

Influence of Workload and Level of Stress on Work Life Balance, Organizational Commitment and Performance among the Employees in Higher Education Context of Maldives

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Abstract: The main purpose of this research is to examine the influence of workload and level of stress on work life balance, commitment and job performance. The data was collected using a Likert Scale Questionnaire which ranges between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree) from a sample of 100 respondents from university using random sampling techniques. The data was analysed using SPSS 22.0 to examine the influence of workload and level of stress on dependent variable work life balance, commitment and job performance. The analysis found that there is a significantly strong negative correlation between workload and employee outcomes such as performance, commitment and work-life balance, but has positive correlation with the level of stress. Similarly, level of stress has significantly negative correlation with work-life balance, commitment and performance. In terms of regression analysis, it was found that workload and level of stress has significantly negative influence on work-life balance. Also, level of stress has significantly negative influence on commitment and performance, while the study did not find any significant influence of workload on employee commitment, and performance. However, workload has a significantly positive influence on the level of stress. Therefore, it is concluded that by allocating appropriate level of workload is critical to improve work-life balance and reducing level of stress. Furthermore, by reducing level of stress will improve work-life balance, commitment and performance of university employee in Maldives. It is strongly recommended to increase the sample size by including all academic institution in Maldives in order to generalize the finding across the county. The finding of the study can be used by policy makers to formulate relevant workload and work-life balance policies to enhance and improve employee productivity and commitment. Moreover, the finding of the study confirmed that the workload and level of stress are two key determinants of work-life balance. Similarly, the finding of the study can be used to design relevant workshops and training to foster awareness among the human resource managers to address workload.

Keywords: Work-life balance, performance, commitment, workload, level of stress, universities, Maldives.

INTRODUCTION

In today's highly competitive global and ever-changing environment, along with significant advancements in technology, it is imperative for organizations to identify what they should focus on to not only promoting organizational commitment, but also to enhance the work-life balance of both employees and their working relationships, to establish and maintain high performance levels (Oyewobi, Oke, Adeneye & Jimoh, 2019). Therefore, organizations need to focus on promoting organizational commitment and enhancing work-life balance to ensure high performance levels (Basyah & Adam, 2024).

The interplay between work and family life, often referred to as work-life balance, has become a crucial topic for governments, practitioners, and academics alike (Warhurst, Eikhof, & Haunschild, 2018). The challenge of balancing workplace demands with personal life needs is increasingly recognized worldwide, and this issue is particularly pertinent for academics in higher education institutions (McDonald & Hatcher, 2022). Teaching is a highly esteemed profession, and the success of a nation significantly relies on the quality of education its students receive. It is

unrealistic to expect that professors who are under stress, dissatisfied with their jobs, and struggling to balance their work and family lives will be able to produce excellent students. The lack of attention to teachers' issues and challenges is possibly due to a limited awareness and understanding of these problems. Therefore, this study aims to shed light on the relationships between work-life balance, job stress, and job satisfaction among university teachers. Gaining insights into these issues will foster awareness and contribute to developing solutions for the challenges faced by university educators.

Commitment, work-life balance, and performance are critical components of organizational success and employee well-being. High levels of commitment ensure that employees are dedicated and motivated, enhancing productivity and reducing turnover rates (Strom, Sears, & Kelly, 2019). Work-life balance is essential for maintaining mental and physical health, preventing burnout, and promoting job satisfaction (Friedman, 2020). Performance, the measure of how effectively employees fulfill their job roles, is directly linked to the overall success and

competitiveness of the organization (Sonntag & Fritz, 2021). In the education sector, these factors are particularly vital as they impact the quality of education and student outcomes (Klassen & Tze, 2020).

In today's fast-paced and competitive work environment, employees are often faced with increasing workloads that can significantly impact their personal and professional lives (Aruldoss, Kowalski & Parayitam, 2021). The escalating demands of work can lead to heightened levels of stress, which may adversely affect an individual's work-life balance, organizational commitment, and overall job performance (Poulose & Dhal 2020).

In the Maldives, particularly at the universities, there are growing concerns about the adverse effects of excessive workload on employees. The increasing demands on faculty and administrative staff have led to significant stress, which undermines their ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance. This imbalance often results in reduced commitment to the institution and diminished job performance. The education sector in the Maldives faces unique challenges, including limited resources and high expectations, which exacerbate these issues and threaten the well-being of its workforce (Rashid & Hashim, 2022). The influence of unhealthy work is becoming a major concern among organizations. The impact of imbalanced work-life is leading employees to leave the occupation of teaching (Amin & Hastayu, 2020). Work-life balance tends to get affected when individuals are subjected to a higher workload (Holland, Tham, Sheehan & Cooper, 2019). Many factors come in the way of work-life balance, out of which workload is a major cause according to the recent scenario going on in the world amidst Covid-19. The possibility that it had been negatively affecting the work-life balance is through stress, which gradually affects not only productivity, performance but also the commitment levels of the employees. Balancing work and non-work is an important way to sustain the needs of workers, families, and societies. Both employers and employees must find ways to address the problem individually and through policies.

Current research has extensively explored the general impacts of workload and stress on employee outcomes across various sectors. However, there is a paucity of studies focusing specifically on how workload influences work-life balance, commitment, and performance through

the lens of stress within the education sector of the Maldives. Most existing studies are context-specific to corporate environments or Western educational institutions, leaving a gap in the literature regarding the unique cultural and organizational dynamics at play in Maldivian educational institutions (Khan, 2021). The problem arises from the intersection of several factors. Firstly, academic roles at universities are multifaceted, encompassing teaching, research, administrative duties, and community engagement, thereby subjecting faculty and staff to diverse and often demanding workloads. Furthermore, while maintaining a healthy work-life balance is crucial for employee well-being and organizational success, the extent to which workload influences this balance among the university faculty and staff remains unclear. Similarly, the relationship between workload and employee commitment, which is fundamental for fostering a supportive organizational culture and achieving institutional goals, requires deeper exploration within the context of higher education context. Moreover, the impact of workload on job performance among academic professionals in a higher education context is a critical concern. Effective teaching, research productivity, administrative efficiency, and student satisfaction are essential dimensions of job performance in the academic setting, yet excessive workload may hinder faculty and staff from fulfilling these responsibilities to their fullest potential.

Therefore, the primary aim of this research is to investigate the influence of workload on work-life balance, commitment, and performance among university educators, with a specific focus on the mediating role of stress in this relationship. Despite the critical role that educators play in shaping the future of students and, by extension, the nation, there is a notable gap in addressing the challenges they face in managing their professional and personal lives. The two universities serve as a case study to explore these dynamics within the context of higher education. This research seeks to provide empirical evidence on how workload impacts educators' ability to balance their work and personal lives, their commitment to their roles, and their overall performance. By highlighting these relationships, the study aims to contribute to the development of targeted strategies and interventions to enhance the well-being and effectiveness of university educators. This means that this study will emphasize on addressing the influence of workload

influence and stress on work-life balance, commitment, and performance among employees in the higher educational context.

Therefore, the following research objectives are formulated:

- ✓ To examine the influence of workload and level of stress on work-life balance
- ✓ To examine the influence of workload and level of stress on employee performance
- ✓ To examine the influence of workload and level of stress on employee commitment
- ✓ To examine the influence of workload on level of stress

LITERATURE REVIEW

Review of Key Concepts

Work-life balance is an important work element that influences employee's satisfaction, performance and commitment. Work-life balance is defined as equal time or priority to personal and professional activities (Susanto, Supardi, Parmenas, Tannady & Soehaditama, 2023). Also, it was defined as convenience of being able to manage a personal life during the workday, without the hassle of having to get permission or explain our activities to others (Soelton, 2023). Others have defined work-life balance as harmonization between personal and professional life (Singh, Tiwari, & Yadav, 2023). Furthermore, work-life balance is defined as an individual's subjective perception on the degree that they balance between work-life and personal life in align with their values and preferences. Therefore, based on the past definitions, for the purpose of this study, work-life balance is defined as the state of equilibrium achieved when an individual effectively manages and integrates personal and professional activities.

Work-life balance influences employee performance and organisational commitment. Organisational commitment is defined as the degree to which an employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals and wishes to maintain membership in the organization (Work-Life Balance and Organizational Commitment Study, 2014). Another definition of organisational commitment stated that it is a willingness to use serious efforts for the benefit of the organization and a desire to maintain membership in an organization (Sunarsi, Rohaeni, Wulansari, Andriani, Muslimat, Rialmi & Fahlevi, 2020). Also, some defined organizational commitment is about the feelings possessed by employees who provide a picture as a form of

desires, needs and responsibilities for employees towards the organization (Purwanto, 2020). Therefore, based on the scholars' definitions, commitment can be defined as the degree of identification, dedication, and loyalty an individual employee exhibits towards an organization and its objectives.

In terms of performance, it was defined as the outcomes that an employee is able to get in fulfilling their responsibilities by effectively utilizing the resources provided by the organization and leveraging their abilities to the fullest extent (Tahir, 2023). In addition, performance refers to the achievement of objectives or targets by individuals, teams, or organizations within a specific timeframe (Fan, 2023). Furthermore, performance refers to the effectiveness and efficiency of business processes, operations, or strategies in achieving organizational goals and objectives (Kuswati, 2020). performance can be defined as the successful attainment of predetermined objectives, targets, or outcomes by individuals, teams, or organizations.

The key factors that are used to determine work-life balance, performance, and commitment are workload and stress. Workload refers to the amount of work that an individual, group, or system is expected to perform within a given period of time (Amri, 2023). Also, workload is defined as the volume and complexity of tasks and responsibilities assigned to individuals or teams within an organization (Zhang, She & Li, 2023). Furthermore, workload is defined as the combination of cognitive, physical, and environmental demands placed on individuals or systems during task performance (Kubicek, Uhlig, Hulshager, Korunka & Prem, 2023). Moreover, workload represents the utilization of resources (e.g., time, manpower, equipment) required to complete a set of tasks or achieve specific objectives (Creagh, Thompson, Mockler, Stacey & Hogan, 2023). Therefore, based on previous scholars' definitions, workload can be defined as the volume and complexity of tasks and responsibilities assigned to individuals or teams within an organization.

Stress is another antecedent of work-life balance, performance and commitment. Stress is defined as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. Job related stress is defined in terms of job characteristics that pose a threat to the individual due to the mismatch between the ability

to complete the task and task assigned (Spielberger & Reheiser, 2020). Job stress is defined as an employee's psychological or physiological reactions to the external and internal environmental factors that cause bodily and mental strain (Dodanwala, Santoso & Yukongdi, 2023). Therefore, the job stress is defined as state of mental and physical pressure exerted externally due to the allocation of workload or situation that beyond the control of the employees.

Formulation of Hypotheses

Workload and Work-Life Balance

Research suggests that heavy workloads can negatively impact employees' ability to maintain a healthy balance between their work-related responsibilities and personal life commitments (Omar *et al.*, 2015). High workload may lead to time pressures, exhaustion, and difficulties in allocating time for personal activities, thus disrupting work-life balance (McDowall & Kinman, 2017).

In a study conducted by Shah *et al.*, (2024), the authors explored the factors influencing burnout among teachers in the Melaka Tengah District, Malaysia.

H1: There is a significantly negative influence of workload on work-life balance among the university employees in Maldives

Workload and Commitment

Studies have found that increased workload can erode employees' emotional attachment and dedication to their organization (McDowall & Kinman, 2017). Excessive work demands may lead to feelings of burnout and reduced affective commitment, as employees struggle to cope with the pressures of their workload (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Cohen explored the relationship between workload and organizational commitment across different cultural contexts. His study revealed that increased workload often results in lower levels of commitment due to elevated stress levels and work-life conflict. He suggested that organizations need to balance workload to maintain high levels of commitment, especially in high-context cultures where relational aspects of work are highly valued (King & Sethi, 1997). It was found that high workloads increase job stress, leading to decreased affective commitment (Bakker *et al.*, 2014). (Bakker *et al.*, 2014). Their study emphasized that job resources, such as social support and autonomy, can mitigate the negative impact of high workloads on commitment, highlighting the

importance of resourceful work environments (Bakker *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, it was found that They found that increased workload leads to higher levels of job stress, which in turn reduces affective and normative commitment (Santiago-Torner *et al.*, 2024). Moreover, it was found that high workload leads to job burnout, which subsequently reduces affective and normative commitment (Wang *et al.*, 2022). Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated

H2: There is a significantly negative influence of workload on organisational commitment among the university employees in Maldives

Workload and Performance

Research suggests a complex relationship between workload and job performance. While moderate levels of workload may enhance motivation and productivity, excessive workload can lead to diminished performance outcomes (Balesh, 2020). High workload may overwhelm employees, impairing their ability to focus, make decisions, and complete tasks effectively. The study suggested that reducing workload and providing adequate support can enhance teachers' performance and job satisfaction, ultimately benefiting student outcomes (Mahmod & Rosari, 2020). A longitudinal study found that high workloads are a significant predictor of teacher burnout, which in turn negatively affects job performance (Pakarinen & Saloviita, 2021). It was found that faculty members with heavy teaching loads and extensive administrative responsibilities reported lower research productivity and teaching effectiveness (Maslach & Leiter 2016). Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated

H3: There is a significantly negative influence of workload on performance among the university employees in Maldives

Workload and Level of Stress

Workload is a significant predictor of stress among employees in various industries (Bakker *et al.*, 2014). Heavy workloads can contribute to feelings of stress, anxiety, and burnout, as employees struggle to cope with the demands of their job (Karasek, 1979). Another study found that high workloads significantly contribute to elevated stress levels among teachers (Skaalvik, & Skaalvik, 2020). The main stressors identified were excessive administrative tasks, large class sizes, and insufficient preparation time. The study emphasized the need for workload reduction strategies to alleviate stress and prevent burnout

among teachers (Skaalvik, & Skaalvik, 2020). Another study found that workload-related stress adversely affects teachers' mental health and well-being, leading to reduced job satisfaction and increased turnover intentions (Stevens, 2023). Moreover, it was found that excessive workload, including teaching multiple classes and managing extracurricular activities, leads to high stress levels (Chambel & Carvalho (2022) . This stress was associated with feelings of burnout and decreased job satisfaction (Chambel & Carvalho (2022). Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated

H4: There is a significantly negative influence of workload on level of stress among the university employees in Maldives

Level of Stress and Work-Life Balance

It was found that high levels of stress, stemming from workload, student behavior issues, and administrative demands, significantly disrupt teachers' work-life balance (Brackett & Cipriano, 2020). Stressors such as long working hours and emotional exhaustion spill over into personal life, affecting relationships and well-being (Brackett & Cipriano, 2020). Another study revealed that stress, particularly related to research pressures and teaching demands, negatively affects faculty members' work-life balance (McCarthy *et al.*, 2020). High stress levels were associated with work interference with personal life, resulting in reduced satisfaction with family and leisure activities (McCarthy *et al.*, 2020). Also, it was found that high levels of stress, stemming from administrative responsibilities and school-related pressures, compromise administrators' ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Furthermore, it was highlighted that intense pace of work and extended working hours, often extending beyond the conventional eight-hour day, have significantly eroded work-life balance within the teaching profession (Shah 2024). Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated

H5: There is a significantly negative influence of level of stress on work-life balance among the university employees in Maldives

Level of Stress and Commitment

High levels of stress may undermine employees' commitment to their organization (McDowall & Kinman, 2017)). Also, it was found that stressors such as student behavior, administrative support, and work-life balance issues contribute to decreased commitment levels (Klassen & Tze 2021). Furthermore, it was found that high levels

of stress, particularly related to workload and administrative demands, significantly decrease teachers' affective commitment (Pakarinen & Saloviita, 2021). Moreover, teachers experiencing high stress levels reported lower job satisfaction and a diminished sense of belonging to their university, leading to reduced commitment and higher turnover intentions (Pakarinen & Saloviita, 2021). It was indicated that high stress levels, resulting from academic pressures and research demands, significantly lower organizational commitment (Wang *et al.*, 2020). Faculty members under high stress were more likely to experience job dissatisfaction and consider leaving their institutions (Wang *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated

H6: There is a significantly negative influence of level of stress on organisational commitment among the university employees in Maldives

Level of Stress and Performance

It was found that high levels of stress significantly reduce teachers' job performance, leading to lower instructional quality and less effective classroom management (Pakarinen & Saloviita, 2021). Teachers experiencing high stress levels reported difficulties in maintaining student engagement and delivering effective lessons (Pakarinen & Saloviita, 2021). Their research indicated that stress related to administrative duties and lack of support negatively impacts teachers' performance (Collie *et al.*, 2020). Similarly, it was found that stress decreases teachers' motivation and energy, resulting in lower teaching effectiveness and reduced student achievement (Collie *et al.*, 2020). Also, it was revealed that high levels of stress, particularly from research pressures and administrative responsibilities, lead to decreased job performance (Wang *et al.*, 2022). Faculty members under high stress reported lower research productivity, reduced teaching quality, and diminished job satisfaction (Wang *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, employees experiencing high levels of stress may exhibit reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, and lower job satisfaction, ultimately impacting organizational performance (Kim, Owusu & Asbury, 2024). Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated

H7: There is a significantly negative influence of level of stress on organisational employee performance among the university employees in Maldives

RESEARCH DESIGNS AND METHODS

Target Population

The target population of this study is the employees working in universities of Maldives. They are two universities. Maldives national university and Islamic University of Maldives. This is the two largest academic institutions owned by the government of Maldives. These two universities are highly regulated by the government. Also, they were selected due to their systematic process as well as workload policies being implemented. These policies are well documented and available for the public to use. In May 2022, the University employed a total of 555 teaching staff, with 285 full-time and 270 part-time members of staff (QAA Global, 2023), while Islamic University of Maldives employed 90 staff at the end of 2023.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970)’s statistical table. Based on the total population, the table provided a required sample. Since the total fulltime employees working at Maldives National University (MNU) and Islamic University of Maldives (IUM) is 375 employees. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the required sample size is 191 respondents. Therefore, the sample size used in this study is 200 participants. The employees are selected based on the sampling frame. A simple random probability sampling was used to select the

respondents. If the selected respondents did not respond after remainder, then again, the process was repeated, and participants were selected to participate in the survey. The process continued until 200 responds successfully completed and returned the google form.

Research Instrument and Measures Used

The research instrument was developed based on the relevant literature written in the past. The following measures were used

- ✓ Workload: This was measured using five (5) items adopted from (Harputlu, 2014).
- ✓ Level of stress: this was measured using five (5) items. All the five items were adopted from Danauske, Raisiene and Korsakiene, (2023).
- ✓ Work-life balance: This was measured using five (5) items which are adopted from Agha, Alzoubi and Alshurideh, (2021).
- ✓ Organisational commitment: This was measured using five (5) items, which are adopted from Van Tran, (2024).
- ✓ Performance: This was measured using five (5) items, which are adopted from Van Tran, (2024).

Normality, Reliability and Validity Tests

The item include in the item construct was tested to ensure all the item can be retained if it meets the acceptable range value of normality, reliability and validity of the items in the construct are illustrated in the table below

Table 1: Normality, reliability and validity of the items in the construct

STATEMENTS	Skewness Range from -1.96 to +1.96	Kurtosis Range from -1.96 to +1.96	Loading >0.5	Average Variance Extracted >0.5	Reliability $\alpha > 0.7$
Workload I often feel overwhelmed by the amount of work I must do.	-0.724	-0.689	.850	.825	.948
I frequently find myself working late hours or taking work home to keep up with my workload.	-0.564	-1.089	.796		
My workload often interferes with my ability to complete tasks efficiently.	-0.773	-0.675	.837		
I often feel pressured to take on additional tasks beyond my regular workload.	-0.676	-0.824	.787		
I feel mentally drained at the end of a workday due to my workload.	-0.624	-0.982	.857		
Work-Life Balance I am not satisfied with the amount	-0.753	-0.586	.854		

of time I have available for activities outside of work.					
Work obligations frequently interfere with my personal life.	-.808	-.500	.787		
Most of the time I find difficult manage my work responsibilities without sacrificing personal time.	-.814	-.447	.845		
I often feel guilty about neglecting personal responsibilities due to work demands.	-.846	-.526	.831	.826	.957
I miss personal activities (time spend with my family) because of work	-.950	-.305	.812		
Organisational Commitment I do not feel emotionally connected to my organization.	-.172	-1.032	.857		
I am unlikely to recommend my organization as a good place to work.	.147	-1.269	.675		
Stress from my workload decreases my interest in taking on new responsibilities	-.007	-1.291	.895		
The pressure from my workload makes me question my long-term dedication to this organization.	-.044	-1.358	.908	.814	.929
I am currently searching for another job in a different organization.	-.054	-1.416	.732		
Performance High stress levels from my workload lead to more mistakes and errors in my work	-.008	-1.122	.821		
Due to a heavy workload, I find it hard to meet my work deadlines.	-.062	-1.388	.799		
My workload significantly impacts my ability to perform at a high level	-.572	-.863	.597		
I rarely receive recognition or praise from supervisors for my job performance.	-.445	-1.143	.594	.690	.919
I am unable to maintain creativity and innovation in my work when stressed by my workload	-.379	-1.127	.637		
Level of Stress I frequently experience feelings of tension or anxiety related to my job	-.574	-.872	.747		
I often feel physically or emotionally drained as a result of work-related stress	-.675	-.669	.796		
My workload significantly contributes to my overall stress levels	-.694	-.629	.807		

I often find it difficult to relax and unwind after work due to job-related stress	-.567	-.875	.820	.760	.959
Today, I felt insecure, discouraged, irritated, stressed, and annoyed	-.177	-1.033	.631		

The table above indicated that the data was distributed normally. According to Kim (2013), the fact that when the sample number is $n < 50$ and z-scores are in the range of ± 1.96 ; and when the sample size is in the range of $50 < n < 300$, and z-scores are in the range of ± 3.29 means that the data have a normal distribution (Demir, 2022). In case of this research, all the skewness and kurtosis values are between -1.96 to +1.96. This means all the values falls in the range of ± 3.29 . Thus, the data is normally distributed.

In terms of reliability, Cronbach’s Alpha values are used. This means all the Cronbach’s Alpha values must be more than 0.7 in order to establish the required internal consistency among the items in the construct. According to Hassan (2024), Cronbach’s Alpha value should be more than 0.7

in order to establish high internal consistency among the items in the same group. Based on the above table, all the standardised Cronbach’s Alpha values are 0.919 to 0.959 suggesting high internal consistency between the items in the construct.

In terms of validity, two values are used to establish the validity of the items in the construct. Factor loading and average variance explained. According to Hassan (2024), all the factor loading values and average variance extracted must exceed 0.5. Based on the table above, all the factors loading values (range from 0.594 to 0.908) and average variance extracted (range from 0.690 to 0.826) exceeded 0.5. Thus, validity of the items used in the construct are convergently valid.

Discriminant Validity

Table 2: Discriminant Validity

	Mean	SD	Workload	Work-Life Balance	Commitment	Performance	Stress
Workload	3.7200	0.8979	.908				
Work-Life Balance	2.1860	0.8826	-.875**	.909			
Commitment	2.9800	0.8782	-.579**	.580**	.902		
Performance	2.7560	0.7205	-.688**	.720**	.805**	.831	
Stress	3.5720	0.9372	.846**	-.821**	-.665**	-.794**	.872

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The discriminant validity should be established in order to ensure that the items are distinct from each other in order to analyze the impact of one variable on another variable (Parent-Rocheleau, Parker, Bujold & Gaudet, 2024). Similarly, the square root of the average variance extracted must exceed the corresponding correlation coefficients (Saeed, Tasmin, Mahmood & Hafeez, 2022).

Based on the table above, all the values of correlation coefficients are less than all the square-root value of average variance extracted, thus discriminant validity is established to proceed with the causal analysis.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Demographic Analysis

Table 3: Demographic profile of respondents

		Count	Valid %	Cumulative %
Gender	Female	138	69.0%	69.0%
	Male	62	31.0%	100.0%
Age group	18-35	76	38.0%	38.0%
	36-45	56	28.0%	66.0%
	46-60	58	29.0%	95.0%
	61 and above	10	5.0%	100.0%
Nature of Work	Academic	92	46.0%	46.0%

	Administrative	82	41.0%	87.0%
	IT	2	1.0%	88.0%
	Management	23	12.0%	100.0%
Years of Service	0-5 years	48	24.0%	24.0%
	6-10 years	76	38.0%	62.0%
	11 - 15 years	56	28.0%	90.0%
	16 years and above	20	10.0%	100.0%
Highest Level of Educational Attainment	Advanced Certificate or below	6	3.0%	3.0%
	Diploma	14	7.0%	10.0%
	Bachelor's Degree	50	25.0%	35.0%
	Post Graduate Certificate/Diploma	2	1.0%	36.0%
	Master's Degree	112	56.0%	92.0%
	PHD	16	8.0%	100.0%
Monthly income in MVR	Less than 10000	6	3.0%	3.0%
	between 10000 - 20000	86	43.0%	46.0%
	Between 20000 - 35000	84	42.0%	88.0%
	Above 35000	24	12.0%	100.0%
Marital Status	Single	18	9.0%	9.0%
	Married	162	81.0%	90.0%
	Divorced	20	10.0%	100.0%
Number of Family Members	1 (just myself)	8	4.0%	4.0%
	2	28	14.0%	18.0%
	3	44	22.0%	40.0%
	4	68	34.0%	74.0%
	5 or more	52	26.0%	100.0%
How often do you work overtime?	Never	36	18.0%	18.0%
	Very rarely	26	13.0%	31.0%
	Sometimes	58	29.0%	60.0%
	Very often	58	29.0%	89.0%
	Frequently	22	11.0%	100.0%
How often your workplace contacts you after work hours?	Never	6	3.0%	3.0%
	Very rarely	20	10.0%	13.0%
	Sometimes	74	37.0%	50.0%
	Very Often	46	23.0%	73.0%
	Frequently	54	27.0%	100.0%

From the table, it is observed that 69% of the respondents are female and 31% are male respondents. 66% of respondents are aged between 18 to 45 years of age group. 46% of respondents are academicians while 41% of respondents are administrators of universities. 66% of respondents have 6-15 years of experience. 56% of respondents have obtained their master's while only 8% of the respondents hold a relevant PhD. 55% of respondents earns a monthly income of more than MVR20,000 and above. However, 85%

of respondents earn a monthly income range from MVR 10,000 to MVR35,000. 81% of the respondents are married. 60% of respondents have more than four (4) members in the family. 40% of respondents are required very often to frequently attend overtime work, while 50% of respondents are very often to frequently contacted by the university regarding work matters after working hours.

Correlations

Table 4: Relationship between Workload and stress with organisational outcomes

	Correlation with Workload	Significance <0.05	Correlation with Stress	Significance <0.05
Work-Life Balance	-.875**	0.000	-.821**	0.000
Commitment	-.579**	0.000	-.665**	0.000
Performance	-.688**	0.000	-.794**	0.000
Stress	.846**	0.000		

** significant at 1% (0.001) level.

The table above showed that workload is significantly correlated with all the organisational outcomes such as work-life balance, commitment and stress as all the correlation coefficients are associated with the p-values that are below 0.05. Any correlation values that are associated with significant value that are below 0.05 are considered significant (Imran, Hassan & Shareef,

2024). Therefore, it is confirmed that workload and level of stress is significantly associated with the organisational outcomes such as work-life balance, organisational commitment, and performance.

Regression Analysis

Table 5: Model Summary-Stress, workload and work-life balance

Model	Predictors	Dependent variables	Adjusted R-Square	F-change	Sig. F change	Durbin-Watson
1	Stress, Workload	Work-Life Balance	.787	367.791	.000	1.185
2	Stress, Workload	Commitment	.437	78.218	.000	.994
3	Stress, Workload	Performance	.628	168.629	.000	1.061
4	Workload	Stress	.714	497.986	.000	.919

The regression analysis was carried out to examine the influence of workload and level of stress on work-life balance, commitment and performance. Similarly, the influence of workload on level of stress was carried out. The four regression models generated using SPSS version 22.0 suggested that workload and stress are two key determinants of work-life balance, commitment, performance. The first model indicated that 78.7% of variance in work-life balance is explained by the changes in workload and level of stress, while it explains 62.8% of changes in employee performance and workload itself explains 71.4% changes in level of stress experience by the employees of the universities. Since all these three models explain more than 60% of variance in the dependent variables, these three models are considered as good fit models (Shabiq & Hassan, Z, 2016). However, the model two, where workload and level of stress only explains 43.7% of changes in the commitment, it is considered that the model is

not a good fit model as it explains less than 60% (Shabiq & Hassan, 2016).

However, F-Change values are associated with significant value of 0.000, suggested that all the models are reliable models to predict clearly the organisational outcomes such as work-life balance, performance and commitment. Similarly, all the models are associated with a Durbin-Watson values range between 1.5 to 2.5 suggested that there is no auto correlation.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1 below illustrates the β -coefficients and their association with the p-values (significance). According to the β -coefficients and their association with the p-values, two (2) hypotheses are rejected, while all other hypotheses are accepted. The rule of thumb applied is that significant values associated with β -coefficients must be less than 0.05 (p-value<0.05) (Zubair, Susilawati, Talei & Pu, 2024).

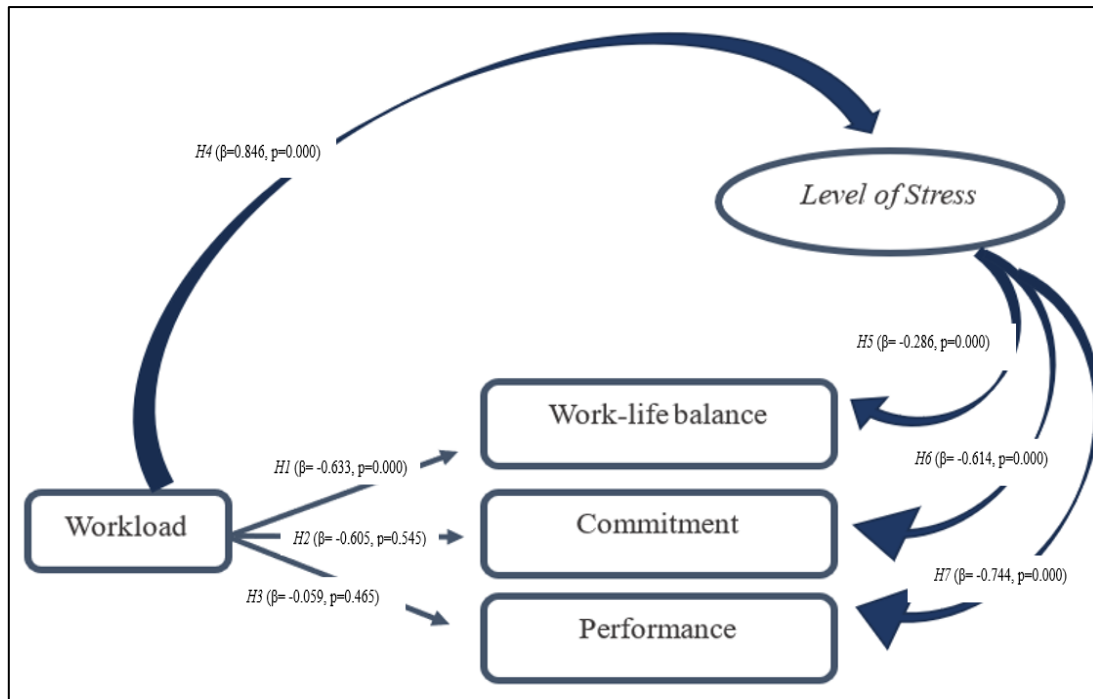


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework with Hypothesis

In terms of H1, it was found that workload has a significantly negative influence on work-life balance as workload has a negative β -coefficient of 0.633 in association with a p-value of 0.000. This means that when workload increases by 1 unit, the work-life balance will reduce by 0.633 units. This finding is similar to past research such as Smith *et al.*, (2022) as well as study done by Shah *et al.*, (2024). In aligned with the findings of the current study, the increase in workload negatively influences employee's work-life balance in terms of work-related commitments and personal life, particularly maintaining a healthy lifestyle (Smith *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, research finding supported the current finding as their research showed that workload causes exhaustion, time pressure, and difficulty in allocating person time leads to work-life balance disruption. Moreover, past research done by Shah *et al.*, (2024) in support of current findings as they found that workload causes burnout among the teachers. Thus, H1 is accepted.

In terms of H2, and H3, it was found that workload does not have any significant influence on commitment and performance, as β -coefficients of commitment of -0.605 (p-value=0.545), and β -coefficient of performance of -0.059 (p-value=465). This means that changing workload does not significantly increase or decrease commitment or performance. In contrast, the past studies indicated increasing workload causes to reduce organisational commitments (Bakker *et al.*,

2018; Santiago-Torner *et al.*, 2024; King & Sethi, 1997; Wang *et al.*, 2022) and performance Balesh, 2020; Mahmud & Rosari, 2020; Pakarinen & Saloviita, 2021; Maslach & Leiter, 2016). However, as the current study found no significant influence of workload on organisational commitments and performance among the university employees, it was decided to reject the H2 and H3.

In terms of H4, it was found that increasing workload (β -coefficient=0.846, p-value=0.000) causes to increase level of stress experienced by the university employees. This means when the workload is increased by one (1) unit, the level of stress experienced by the employee will increase by 0.846 units. This finding is aligned with past research. Most of the past research indicated that increasing workload causes to increase levels of stress, anxiety and burnout (Karasek, 1979; Skaalvik, & Skaalvik, 2020). Moreover, it was found that excessive workload, including teaching multiple classes and managing extracurricular activities, leads to high stress levels (Chambel & Carvalho (2022). Thus, H4 is accepted.

In terms of H5, H6 and H7, it was found that stress has significantly negative influence on work-life balance (β -coefficient=-0.286, p-value= 0.000), organisational commitment (β -coefficient=-0.604, p-value=0.000) and employee performance (β -coefficient = -0.744, p-value=0.000). This indicates that when level of stress experience by

the academic or non-academic employees in the university will causes to reduce work-life balance, organisational commitment and employee performance (productivity). The finding of the current study is in alignment with the past studies. For instance, in terms of work-life balance, it was found that the level of stress experienced by employees significantly disrupt work-life balance (McCarthy *et al.*, 2020). Similarly, the finding of the current study strengthens the previous research findings as most of the past research indicated that high level of stress reduced or undermines the organisational commitments (McDowall & Kinman, 2017); Klassen & Tze 2021; Pakarinen & Saloviita, 2021). Furthermore, the finding of the current study complements the previous research which showed that increasing level of stress adversely affects the employee performance (Kim & Asbury, 2023). Thus, H5, H6, and H7 are accepted.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study examined the influence of workload and level of stress on employee work-life balance, commitment and performance. Based on the findings and discussions, it is concluded that by increasing workload will disrupt the work-life balance and increases level of stress experienced by the employees who are currently working at universities in Maldives. Similarly, it is concluded that increasing workload among the university employees will not have significant influence on commitment and performance. Therefore, overall, it is concluded that workload is the key determinant of work-life balance and level of stress. Furthermore, it is concluded that increasing level of stress experienced by employees in the university context will causes to increase the disruption of work-life balance, reduce organisational commitments and performance.

Finding of the current study has several implications. The finding of the current study has the following theoretical implications

- ✓ First, the finding of the study confirmed that workload and level of stress are two key antecedents of work-life balance. Similarly, workload is a key determinant of the level of stress experienced by staff in the context of higher education.
- ✓ Second, the level of stress is a key determinant of organisational commitment and employee performance. This means this study contributes towards the organisational commitment and performance theories by

confirming that stress is a key factor that influences performance and commitment.

- ✓ Third, this study serves as a bridge between insights from psychology, management, and organizational behavior, emphasizing the interdisciplinary nature of research on employee well-being (Allen, Golden, & Shockley, 2019). By integrating perspectives from various disciplines, the study offers a comprehensive understanding of workplace dynamics and their impact on employee outcomes. Additionally, findings from organizational behavior provide valuable insights into the factors influencing employee performance and commitment (Noblet & LaMontagne, 2006).
- ✓ Fourth, the current study provides empirical evidence supporting the Job Demand-Control model (Karasek, 1979) by demonstrating the significant impact of workload on employee stress levels, work-life balance, commitment, and performance. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) in understanding the relationship between workload, stress, and employee outcomes.

The finding of the study has the following practical implications:

- ✓ First, designing and implementation of employee training programs centered on stress management, time management, and work-life balance skills. According to a study by Allen *et al.*, (2019), effective stress management training can significantly reduce employee stress levels and improve overall job satisfaction. Time management training has also been shown to enhance productivity and reduce burnout (Claessens *et al.*, 2020).
- ✓ The finding of the current study can be used by managers to review and revise their existing policies and practices related to workload management, employee support, and work-life balance. Implementing flexible work arrangements and telecommuting options can significantly improve employee satisfaction and productivity. Additionally, promoting a culture of work-life balance through supportive policies can reduce stress and enhance overall well-being, as evidenced by research from Kossek *et al.*, (2020). These measures can help create a more supportive work environment, fostering both employee well-being and organizational success.

- ✓ The current findings underscore the need for effective workload management to reduce stress and promote work-life balance among employees. Implementing comprehensive wellness programs that address both physical and mental health can significantly reduce stress and improve job satisfaction (Noblet & LaMontagne, 2006). Additionally, offering flexible working hours and telecommuting options has been shown to enhance work-life balance and reduce employee burnout (Kossek et al., 2020).

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The study has the following limitations:

- ✓ Scope of the study: the current study only covers the two universities owned by the government. This means the sample could not be used to generalise the finding among the higher education industry of Maldives. Therefore, it is crucial to widen the scope of the future studies by including all the higher education institutions in Maldives, particularly private sector institutions. This will enable to generalise the findings of the study across the Maldives.
- ✓ Applying a mixed method: The current study used only quantitative data to generate the result and concluded based on only statistics. The interpretation of the statistical data can be enhanced by conducting interviews and through observations. Therefore, it is highly recommended to use qualitative research methods to collect subjective data regarding the workload and its influence on various organisational outcomes.
- ✓ Use more complex and advance statistical analysis. The current statistical analysis do not enable the researchers to analyze the mediating and moderating influence of demographic factors such as gender, income or educational level. However, with the use of advance statistical analysis such as structural equation modelling could help to conduct more rigorous analysis which are widely accepted by the known scholars in the field of research.

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