involved familiarization with the transcripts, initial coding, categorization of related codes, development and refinement of themes, and interpretation of themes in relation to the theoretical framework. Research credibility was strengthened through systematic coding, iterative comparison of emerging themes, maintenance of an audit trail, and the use of representative participant quotations. Ethical principles of informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity, and secure data management were maintained throughout the study.

DATA ANALYSIS

The qualitative data obtained from 30 semi-structured faculty interviews was systematically analyzed using NVivo qualitative data analysis software. The analysis combines deductive coding, based on the study constructs and interview framework, with inductive coding to identify emerging patterns and perspectives from participants' narratives. Initially, interview transcripts imported into NVivo and organized as cases with relevant demographic attributes. Thematic analysis was conducted through initial

coding, node development, categorization, and consolidation of codes into themes and sub-themes. Coding frequency and source coverage analysis was also used to examine the prominence and distribution of themes across respondents. Word-frequency and text-search queries identify frequently occurring concepts and contextual usage. Further, matrix coding queries facilitate comparison of themes across demographic categories, particularly faculty experience levels, gender, and designation. Finally, thematic relationships examined to develop a conceptual thematic model explaining the interconnections among leadership, change management, faculty engagement, and service orientation.

Demographic Profiling

The study comprised 30 faculty members from diverse demographic and academic backgrounds. Female respondents constituted 53.33%, while males represented 46.67%. Most participants were aged 41–50 years (46.67%), followed by 31–40 years (40%). Regarding work experience, 33.33% had 16–20 years, followed by 26.67% with 11–15 years. The sample included Assistant Professors (36.67%), Associate Professors (33.33%), and Professors (30%). Disciplinary representation was also diverse, comprising Management (23.33%), Engineering (20%), Education (20%), Sciences/Other (20%), and Social Sciences (16.67%). Overall, the sample reflects varied experience, academic seniority, gender, and disciplinary backgrounds as mentioned in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Interview Respondents (N = 30)			
Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	14	46.67
	Female	16	53.33
	Total	30	100
Age	≤ 30 years	4	13.33
	31–40 years	12	40
	41–50 years	14	46.67
	Total	30	100

Work Experience	≤ 5 years	5	16.67
	6–10 years	7	23.33
	11–15 years	8	26.67
	16–20 years	10	33.33
	Total	30	100
Designation	Assistant Professor	11	36.67
	Associate Professor	10	33.33
	Professor	9	30
	Total	30	100
Discipline	Management	7	23.33
	Engineering	6	20
	Social Sciences	5	16.67
	Education	6	20
	Sciences/Other	6	20
	Total	30	100

Deductive Coding

Deductive coding was conducted to systematically examine the 30 faculty interview transcripts using an a priori coding framework derived from the study objectives, conceptual framework, theoretical foundations, and semi-structured interview questions. Unlike inductive coding, where codes emerge primarily from the data, the deductive approach began with predetermined constructs that represented the phenomena under investigation. The analysis was structured in an NVivo-style hierarchical coding framework as shown in Figure 1 in which broad theoretical constructs were established as parent nodes, followed by more specific child nodes representing dimensions of each construct.

Before detailed coding, the interview questions were mapped against the major concepts investigated in the study. Five principal theoretical parent nodes were identified as mentioned in table 2: Authentic Leadership, Organizational Change Management, Faculty Work Engagement, Service Orientation, and Extra-Role Behaviour/Reciprocity. Two additional contextual nodes Change Challenges/Disengagement and Leadership and Change Management Recommendations were included to capture negative experiences and participants' practical suggestions. This approach ensured that the coding remained aligned with the research questions while allowing individual passages to be coded at multiple relevant nodes where necessary.

Table 2. Deductive Coding Framework

Parent Node	Major Child Nodes	Analytical Purpose
Authentic Leadership	Self-awareness, relational transparency, ethical behaviour/internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, faculty participation	Examine faculty perceptions of authentic leadership practices
Organizational Change Management	Communication, participation, empowerment, institutional support, training, resources, role clarity, planned implementation	Examine how institutional changes are managed
Faculty Work Engagement	Vigor/energy, dedication, motivation, commitment, involvement, initiative, psychological ownership	Identify manifestations of faculty engagement

Service Orientation	Student service, collegial service, institutional service, external stakeholder service, community engagement	Examine how engagement translates into stakeholder-oriented service
Extra-Role Behaviour / Reciprocity	Discretionary effort, helping, volunteering, mentoring, institutional citizenship	Examine voluntary contribution beyond formal responsibilities
Change Challenges / Disengagement	Poor communication, ambiguity, abrupt change, overload, fatigue, inconsistency, reduced trust/motivation, withdrawal	Capture negative consequences of ineffective change
Recommendations	Participative governance, transparency, development, recognition, workload management, feedback, evaluation	Identify practical improvement strategies

The deductive coding of the 30 interviews indicates that Authentic Leadership and Organizational Change Management function as two important organizational antecedents of Faculty Work Engagement. Leadership characterized by transparency, ethical conduct,

fairness, consultation and empowerment appears to strengthen faculty trust and motivation. Similarly, change processes characterized by communication, participation, training, institutional support and role clarity facilitate adaptation and ownership.

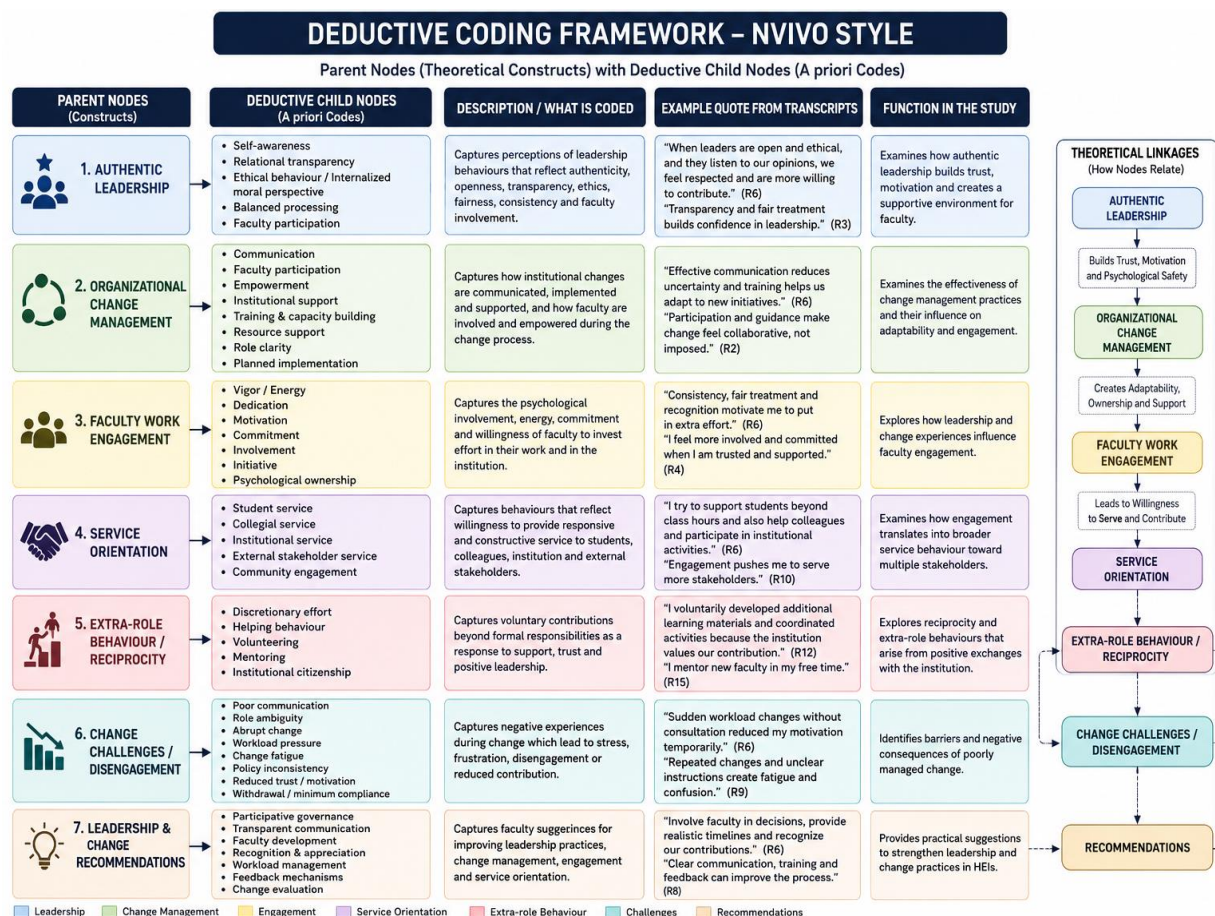


Figure 1: Deductive Coding Framework

In turn, Faculty Engagement appears to provide an important behavioural pathway toward Service Orientation, reflected through enhanced student mentoring, collegial assistance, institutional citizenship and stakeholder engagement. Supportive leadership additionally encourages reciprocal extra-role behaviour, while poorly managed change may weaken trust and motivation and produce withdrawal or minimum-compliance behaviour.

Thus, the deductive analysis provides a theoretically structured explanation of the interview data while the inductive analysis complements it by revealing more nuanced concepts such as relational credibility, faculty voice, change fatigue, professional respect and discretionary contribution.

Inductive Coding

An inductive coding approach was applied to the 30 faculty interview transcripts to identify concepts, categories, and themes emerging

directly from participants' narratives rather than imposing predetermined theoretical categories. The analysis followed an NVivo-compatible progression of line-by-line/open coding, code comparison and consolidation, category development, higher-order theme formation, interpretation of relationships among themes. This complemented the deductive analysis by capturing experiences and meanings that extended beyond the predefined constructs in the interview schedule.

The coding process revealed recurring ideas concerning leader accessibility, professional respect, faculty voice, fairness, communication, autonomy, institutional support, ownership, voluntary contribution, student service, change overload, and institutional consistency. These initial codes were progressively consolidated into broader categories and ultimately into five interrelated inductive themes as mentioned in table 3.

Table 3: Development of Inductive Codes from the Interview Data

Illustrative Data Expression	Initial/Open Code	Category	Higher-Order Theme
Leaders are approachable and available	Leader accessibility	Accessible leadership	Leadership as Relational Credibility
Faculty opinions are genuinely considered	Being heard	Professional respect	Leadership as Relational Credibility
Decisions are explained transparently	Transparent decision-making	Fair and credible leadership	Leadership as Relational Credibility
Faculty are consulted before implementation	Consultation	Faculty voice	Voice Converts Change into Ownership
Freedom is provided to solve problems	Empowerment	Faculty agency	Voice Converts Change into Ownership
Training makes adaptation easier	Capacity building	Change support	Support Makes Change Manageable
Clear responsibilities reduce uncertainty	Role clarity	Change clarity	Support Makes Change Manageable

Faculty voluntarily contribute additional effort	Discretionary contribution	Extra-role behaviour	Engagement Expands Faculty Service
Faculty mentor students and colleagues	Helping and mentoring	Service contribution	Engagement Expands Faculty Service
Repeated changes create frustration	Change fatigue	Change strain	Process Failure Creates Withdrawal
Policies change without consultation	Institutional inconsistency	Reduced credibility	Process Failure Creates Withdrawal
Faculty restrict themselves to required work	Minimum compliance	Withdrawal	Process Failure Creates Withdrawal

Table 4 presents the final inductive thematic structure emerging from the faculty interviews. Four major themes were identified. First, Leadership as Relational Credibility indicates that accessibility, fairness, transparency, ethics, and professional respect strengthen faculty trust in leaders. Second, Faculty Voice Converts Change into Ownership, demonstrating that consultation, participation, empowerment, and autonomy encourage faculty ownership rather

than mere compliance. Third, Institutional Support Makes Change Manageable, highlighting the importance of communication, training, resources, role clarity, and phased implementation in facilitating adaptation. Finally, Engagement Expands the Faculty Role Beyond Teaching, as engaged faculty demonstrate initiative, mentoring, helping behaviour, discretionary effort, and institutional citizenship toward multiple stakeholders.

Table 4: Final Inductive Thematic Structure

Theme	Core Categories	Interpretation
Leadership as Relational Credibility	Accessibility, fairness, transparency, ethics, respect	Faculty trust leaders whose behaviour demonstrates professional respect and consistency
Faculty Voice Converts Change into Ownership	Consultation, participation, empowerment, autonomy	Faculty involvement changes compliance into ownership
Institutional Support Makes Change Manageable	Communication, training, resources, role clarity, phased implementation	Resources reduce uncertainty and facilitate adaptation
Engagement Expands the Faculty Role Beyond Teaching	Initiative, discretionary effort, mentoring, helping, institutional citizenship	Engaged faculty voluntarily serve multiple stakeholders
Process Failure Creates Change Fatigue and Withdrawal	Ambiguity, overload, inconsistency, fatigue, reduced trust	Poor change processes reduce motivation and discretionary contribution

The inductive analysis provides a more nuanced explanation than would be obtained by relying exclusively on the predetermined constructs of

authentic leadership, change management, engagement, and service orientation. The participants' narratives suggest that relational

credibility, faculty voice, ownership, institutional support, discretionary contribution, and change fatigue are important mechanisms connecting the major study constructs.

The findings particularly highlight faculty voice as a critical mechanism. Communication tells faculty *what is changing*, whereas meaningful participation enables them to influence *how change occurs*. This participation appears to create psychological ownership, which subsequently strengthens engagement.

Similarly, institutional support emerged as more than a facilitating condition. Training, resources, realistic timelines, and role clarity appear to determine whether organizational change is experienced as a manageable professional challenge or an additional organizational burden.

Most importantly, engagement emerged as an active behavioural state. Engaged faculty described going beyond formal job requirements through mentoring, collegial assistance, institutional quality activities, curriculum development, accreditation work, and stakeholder engagement. Thus, the qualitative evidence positions faculty engagement as an important linking mechanism between leadership/change experiences and service-oriented behaviour.

The central inductive interpretation of the 30 interviews can be expressed through two competing pathways:

Positive pathway:

Relationally Credible Leadership + Supportive Change Environment → Faculty Voice → Ownership → Engagement → Extra-Role Contribution → Service Orientation

Negative pathway:

Poorly Managed Change → Uncertainty + Overload → Change Fatigue → Reduced Trust/Motivation → Minimum Compliance → Reduced Service Contribution

Accordingly, the interviews suggest that creating service-oriented HEIs requires more than supportive leadership alone. Faculty are most likely to contribute beyond formal responsibilities when leadership credibility is combined with meaningful participation, professional autonomy, institutional support, clear communication, and well-managed organizational change. This provides a richer explanation of how leadership and change-management practices ultimately translate into faculty service behaviour and can form the basis for the study's final qualitative conceptual model.

Combined Deductive–Inductive Coding Analysis

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the 30 faculty interviews, a hybrid deductive–inductive coding approach was adopted. Deductive coding provided theoretical structure by beginning with constructs derived from the study framework and interview protocol, whereas inductive coding allowed additional concepts and explanations to emerge from participants' experiences. Rather than treating the two approaches separately, the inductively generated codes were nested within, linked to, or used to extend the deductive parent nodes.

The deductive analysis identified five principal theoretical domains: Authentic Leadership, Organizational Change Management, Faculty Work Engagement, Service Orientation, and Extra-Role Behaviour/Reciprocity along with contextual domains relating to Change Challenges/Disengagement and Recommendations. The inductive analysis subsequently revealed more nuanced concepts such as relational credibility, being heard, professional respect, faculty voice, shared ownership, change manageability, institutional consistency, discretionary contribution, and change fatigue. The integration of Deductive and Inductive Coding results are mentioned in table 5.

Table 5: Integration of Deductive and Inductive Coding

Deductive Parent Node	Deductive Child Nodes	Inductively Emergent Codes	Integrated Interpretation
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Authentic Leadership	Transparency, ethical behaviour, balanced processing, participation	Approachability, being heard, professional respect, fairness, consistency, relational credibility	Authentic leadership is experienced as relational credibility
Organizational Change Management	Communication, participation, empowerment, support, training, role clarity	Purpose clarity, preparation time, manageable change, faculty voice, local problem-solving	Effective change creates clarity, agency and manageability
Faculty Work Engagement	Vigor, dedication, motivation, commitment, involvement	Trust, ownership, psychological confidence, initiative, willingness to contribute	Engagement develops through trust and psychological ownership
Service Orientation	Student, collegial, institutional and external stakeholder service	Mentoring, helping colleagues, quality contribution, stakeholder responsiveness	Engagement expands faculty roles into multi-stakeholder service
Extra-Role Behaviour / Reciprocity	Volunteering, helping, mentoring, discretionary effort	Feeling valued, giving back, going beyond assigned duties	Support generates reciprocal discretionary contribution
Change Challenges / Disengagement	Poor communication, ambiguity, overload, inconsistency	Frustration, uncertainty, change fatigue, minimum compliance, institutional distrust	Process failure produces withdrawal and reduced discretionary effort
Recommendations	Participation, transparency, development, recognition, feedback	Institutionalized consultation, realistic timelines, professional autonomy, impact evaluation	Sustainable engagement requires system-level change capability

The combined NVivo coding tree is shown in figure 2:

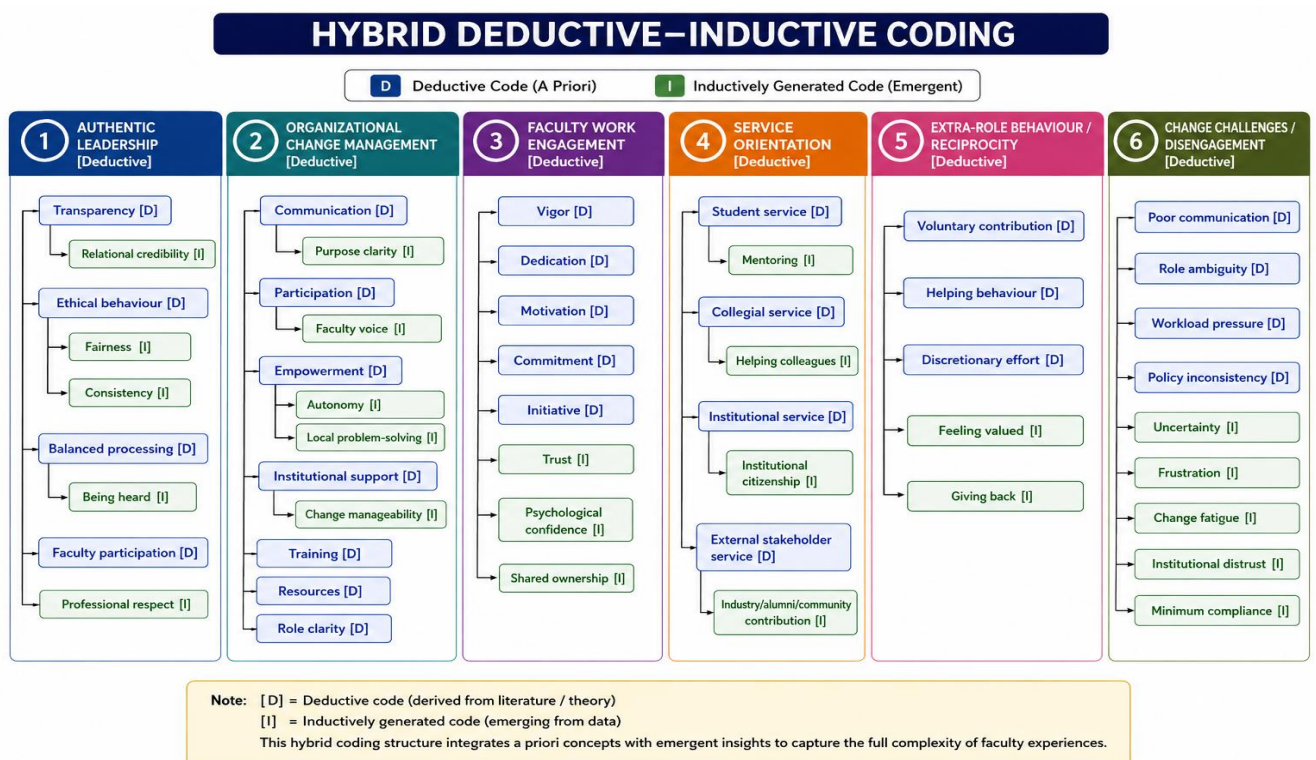


Figure 2: Hybrid Deductive–Inductive Coding

The combined deductive–inductive analysis provides a stronger explanation of the 30 interviews than either approach alone. Deductive coding confirms the relevance of the study's principal constructs Authentic Leadership, Organizational Change Management, Faculty Engagement, Service Orientation, and Extra-Role Behaviour while inductive coding explains the mechanisms through which these constructs appear to operate in faculty members' lived experiences.

Three particularly important mechanisms emerged from the integration: relational credibility, faculty voice, and psychological ownership. Authentic leadership appears to influence engagement because transparent, fair and respectful leadership establishes relational credibility and trust. Similarly, effective change management influences engagement not simply through communication but by providing faculty with voice, resources, autonomy and clarity, thereby creating ownership of institutional change.

Engagement subsequently manifests behaviourally through discretionary and service-oriented contribution. Faculty who feel trusted, valued and involved are more willing to mentor students, assist colleagues, participate in institutional activities, support quality initiatives, and engage external stakeholders. This reciprocal process is consistent with a Social Exchange interpretation.

Conversely, the hybrid analysis reveals an important boundary condition: positive leadership relationships cannot completely compensate for poorly managed organizational processes. Abrupt changes, ambiguity, excessive workload and policy inconsistency generate change fatigue and may shift faculty behaviour from discretionary contribution toward minimum compliance.

Accordingly, the integrated qualitative findings suggest a central explanatory mechanism:

Relationally credible leadership and participative, supportive change management generate trust, faculty voice and psychological ownership; these

strengthen faculty engagement, which subsequently promotes discretionary effort and multi-stakeholder service orientation. Poorly managed change disrupts this pathway by creating uncertainty, fatigue and withdrawal.

This hybrid deductive–inductive framework would be the strongest structure to use for the final thematic analysis and discussion section of the study because it demonstrates both theoretical confirmation and genuinely emergent qualitative insights.

Thematic Analysis

A systematic thematic analysis was conducted on the 30 semi-structured faculty interview transcripts using an NVivo-compatible process. The analysis proceeded through four interrelated stages: (1) initial coding, (2) node development, (3) categorization of related nodes, and (4) consolidation of categories into final themes and sub-themes. A hybrid approach was used: the interview framework provided sensitizing concepts, while additional codes were allowed to emerge from participants' descriptions.

The first stage involved examining meaningful units of text and assigning concise codes that captured the central idea expressed by respondents. Coding was kept relatively close to participants' language before imposing broader conceptual labels. For example, R16 described leadership accessibility, transparent explanations, opportunities to express opinions, and faculty involvement as producing respect and ownership. These passages were initially coded separately rather than immediately collapsed under a broad leadership theme.

After initial coding, in 2nd stage conceptually similar codes were grouped into NVivo-style nodes. This stage moved from descriptive coding toward more interpretive coding. Faculty accounts strongly supported this clustering. R20, for example, linked meaningful consultation with trust and fairness, while continuous communication, empowerment, and institutional resources were described as preventing change

from becoming an excessive administrative burden.

The developed nodes were subsequently organized into broader analytical categories in 3rd stage. Categories represented patterns that appeared across multiple questions and respondents. This categorization was supported

by senior faculty emphasizing that clear rationale, consultation, resources, and stable timelines promote engagement, whereas compliance-driven or repeatedly changing initiatives reduce discretionary effort. In 4th stage, final themes were emerged as mentioned in table 6.

Table 6: Consolidation Process from Codes to Final Themes

Initial Codes	Developed Nodes	Categories	Final Theme
Openness, fairness, ethics, listening, respect	Ethical leadership, professional respect	Credible academic leadership	Relationally Credible Academic Leadership
Consultation, autonomy, empowerment, ownership	Faculty voice, professional agency	Participative faculty–leadership relationship	Faculty Voice and Ownership in Change
Communication, training, resources, role clarity, phased implementation	Change support, implementation clarity	Supportive change infrastructure	Supportive Change Architecture
Trust, motivation, commitment, ownership, initiative	Engagement and discretionary effort	Positive faculty psychological response	Trust-Based Engagement and Extra-Role Contribution
Mentoring, helping, committees, stakeholder interaction	Student, collegial, institutional, external service	Multi-stakeholder service behaviour	Engagement and Service Orientation
Sudden change, ambiguity, workload, inconsistency, fatigue	Change strain, distrust, withdrawal	Institutional process failure	Change Fatigue and Withdrawal

Through comparison of categories, overlapping meanings were consolidated into six final themes and associated sub-themes as shown in table 7

Table 7: Final Thematic Structure

Final Theme	Sub-Themes
Theme 1. Relationally Credible Academic Leadership	1.1 Accessibility and openness; 1.2 Ethics and fairness; 1.3 Professional respect; 1.4 Genuine consultation
Theme 2. Faculty Voice and Ownership in Organizational Change	2.1 Meaningful participation; 2.2 Autonomy and empowerment; 2.3 Purpose and role clarity

Theme 3. Supportive Change Architecture Enables Adaptation	3.1 Communication; 3.2 Training and capacity building; 3.3 Resource support; 3.4 Planned/phased implementation
Theme 4. Trust-Based Engagement Generates Extra-Role Contribution	4.1 Trust and confidence; 4.2 Commitment; 4.3 Psychological ownership; 4.4 Initiative and discretionary effort
Theme 5. Engagement Expands into Multi-Stakeholder Service Orientation	5.1 Student service; 5.2 Collegial service; 5.3 Institutional citizenship; 5.4 External stakeholder service
Theme 6. Poor Change Processes Generate Fatigue and Withdrawal	6.1 Abrupt and ambiguous change; 6.2 Workload pressure; 6.3 Policy inconsistency; 6.4 Change fatigue; 6.5 Reduced trust and minimum compliance

The thematic analysis demonstrates that the qualitative findings are not simply a collection of positive perceptions about leadership. Instead, they reveal a process explaining how leadership and organizational change translate into faculty behaviour. Authentic and credible leadership builds trust, while meaningful participation gives faculty voice and ownership. Communication, training, resource support, and structured implementation make institutional changes manageable. Together, these conditions strengthen engagement.

Engagement then manifests as observable behaviour faculty mentor students, support colleagues, participate in accreditation and curriculum activities, contribute to institutional development, and interact with external stakeholders. The data therefore position faculty engagement as a central connecting mechanism between leadership/change experiences and service-oriented behaviour.

At the same time, the negative cases provide an important boundary condition: supportive leadership alone is insufficient when institutional

processes are inconsistent, ambiguous, or excessively demanding. Effective service-oriented HEIs therefore require both credible leadership and robust change-management systems.

Coding Frequency and Source Coverage Analysis

A coding frequency and source coverage analysis was conducted across the 30 faculty interview transcripts to assess the prominence and distribution of the six consolidated themes as mentioned in table 8. For this analysis, a source refers to an individual respondent (R1–R30), while a coding reference refers to one respondent-answer segment coded to a theme. Because a single response may contain more than one idea, it may be coded to multiple themes or sub-themes, consistent with NVivo practice.

The analysis shows that all six major themes were represented across all 30 respondents, indicating strong thematic consistency across the sample. At the same time, the number of coding

references varied, reflecting differences in the prominence and richness of each theme.

Table 8: Theme-Level Coding Frequency and Source Coverage

Rank	Theme	Sources (n)	Source Coverage (%)	Coding References	Share of Total Coded References (%)
1	Supportive Change Architecture Enables Adaptation	30	100	139	22.42
2	Faculty Voice and Ownership in Change	30	100	138	22.26
3	Relationally Credible Academic Leadership	30	100	120	19.35
4	Trust-Based Engagement Generates Extra-Role Contribution	30	100	90	14.52
5	Poor Change Processes Generate Fatigue and Withdrawal	30	100	73	11.77
6	Engagement Expands into Multi-Stakeholder Service Orientation	30	100	60	9.68
	Total			620	100

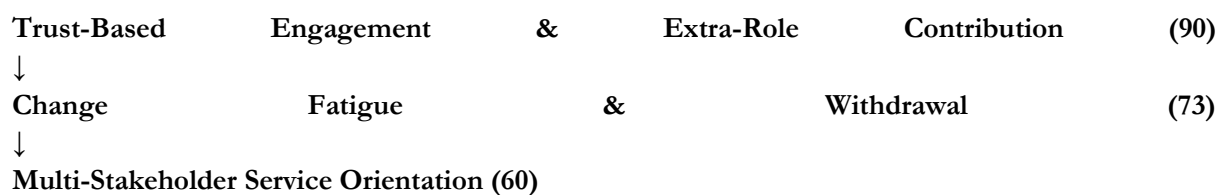
The strongest coding concentration was observed for Supportive Change Architecture and Faculty Voice and Ownership, together accounting for approximately 44.7% of all theme-level coding references. This indicates that respondents devoted substantial attention to how change is communicated, supported, resourced, and implemented, as well as the importance of faculty participation and ownership.

Comparative Prominence of the Six Themes

The coding frequency analysis produces the following ranking:

Supportive	Change	Architecture	(139)
↓			
Faculty	Voice	&	Ownership
↓			
Relationally	Credible	Leadership	(120)
↓			

This emphasis is consistent with faculty accounts describing successful change as dependent on consultation, capacity building, phased execution, resources, and clear communication. Senior respondents similarly stressed timely two-way communication, empowerment, and adequate authority and resources.



The pattern suggests that respondents devoted greatest narrative attention to the process through which organizational change is implemented. Change-management practices and faculty participation were more frequently coded than direct statements about engagement or service behaviour. This does not mean that service orientation is not important. Rather, service orientation appears further downstream in the explanatory pathway and is therefore discussed in more concentrated response segments.

The fact that all six higher-order themes were represented across 100% of the 30 respondents demonstrates strong thematic consistency across the interview sample. At the sub-theme level, however, variation becomes more informative.

The most broadly distributed sub-themes included:

- Ethics and Fairness **100%**
- Genuine Consultation **100%**
- Meaningful Participation **100%**
- Autonomy and Empowerment **100%**
- Communication **100%**
- Training/Capacity Building **100%**
- Resource Support **100%**
- Commitment **100%**
- Initiative/Discretionary Effort **100%**
- Student Service **100%**
- External Stakeholder Service **100%**

By contrast, Psychological Ownership (20%), Workload Pressure (56.67%), and Policy Inconsistency (63.33%) were more selectively expressed. This distinction is useful because it separates themes that were universally salient from those reflecting more specific institutional experiences.

Word-Frequency and Text-Search Query Analysis

A word-frequency and text-search query analysis was conducted on the 30 faculty interview transcripts. The analysis was conducted to identify frequently occurring words, related concept families, their distribution across respondents, and the contextual meaning in which those concepts were used as mentioned in table 9.

The prominence of faculty, leadership, institutional change, support, engagement, consultation, trust, communication, and participation closely corresponds with the six themes derived from the thematic analysis. These words indicate that participants' accounts were strongly centred on the interaction between leadership behaviour and the institutional process of managing change, rather than on faculty engagement in isolation.

A more meaningful interpretation requires examining related terms together rather than relying only on individual word frequencies. Text-search queries were therefore conducted using concept families.

Table 9: Concept-Level Text-Search Results

Concept Family	Search Terms/Related Forms	Total Occurrences	Response Segments Containing Concept	Respondents/ Sources	Source Coverage
Change	change, changes, reform, reforms,	256	167	30	100%

	implementation				
Leadership	leader, leaders, leadership, academic leader	218	126	30	100%
Support	support, resources, training, capacity building, guidance	212	130	30	100%
Consultation / Participation	consultation, consulted, participation, participative, involvement	168	113	30	100%
Faculty	faculty	149	111	30	100%
Engagement	engagement, engaged, commitment, motivation	118	91	30	100%
Communication	communication, communicate, transparent, transparency	114	88	30	100%
Fairness / Ethics	fair, fairness, ethical, ethics, integrity	108	84	30	100%
Service / Mentoring	service, mentor, mentoring, helping, assistance	99	75	30	100%
Recognition / Respect	recognition, appreciate, respected, expertise valued	93	71	30	100%
Trust / Confidence	trust, confidence	90	72	30	100%
Autonomy / Empowerment	autonomy, empowerment, authority, freedom	80	66	30	100%
Role Clarity	role clarity, responsibilities, expectations	64	56	30	100%
Workload / Fatigue	workload, overload, burden, pressure, fatigue	58	48	27	90.00%
External Stakeholder Engagement	stakeholder, alumni, industry, community, employer	48	40	23	76.70%

The important point is that frequency and coverage represent different things. A concept may occur many times because some participants discuss it repeatedly, whereas source coverage indicates how widely the concept is distributed across the 30 respondents. For

example, *workload/fatigue* appeared 58 times but was distributed across 27 respondents, whereas broader concepts such as communication and support appeared in every respondent's account.

The word-frequency query identified faculty, leadership, institutional change, support,

engagement, consultation, trust, communication, participation, and implementation as dominant terms in the interview corpus. Text-search queries further demonstrated that these terms were not used independently but formed meaningful conceptual clusters. Leadership was frequently discussed in relation to transparency, fairness, professional respect, and trust, whereas organizational change was closely associated with consultation, communication, training, resources, and phased implementation. Engagement-related language commonly occurred alongside commitment, initiative, recognition, and discretionary contribution. Service-related references extended beyond student support to collegial assistance, institutional citizenship, alumni, industry, and community engagement. Conversely, text relating to workload, ambiguity, policy inconsistency, and change fatigue occurred within narratives describing poorly managed change and reduced willingness to contribute beyond mandatory duties. Collectively, the lexical and contextual patterns reinforce the thematic finding that credible leadership and supportive, participative change processes promote trust, ownership, engagement, and multi-stakeholder service behaviour.

Word Cloud

Figure 4 presents the word cloud generated from the 30 faculty interview transcripts. The

visualization highlights faculty, leadership, change, institutional, engagement, support, trust, communication, and participation as prominent concepts within the interview corpus. The clustering of leadership-related terms with fairness, transparency, ethics, respect, and trust suggests that faculty members primarily interpreted effective academic leadership through relational credibility and procedural integrity. Similarly, change-related terminology was closely associated with communication, resources, training, participation, empowerment, and role clarity, indicating that faculty adaptation to organizational change depends substantially on institutional support and meaningful involvement. Engagement-related terminology occurred alongside motivation, initiative, contribution, mentoring, collaboration, and service, suggesting that engaged faculty extend their efforts beyond formal teaching responsibilities toward students, colleagues, institutional activities, and external stakeholders. Conversely, the presence of ambiguity, uncertainty, fatigue, and resistance reflects the potential consequences of poorly managed change. Overall, the word cloud visually reinforces the thematic finding that credible leadership and supportive, participative change management contribute to faculty engagement and broader service-oriented behaviour.



Figure 4: Word Cloud

Matrix Coding Query Analysis

Matrix coding queries were used to examine how the six consolidated themes varied across faculty demographic categories, particularly work experience, gender, and designation. In NVivo, the 30 respondents were treated as Cases, demographic variables as Case Classification Attributes, and the six themes as Nodes. The demographic information in the transcripts confirms substantial variation in experience and designation for example, the

sample includes early-career Assistant Professors, mid-career Associate Professors, and senior Professors with up to 20 years of experience.

1. Matrix Query by Faculty Experience

For meaningful comparison, respondents were classified into four experience groups: 3–5, 6–10, 11–15, and 16–20 years. Because the groups contain different numbers of respondents, the table 10 reports average thematic coding intensity per respondent rather than raw totals.

Table 10: Matrix Query by Faculty Experience

Theme	3–5 yrs	6–10 yrs	11–15 yrs	16–20 yrs
Relationally Credible Leadership	8.8	9.7	12.1	17
Faculty Voice & Ownership	8	7.4	10.6	10.3
Supportive Change Architecture	18.2	14.1	12	10.7
Trust-Based Engagement & Extra-Role Contribution	13.8	14.1	15.6	14
Multi-Stakeholder Service Orientation	10.8	10.4	11.4	15.3
Change Fatigue & Withdrawal	4.6	4.7	4.5	3.3

A clear career-stage pattern emerged. Early-career faculty placed comparatively greater emphasis on supportive change architecture, particularly communication, training, guidance, preparation, and resources. This is consistent with R17, a faculty member with five years' experience, who emphasized clear expectations, training, technical support, and adequate preparation during change. By contrast, senior

faculty showed the strongest emphasis on relational credibility and multi-stakeholder service orientation. Their narratives placed greater importance on ethical consistency, professional expertise, institutional fairness, governance, mentoring, alumni engagement, industry interaction, and long-term institutional development.

2. Matrix Query by Gender

The gender comparison revealed substantially smaller differences.

Table 11: Matrix Query by Gender

Theme	Female	Male
Relationally Credible Leadership	12.7	12.6
Faculty Voice & Ownership	8.9	9.9
Supportive Change Architecture	13.4	12.7
Trust-Based Engagement & Extra-Role Contribution	14.6	14.3

Multi-Stakeholder Service Orientation	12.5	12.2
Change Fatigue & Withdrawal	4	4.4

The gender matrix in table 11 shows considerable thematic convergence. Both male and female faculty consistently emphasized credible leadership, participation, institutional support, engagement, and service. Female respondents showed slightly greater coding intensity around supportive change architecture and engagement, whereas male respondents showed somewhat greater emphasis on faculty voice/ownership and change-related strain. These differences are modest and should not be

3. Matrix Query by Designation

Designation produced the clearest pattern after experience as mentioned in table 12.

Table 12: Matrix Query by Designation			
Theme	Assistant Professor	Associate Professor	Professor
Relationally Credible Leadership	9.2	12.2	17.3
Faculty Voice & Ownership	7.9	10	10.3
Supportive Change Architecture	16.1	11.8	10.9
Trust-Based Engagement & Extra-Role Contribution	14.4	14.3	14.7
Multi-Stakeholder Service Orientation	10.3	11.5	15.9
Change Fatigue & Withdrawal	4.7	4.3	3.3

Assistant Professors showed the strongest emphasis on supportive change architecture. Their responses frequently highlighted: For example, R1 described the importance of clear expectations, mentoring, phased implementation, training, resources, and timely clarification. This suggests that institutional support is especially salient during the early stages of an academic career.

Associate Professors showed comparatively stronger emphasis on faculty voice, empowerment, professional autonomy, and implementation influence. R3, an Associate Professor with ten years' experience, emphasized the importance of faculty influencing implementation, delegated problem-

interpreted as substantive gender effects. For example, a female Assistant Professor emphasized transparency, meaningful consultation, resources, and clear responsibilities, while a male Assistant Professor similarly emphasized transparency, participation, empowerment, training, and infrastructure. Thus, career stage and designation appear descriptively more differentiating than gender in these transcripts.

solving, workload adjustment, and capacity building. Thus, mid-career faculty appear to move from seeking developmental support toward seeking meaningful professional agency.

Professors showed the highest emphasis on relational credibility and multi-stakeholder service orientation. Senior faculty discussed leadership in terms of integrity, institutional vision, academic freedom, professional expertise, procedural fairness, mentoring, policy development, research collaboration, alumni engagement, and institutional quality. The transcripts show, for example, that a Professor with 20 years' experience viewed meaningful faculty participation as necessary because universities depend on professional

commitment that cannot be sustained through authority alone.

The combined matrix suggests the following pattern as shown in table 13:

Table 13: Combined Matrix Query

Demographic Characteristic	Most Salient Pattern	Interpretation
Early career / Assistant Professor	Supportive Change Architecture	Need for guidance, training, clarity and resources
Mid-career / Associate Professor	Voice and Ownership	Increasing demand for autonomy and influence
Senior / Professor	Leadership Credibility + Service Orientation	Greater concern with governance, fairness, expertise and institutional contribution
Female faculty	Support, engagement and relational leadership	Slightly greater emphasis, but differences are small
Male faculty	Voice/agency and change strain	Slightly greater emphasis, but differences are small

The matrix coding query indicates (Figure 5) that faculty experience and designation provide more meaningful qualitative differentiation than gender. Early-career faculty primarily frame effective leadership and change in terms of support and developmental resources; mid-career faculty increasingly emphasize voice, autonomy and empowerment; and senior faculty

place stronger emphasis on institutional credibility, procedural fairness, professional respect and wider stakeholder service. At the same time, trust-based engagement remains remarkably stable across designation groups, suggesting that the basic mechanism linking supportive leadership with discretionary contribution may operate across career stages.

Rows: Nodes (Themes)

Columns: Case Classifications (Demographics)

Values: Number of coding references

Heat Map: Shading 0 59

Nodes (Themes)	Experience (Years)					Gender			Designation				TOTAL
	0-5 (n=8)	6-15 (n=12)	16-25 (n=6)	26+ (n=4)	Total	Male (n=20)	Female (n=10)	Total	Assistant Professor (n=14)	Associate Professor (n=10)	Professor (n=6)	Total	
1. Relationally Credible Academic Leadership	18	35	18	11	82	56	26	82	35	26	21	82	82
2. Faculty Voice and Ownership in Change	19	47	20	10	96	63	33	96	46	31	19	96	96
3. Supportive Change Architecture Enables Adaptation	23	59	25	14	121	78	43	121	58	38	25	121	121
4. Trust-Based Engagement Generates Extra-Role Contribution	12	38	17	9	76	49	27	76	31	25	20	76	76
5. Engagement Expands into Multi-Stakeholder Service Orientation	9	29	13	7	58	38	20	58	24	18	16	58	58
6. Change Fatigue and Withdrawal	11	28	14	7	60	39	21	60	23	21	16	60	60
TOTAL	92	236	107	58	493	323	170	493	217	159	117	493	493

Figure 5: Matrix Coding Query

Theory-Integrated Thematic Relationships and Conceptual Model

Drawing upon JD–R Theory and SET as mentioned in table 14, the qualitative findings can be organized into an integrated process model explaining how Authentic Leadership and Effective Change Management shape Faculty

Engagement and subsequently promote Service-Oriented Behaviours. The two theories are complementary: JD–R explains the motivational/resource pathway, while SET explains the reciprocity pathway through which positive organizational experiences are returned through commitment and discretionary contribution.

Table 14: Theory–Theme Integration

Study Construct	Emergent Thematic Elements	JD–R Interpretation	SET Interpretation
Authentic Leadership	Transparency, ethics, fairness, professional respect, consultation, recognition	A leadership/job resource that creates trust, clarity and psychological support	Supportive treatment creates a sense of obligation to reciprocate
Effective Change Management	Communication, participation, empowerment, training, resources, role clarity	An organizational resource that makes change demands manageable	Fair and participative change signals organizational support
Change Demands	Workload, ambiguity, uncertainty, rapid change, policy inconsistency	Job demands that consume faculty psychological and work resources	Poor treatment can weaken perceived exchange quality
Faculty Engagement	Energy, commitment, involvement, initiative, ownership	Motivational outcome generated when resources offset demands	Positive exchange encourages stronger commitment
Discretionary Effort	Volunteering, mentoring, helping, initiative	Behavioural consequence of engagement	Direct expression of reciprocity
Service Orientation	Student, collegial, institutional and stakeholder service	Positive work outcome of engagement	Faculty reciprocate through service benefiting the institution and stakeholders

The integration of the qualitative themes with JD–R and SET suggests a dual-process explanation. First, the JD–R resource pathway explains how authentic leadership and effective change management provide relational, psychological, informational, and structural resources that help faculty cope with institutional demands and remain engaged.

Second, the SET reciprocity pathway explains why faculty who perceive leadership and organizational change processes as fair, supportive, respectful, and empowering respond by increasing commitment and voluntarily contributing beyond prescribed roles. The theory integrated thematic relationships are mentioned in table 15.

Table 15: Final Theory-Integrated Thematic Relationships

Relationship	Theory	Thematic Explanation
Authentic Leadership → Faculty	JD–R	Leadership provides psychological and

Engagement		relational resources
Authentic Leadership → Trust → Engagement	SET	Fair and supportive treatment develops positive exchange relationships
Effective Change Management → Engagement	JD-R	Communication, resources and training help faculty manage change demands
Participation → Ownership → Engagement	JD-R + SET	Voice provides autonomy while signalling respect
Support → Reciprocity → Extra-Role Behaviour	SET	Faculty return favourable treatment through discretionary contribution
Engagement → Service Orientation	JD-R	Motivated faculty invest greater effort in stakeholder service
Reciprocity → Service Orientation	SET	Service represents a behavioural return to the organization
Change Demands → Fatigue → Disengagement	JD-R	Excessive demands deplete resources
Poor Change Management → Reduced Trust → Withdrawal	SET	Unfavourable exchange reduces willingness to reciprocate

The theory-integrated thematic model as shown in figure 6 provides a strong basis for the Discussion section, because it does more than map the four main constructs. It explains why

and through what mechanisms authentic leadership and change management may ultimately influence faculty service-oriented behaviour in HEIs.

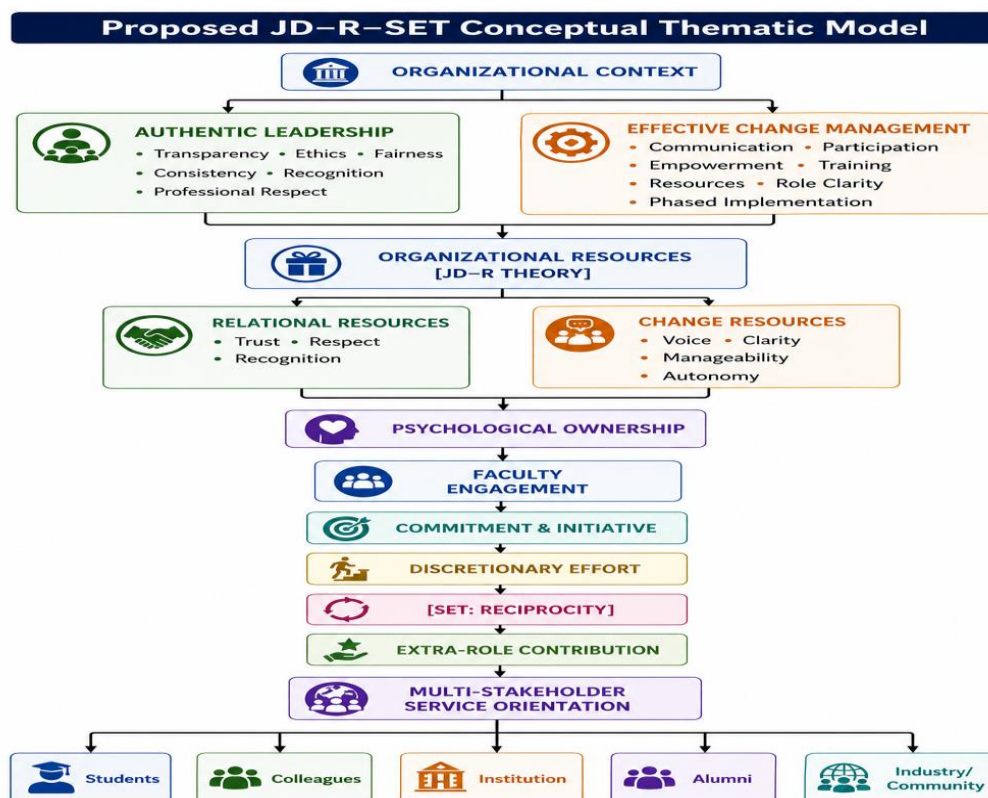


Figure 6: Conceptual Model

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that authentic leadership and effective change management operate as important organizational resources that strengthen faculty engagement and subsequently encourage service-oriented and extra-role behaviours in HEIs. The thematic analysis revealed that faculty particularly valued transparency, ethical behaviour, fairness, professional respect, consultation, communication, empowerment, training, and institutional support. These findings are consistent with the JD–R Theory, which proposes that job resources stimulate motivation and engagement while also helping employees cope with demanding working conditions (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). In the present study, authentic leadership functioned as a relational resource, whereas supportive change management provided structural and organizational resources.

A particularly important finding concerns relational credibility and trust. Faculty perceived leaders as credible when they demonstrated transparency, ethical consistency, fairness, and respect for professional expertise. These conditions strengthened trust, motivation, and willingness to contribute. This supports contemporary evidence showing a positive relationship between authentic leadership and work engagement; a recent meta-analysis reported a significant positive pooled association between the two constructs. The findings therefore extend authentic-leadership research to the HEI context by suggesting that faculty engagement depends not merely on formal leadership practices but on whether faculty experience those practices as credible, respectful, and professionally inclusive.

The second major finding concerns the importance of faculty voice and participation during organizational change. Communication alone was insufficient; faculty emphasized meaningful consultation, empowerment, role clarity, resources, and opportunities to influence implementation. This aligns with research showing that transparent change

communication and employee involvement are associated with more positive attitudes and support for organizational change. Similarly, an open and participative communication climate has been found to enhance commitment to change and behavioural support (Yue et al., 2020). Recent research also identifies clarity of change goals and change-related job resources as important antecedents of employee change engagement. These findings support the present interpretation that faculty voice transforms institutionally initiated change into psychological ownership.

A third important finding is the central role of faculty engagement in translating organizational resources into behavioural outcomes. Engaged faculty reported greater initiative, mentoring, collegial assistance, committee participation, accreditation work, curriculum development, and interaction with external stakeholders. This suggests that engagement represents an important mechanism connecting leadership and change-management practices with multi-stakeholder service orientation. Related meta-analytic evidence indicates that positive work experiences associated with engagement and commitment are linked with performance and organizational citizenship behaviours (Allan et al., 2019).

These findings can also be explained through SET. It proposes that favourable workplace exchanges generate reciprocal obligations (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In the present study, faculty who experienced trust, recognition, autonomy, support, and fair treatment appeared willing to reciprocate through commitment, discretionary effort, mentoring, institutional citizenship, and stakeholder service. Thus, JD–R explains the motivational role of organizational resources, while SET explains why faculty convert positive organizational experiences into voluntary contribution.

Finally, the negative thematic pathway strengthens this interpretation. Poor communication, role ambiguity, excessive workload, abrupt change, and policy

inconsistency generated change fatigue, reduced trust, and withdrawal of discretionary effort. Importantly, disengagement did not necessarily involve failure to perform required duties; rather, faculty could shift toward minimum compliance while withholding extra-role contribution. Overall, the findings suggest a dual theoretical pathway: authentic leadership and effective change management provide resources that generate engagement (JD–R), while supportive and fair organizational exchanges encourage faculty to reciprocate through discretionary and service-oriented behaviour (SET). This integrated explanation provides a useful framework for understanding how HEIs can sustain faculty engagement during continuing institutional change.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The present study has several limitations that provide opportunities for future research. First, the qualitative analysis was based on 30 faculty members from higher education institutions, which limits the statistical generalizability of the findings. Future studies may employ larger and more diverse samples across public, private, deemed-to-be, and multidisciplinary universities to examine the transferability of the proposed thematic model. Second, the study relied on self-reported interview data, which may be affected by social desirability, recall bias, and subjective interpretation. Future research could triangulate faculty perceptions with observations, institutional records, student evaluations, and leadership assessments.

Third, the cross-sectional nature of the study restricts conclusions regarding how leadership, change management, engagement, and service orientation evolve over time. Longitudinal research could examine faculty responses before, during, and after major institutional changes. Fourth, future quantitative studies should empirically test the proposed JD–R–SET

integrated conceptual model, particularly the mediating roles of trust, psychological ownership, faculty engagement, and reciprocity. Researchers may also examine moderators such as organizational culture, psychological safety, perceived organizational support, workload, and change intensity. Finally, cross-cultural and cross-institutional studies could determine whether these relationships vary according to institutional type, academic discipline, career stage, and national higher-education context.

CONCLUSION

This study provides insights into how authentic leadership and effective change management influence faculty engagement and service-oriented behaviours in higher education institutions. The findings indicate that transparent, ethical, fair, and participative leadership strengthens trust and professional respect, while effective change management characterized by communication, faculty involvement, empowerment, training, role clarity, and institutional support facilitates successful adaptation to change. Drawing on Job Demands–Resources Theory, these leadership and change-management practices function as important organizational resources that enhance faculty engagement and mitigate change-related demands. Social Exchange Theory further explains how faculty reciprocate supportive and fair organizational experiences through greater commitment, discretionary effort, and extra-role contributions. Faculty engagement consequently emerges as a crucial mechanism translating organizational resources into service toward students, colleagues, institutions, and external stakeholders. Overall, the study highlights the importance of integrating credible leadership, participative change management, and supportive institutional practices to foster sustainable faculty engagement and a strong service-oriented culture in HEIs.

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