

Original Article



Examining the Effects of Work Overloads Among Lecturers on Private Institution

Authors' contribution:

- A. Conception and design of the study
- B. Acquisition of data
- C. Analysis and interpretation of data
- D. Manuscript preparation
- E. Obtaining funding

Article History:

Received: 19-04-2023

Revision: 23-04-2023

Accepted: 31-05-2023

Published: 15-06-2023

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How to Cite: Abd Aziz, N., Abd Razak, M.R., Roslan, M.F., & Ishak, N.S. Examining the Effects of Work Overloads Among Lecturers on Private Institution, *Journal of Metrics Studies*, 2(1),33-40.

Abstract. Work overload refers to a situation where an individual is assigned more work than they can reasonably handle in a given amount of time. This can occur due to various reasons such as tight deadlines, under-staffing, insufficient resources, or unrealistic expectations from superiors. However, this issue is familiar and has several questions and debates about existing concepts and theories. As a result, the primary goal of this research is to identify the experiences and challenges that lecturers face due to work overload. The study's findings show that some employees face experiences and challenges, such as doing work for other employees, last-minute assignment, unable to cope with the tasks at hand, and bearing excessive work. This research is important for understanding the work overload issues faced by lecturers in private institution.

Keywords: Effects; Work Overload; Lecturers; Private Institution

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, every employee want a peaceful job, a good salary, and a calm environment. All employees desire to this situation because it brings happiness in the workplace. However, the atmosphere at workplace is different when employees face various challenging daily tasks. There is no exception for workers who accept work overload (Ibrahim et. al., 2022). Each of these tasks becomes a challenge and a heavy burden at workplace. This matter will make employees feel tortured and may have some side effects in the future (Salleh, 2020; Kadir & Suwiknyo, 2021).

Work overload refers to a situation where an individual is assigned more work than they can reasonably handle within a given time frame or working hours. According to Mahawati et. al. (2021), job demands that employees perceive as being too much to fulfill in the given time and as too complex. Employees often have no choice and they are forced to perform the task against their will. Therefore, every employee must not be able to do work at one time, this will make the employee's morale decrease at that time. Similarly, when work overload increases, it can pose anxiety for the employee (Abidin et. al., 2020). This is because work overload necessitates a lengthy process to restore employees' well-being, and it also has an impact on the organization's survival.

Work overload can be caused by various factors such as excessive demands, understaffing, unrealistic expectations from supervisors, or insufficient resources (Severson, 2019; Danlami, 2018). This factor tends to invite employee dissatisfaction with management at workplace. According to Roslan et. al. (2022), employees must be free from any unreasonable work and always give the tasks according to the scope of work that has been set. This will make employees more valued. Employees should be highly appreciated because they are part of the organization (Abdullah, 2022).

Work overload also can result in negative consequences such as stress, burnout, reduced job satisfaction, decreased performance, and physical health problems. According to Haq et. al. (2020), work overload affects employees' overall productivity in many negative ways, which in turn can have an impact on the overall organization performance and hence be a big hurdle for the organization's in achieving any competitive advantage and achieving its long term strategic goals. According to Ali et. al. (2014) several external and internal factors in the education system create barriers for lecturer in private universities, interfering with their productivity, psychological state, level of comfort, and motivation. Therefore, an uncontrolled workload can damage careers and relationships with people around us in our work environment (Kurniawaty et. al., 2019).

In addition, Ling et. al. (2014) claims that there is a lack of interest in conducting stress studies in the education sector compared to other sectors such as the health, corporate and banking industries. Therefore, five lecturers were selected as study respondents because they have characteristics that may be affected by work-related overload. In this study, the respondents may experience work-related overload, such as stress from high work demands and too many work assignments that need to be completed in a short period of time. According to Demerouti et. al. (2001), work-related overload develops as a result of high job demands and limited resource availability, which contributes to a negative work environment that demotivates employees and drains their energy.

This study will focus on the work overload experiences and challenges of lecturers at a private institution in Seremban, Negeri Sembilan. These lecturers are under tremendous pressure to ensure that all activities in the department are completed correctly and in an

orderly manner. At the same time, they need to maintain good relationships with students, coworkers and even faculty.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach through the interview method, where the sampling is from participants who have the potential to represent the group to be studied. Five (5) lecturers from various departments and faculties at Nilai International College & Murni International College were selected in an interview to find out their demographics, work overload experiences and challenges of work overload at workplace. The objective of this interview method is to find out the real situation faced by the lecturers. According to Burns & Groove (2014); Cardano (2020), using a qualitative approach is suitable for researchers involved in the observation of a person or unit, a group of people, a family, in a class, school and even culture.

This study employs a semi-structured interview method because the nature of this survey is relaxed, providing participants comfort in examining and explaining the answers to the questions presented by the researcher. According to Nowell et. al. (2017), the interview session findings will be analysed using appropriate guidelines and reliability criteria. The interview was conducted through google form on March 23, 2023 (Thursday) until March 30, 2023 (Thursday), using questions prepared to obtain information about work overload conditions and consent was obtained from the participants before the interview session. The interview questions are listed below:

1. Demographics: gender, age, marital status, academic status and work experience.
2. What is your understanding of work overload?
3. Have you experience any work overload situation? Explain?
4. According to your observation, what is the reason or cause of work overload at your workplace?

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 3.1 shows the gender, age, marital status, academic status and work experience as lecturers for each of the respondents studied. Followed by the study's findings on work overload, the experience of facing work overload, and challenges. This finding is based on five respondents' interview responses and a discussion.

Table 3.1: Respondent Profile

Description	Frequency (n=5)	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	2	40
Female	3	60
Age		

20 – 30 years	3	60
> 30 years	2	40
Marriage status		
Married	3	60
Single	2	40
Academic Status		
Degree	3	60
Master	1	20
PhD	1	20
Work experience		
5 – 10 years	3	60
> 10 years	2	40

Table 3.1 shows the demographic profile and background of all respondents. There were two male and three female among the respondents. All respondents are 20 years old and above, where 3 respondents are from 20 to 30 years old and 2 respondents are from 30 years old and above. Three respondents are married while two respondents are unmarried. In terms of education level, three respondents have a degree, one respondent have a master and another one respondent have a phd. All respondents have at least five years and above work experience as lecturers.

3.1 Analysis of respondents related to knowledge of work overload

All five respondents have given an explanation related to the knowledge of work overload.

3.1.1 The first respondent stated that:

"When the responsibility of a job is higher than the time, resources and skills of an individual".

3.1.2 According to the second respondent:

"When the worker does something (work or task) that exceed someone limit".

3.1.3 The third respondent said:

"My understanding about work overload is when the workload that I received are something that need to be done even after my work hours had finished".

3.1.4 The fourth respondent stated that:

"Too many work assignments that need to be completed in a short period of time".

3.1.5 While the fifth respondent told that:

"Excessive work assignments that need to be completed in a short period of time".

The findings of the study mentioned above are supported by the research conducted by Dhal, H. B., Bhatt, V., & Vora, H. (2022) which states that work overload is positively related to stress, implying that the worker is stressful due to their heavy workload and the ambiguity and conflict they come across at work. If no effective strategy for dealing with pressure is in place, this reaction will undoubtedly have an impact on the employee. While according to DiStaso & Shoss (2020), Workload is the response of employees when they are given a lot of work and challenged by their ability to do it. This often happens to lecturers when they are given tasks that are not part of their daily work scope. According to Praghlapati, A., Yosef, I., & Soemantri, I. (2020) in their study, it is an adaptive response to work demands that causes psychological or physical stress. In general, these three definitions of overload are not much different and will almost certainly result in job overload in the workplace.

3.2 Analysis for respondents related to the experience of work overload during work.

All five respondents gave an explanation related to the experience of work overload during work.

3.2.1 The first respondent stated that:

"Yes! I had a last-minute assignment and need to complete it immediately in a short period of time so that your break & meal time was interrupted".

3.2.2 According to the second respondent:

"Yes, especially when the work had been procrastinated for a long period of time and end up need to submit them in a short period of time".

3.2.3 The third respondent said:

"Yes. The boss was not satisfied with the results of other people's assignments and handed them over to me in a state where the data was still messy. The boss also always disturbs the staff with sudden meetings every day. There are also situations where there is a lot of work if there is no time management & lack of skills".

3.2.4 The fourth respondent stated that:

"Yes. I unable to cope with the tasks at hand and feel frustrated, and pressed for time. Then I don't have enough time to perform tasks during regular working hours".

3.2.5 While the fifth respondent told that:

"Yes, I need to do something that only me can solve it while as an employer did not want to hire more staff".

The findings of the study mentioned above are supported by research conducted by Yean et. al. (2022), which found that work overload for employees is the main factor that causes job dissatisfaction and makes employees feel unfair. Employees will feel threatened if their work is disrupted and the level of job satisfaction will be unbalanced. According to Hafeez et. al. (2019) research, states that one of the determinants of achieving a high-performance job is comfort in the workplace without distractions. Employee comfort should be preserved because it can provide balance between work and life. According to Omar et. al. (2020) in his study stated that

an excessive workload can cause stress in an employee and make them lose focus while working. This often happens to lecturers who are given too much work at once and if the work cannot be completed within a certain time, surely the employee's performance will suffer.

3.3 Analysis for respondents related to work overload challenges at work

All five respondents have given an explanation regarding the challenges of work overload at work.

3.3.1 The first respondent stated that:

"The superior didn't do their work well. So, it will reflect toward bottom level employee".

3.3.2 According to the second respondent:

"Likes to postpone work, likes to leave tasks to subordinates even though superiors can complete them themselves".

3.3.3 The third respondent said:

"Lacking of employees and given task at the wrong person that not expert on that task".

3.3.4 The fourth respondent stated that:

"Lacking of employees and given the tasks to the wrong person that not expert about the task".

3.3.5 While the fifth respondent told that:

"The boss is not satisfied with the results of other people's tasks, the lack of employees, procrastination, the lack of work skills".

The findings of the study mentioned above are supported by research conducted by Altaf, A., & Awan, M.A. (2011) employees experience anxiety as a result of excessive workload, and the most important factor is stress, which can lead to decreased job satisfaction and deterioration. Undoubtedly, there will be a disruption in employee performance, which may also affect employee morale. A study from Kurniawaty, K., Ramly, M., & Ramlawati, R. (2019) explains that work overload can affect job satisfaction in a normal work environment. Employees need to maintain their job satisfaction in order to be committed to their work and fulfill their task achievements. According to Giorgia, G., et. al. (2020) in his study states that individual response to excessive work pressure will harm the interaction with the work environment and will lead to physical and mental disorders at work. If this problem continues until it affects the employee, it is definitely not good and will affect the performance of the employee to some extent.

CONCLUSION

Work overload adversely affects the health of employees and they suffer from various related diseases such as heart disease, high blood pressure, depression, anxiety, restlessness and others such as stress, burnout, reduced job satisfaction, decreased performance, and physical health problems. Employees also need a safe work environment to perform tasks well and perfectly. Therefore, every employee must have a good attitude of tolerance among employees so that the work environment is in good condition. The findings from the interviews revealed that there are several experiences and challenges faced by lecturers, such as last-minute assignment, doing work for other employees, unable to cope with the tasks at hand, and having

to bear excessive work. Also, since this is research based on qualitative methods where findings are obtained from interview sessions using google form that may cause some limitations, it is recommended that future researchers to collect more data from more respondents through quantitative methods. Finally, there should be a secure and pleasant working environment. If this peaceful environment exists, the workers will undoubtedly work well and can improve the quality of their work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Acknowledgments to friends and respondents who supported this research. Without them, this study could not have been completed properly.

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