



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORKLOAD AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG ACADEMICIANS IN
SELECTED TVET INSTITUTION**

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**Bachelor of Science (Honours)
(Human Resources Development) 2019**

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORKLOAD AND PSYCHOLOGICAL
WELL-BEING AMONG ACADEMICIANS IN SELECTED TVET
INSTITUTION**

NUR LINA BINTI NOR AZMAN

This project is submitted
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a
Bachelor of Science with Honours
(Human Resources Development)

Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK
(2020)

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK

Grade: A-

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Final Year Project Report

Masters

PhD

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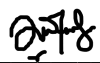
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Praise be to Allah for the blessing that will permit me to complete my final year project. I praise Him for granting me courage when I felt helpless, strength when I was afraid, and patience when I needed guidance. I am incredibly thankful to Him for having given me a supervisor who carried the great foundation for me to successfully complete my final year project.

I am incredibly thankful to my supervisor, Dr. Nur Fatimah binti Abdullah Bandar, regarding her compassion and understanding and wisdom in providing me a lot of helpful advice and thoughts, and perhaps even transferring excellent skills, experience and abilities in the learning cycle to complete my research.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the administrators of the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development for their kind help and guidance and permission to carry out this research. General and especially thanks also go to the respondents participating in the research for their important involvement.

I would like to convey my sincere gratitude to my parents for granting me their endless inspiration, determination, motivation, and encouragement during the entire phase of completing this research. Thank you for all the endless encouragement and advice, especially emotional encouragement because all the struggles of finishing this project have always been the toughest experience of my life. I thank your prayers, blessings and support that you have sent to only help and inspire me.

The special acknowledgement goes to my friends for facilitating directly and indirectly with support and sharing of knowledge all throughout successful completion of this project. Last but not least, my thanks to the respondents and workers who spend their busy time helping my research by filling out the questionnaires and being pleased to be the respondents to my research.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between workload and psychological well-being among academicians in selected TVET institution. This study was conducted using quantitative methods and the research instrument used is a questionnaire. The data was obtained from 100 respondents in one of the polytechnics in Kuching, Sarawak. The data was then evaluated using both descriptive and inferential statistics. In addition, the Pearson Correlation Analysis test was used to assess the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables. The findings have shown that it can be confirmed that workload of component which is job demand has no significant relationship with psychological well-being among TVET academicians. However, working hours and task schedule was reported to have a significant relationship with psychological well-being among TVET academicians. The findings of this study may provide useful information and body of knowledge for both practitioners and future researchers for the purpose of improving current policy on work-life balance.

Keywords: Workload, job demand, working hours, task schedule, psychological well-being among TVET academicians

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan adalah untuk mengkaji hubungan antara beban kerja dan kesejahteraan psikologi dalam kalangan ahli akademik di institusi TVET yang terpilih. Kajian ini dijalankan dengan menggunakan kaedah kuantitatif dan instrumen kajian yang di gunakan menggunakan soal selidik. Data diperoleh daripada 100 responden di salah sebuah politeknik di Kuching, Sarawak. Data kemudian dinilai menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan inferensi. Di samping itu, ujian kolerasi (Pearson) digunakan untuk menilai hubungan antara pemboleh ubah tidak bersandar dan pemboleh ubah bersandar. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa dapat disahkan beban kerja komponen yang merupakan permintaan pekerjaan tidak mempunyai hubungan yang signifikan dengan kesejahteraan psikologi di kalangan ahli akademik TVET. Namun, waktu kerja dan jadual tugas dilaporkan mempunyai hubungan yang signifikan dengan kesejahteraan psikologi di kalangan ahli akademik TVET. Penemuan kajian ini dapat memberikan maklumat dan pengetahuan yang berguna untuk kedua-dua pengamal dan penyelidik masa depan untuk tujuan memperbaiki dasar semasa mengenai keseimbangan kerja-kehidupan.

Kata kunci: Beban kerja, permintaan kerja, waktu kerja, jadual tugas, kesejahteraan psikologi di kalangan ahli akademik TVET

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of Study

TVET is an acronym for Technical and Vocational Education and Training. It is an educational and training process that has employment direction with major emphasis on industry practices. TVET aims to produce competent workforce in targeted areas of the economy such as the automobile industry. In addition, TVET was introduced to meet industrial demand and contribute to economic growth, in line with globalization, knowledge-based economy, technological advances and global workforce mobility (Ismail & Hassan, 2013; A. Ismail, R. Hassan, A. Abu Bakar, H. Hussin, 2018). The scope of TVET is based on recognized occupational standards, with an emphasis on practical coping, psychomotor skills, and exposure to industry training. TVET academicians are the mainstay in achieving TVET's objectives, mission, and vision. Through economic recovery and determination to achieve its goal as a high-income economy by 2020, the government had focused on TVET and it is also a key component in the 10th Malaysia Plan. The focus is on developing and maintaining a database of world-class skilled workers with the potential to drive the growth of the Malaysian economy. However, because the intensive strategy placed onto it and TVET is in high demand in the human resources market, academicians need to exert more energy to meet the staggering demand (Omar, Rashid, & Puad, 2018). Hence, various issues arise. For example, overtime work becomes more commonplace and academicians having irregular task schedule has negative effects on their level of well-being, causing it to be at an abnormal level.

Nowadays, employment insecurity, financial problems and a competitive job market will force employees to take on heavy workloads, causing them to compromise with the stress that comes with it. It shows that excessive workload exists when the world is growing and needs to

compete to meet the day-to-day needs of individuals. Bowling, Alarcon, Bragg, & Hartman, (2015) stated that 'workload' is a term that includes any variable that reflects the quantity or complexity of an individual's work.

Most of the past studies made on the relationship between workload and well-being have been conducted in foreign nations, especially in the western world (Ilies, Dimotakis, & De Pater, 2010; Wood, Michaelides, & Totterdell, 2013; Cohen, Village & Ostry, 2004; Lindfors, Berntsson, & Lundberg, 2006; Pace, D'Urso, Zappulla, & Pace, 2019). This lack of emphasis and research on the relationship between workload and well-being from a Malaysian perspective allows the failure to further understand any detrimental effects on the well-being of academicians in Malaysia, making it difficult to find the suitable approach to tackle any issues that arise from the relationship. The jobs are often excessively burdened, and its effects are apparent among academicians. Their workload tends to rise for them to keep up with the current trends of change. The academicians in TVET institution must be equipped with high competencies in teaching and research to develop students with high knowledge, skills and abilities, as stated in a study by A. Ismail, R. Hassan, A. Abu Bakar, H. Hussin (2018) as well as allowing them to be resourceful and efficient when conducting their own researches. TVET is a vital element of education and training and skills development in a wide range of occupational fields, production, services and livelihood and TVET skills are lifelong learning that takes place at secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels, through work-based learning and continuing training and professional development that can lead to qualifications. Therefore, changes and improvements to competencies will always occur and this can lead to increased amount of workload. Hence, the relationship between workload and well-being among academicians is very important to be of concern for individuals and organizations especially employers and HR practitioners. By understanding the issues, the well-being of employees can be taken care of providing a solution to any issues risen from poor well-being.

Employee well-being plays an important role regardless whether the benefits fall to the organization or to individuals. Care for the well-being of these employees will determine whether an organization can thrive or not. Well-being encompasses the physical, physiological and psychological health of an individual and it is affected by a plethora of factors, one of which being the amount of workloads (Ilies, Dimotakis, & De Pater, 2010; Lam, Wong, Ip, Lam, & Pang, 2010; Lindfors, Berntsson, & Lundberg, 2006; Rajan, 2018). Workloads increases stress, leading to migraines, restlessness, irritability, changes in mood and cardiovascular events which all of these are symptoms of poor well-being. Studies conducted by Mintz-Binder & Sanders (2012) on nurses and health care providers show that excessive workload increases the potential for medical errors. Due to pressure, they do not get enough sleep and long working hours are more likely to raise the difficulty in prescribing the correct dosage. Such factors also affect their ability to counsel patients and make appropriate diagnoses.

Recent study has suggested that future researchers should test whether workload in terms of job demand, working hours and task schedule will influence psychological well-being of employees. Psychological well-being can be defined as interindividual and intraindividual levels of positive functioning which may include relationship with others and self-referential attitudes which include a sense of empowerment and personal growth (Burns, R., 2015). In addition, all the components under workload have been suggested because previous researchers recommend further studies on this issue to be done to develop a further understanding on the relationship.

Work is an activity that is carried out and involves mental or physical effort to achieve the desired goal. Employment has become a major necessity for mankind as it has become a source of income for them to survive. To some extent they must compete to put themselves in the working world. Responsibility plays a vital role in ensuring that the goals are achieved regardless of the company's goals or personal needs. Workload is correlated with several significant outcome variables, such as the well-being of employees (Bowling et al., 2015). Every work has

its own unique amount or complexity of burden that an individual must bear. However, the way an individual control their workload also impacts their whole lives. It can be seen when Ilies et al. (2010) described that if a person's workload is at a high level, they will experience increased affective distress and higher blood pressure at work, and result in poor well-being.

Problem Statement

Workload has become a concerning issue among researchers due to its significance towards employees' well-being. The way of controlling or overcoming the issues can give serious impact towards an individual. Even though there has been a plethora of researches done there are less investigation or study about workload preference in Malaysia, especially among academicians. Throughout this study, the researcher intended to fill other contextual gaps suggested by previous researchers. A review of literature on workload preference indicates that there are stressful effects of high job demands accumulate throughout the workday and it can be detrimental towards one's psychological well-being (Ilies et al., 2010). The rising demand for versatile workers who can work swiftly as well as capable in multidisciplinary tasks have exacerbated the volume of job demands, thus its relationship towards psychological well-being must be investigated. Also, some studies found that working hours are associated with both calmness and enthusiasm when workload is related with their wellbeing (Wood, Michaelides, & Totterdell, 2013). Although working hours are traditionally linked to the amount of workload, the growing numbers of workers performing their jobs beyond working hours has been worrying and should be studied and analysed further. Meanwhile, a study by Huey, Messick & D.Wickens (1993) revealed that task schedules among employees play important roles in achieving a better state of well-being. Through task schedules, workers may also determine whether the level of workload it is excessive or moderate.

The researcher is therefore interested to investigate the relationship between workload with its constituent components and psychological well-being among academician in TVET institutions. It is because the previous research focusing mostly on workaholism, and that most of the research is performed in the West but limited research has been done in Asian countries, particularly in Malaysia and among TVET academics. This motivated the researcher to further investigate how the workload influences the psychological well-being of TVET academicians, as well as to broaden our knowledge and understanding of workload and psychological well-being.

Research Objective

This study intends to investigate the relationship between workload and well-being among TVET academicians. To address the stated research problems, this research needs to achieve the following specific objectives. There are three (3) specific objectives that has been identified and are as follows:

- i. To investigate the relationship between workload (job demand) and psychological well-being among TVET academicians.
- ii. To investigate the relationship between workload (working hours) and psychological well-being among TVET academicians.
- iii. To investigate the relationship between workload (task schedule) and psychological well-being among TVET academicians.

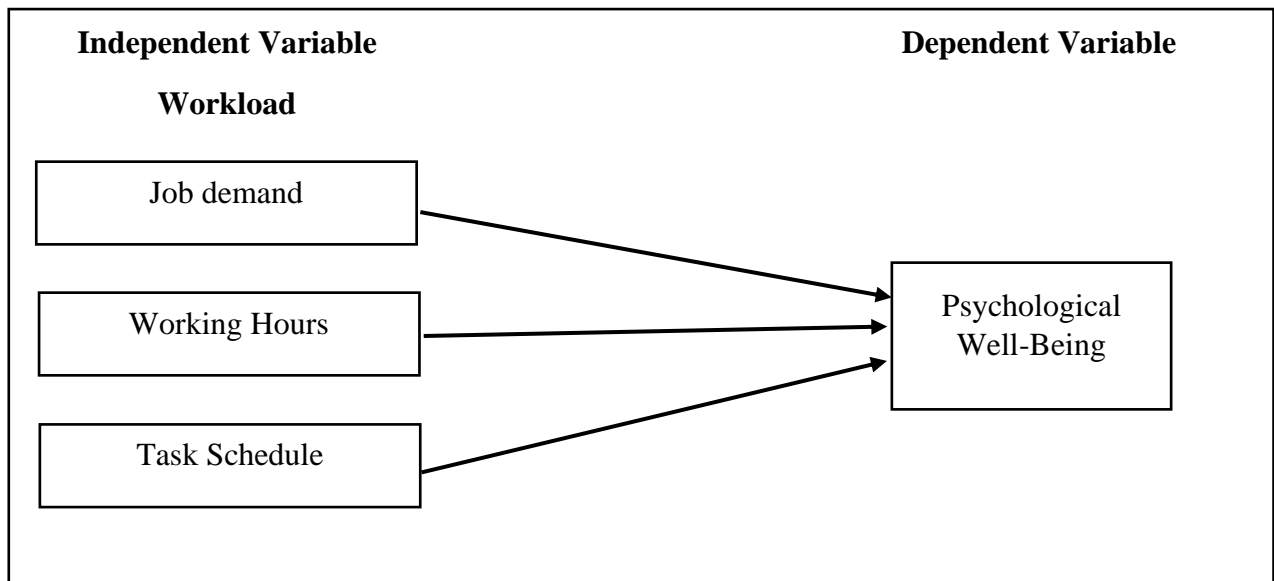
Research Hypotheses

Based on the specific objectives, the hypotheses of these study as follow:

- Ha1: There is a significant relationship between workload (job demand) and psychological well-being among TVET academicians.
- Ha2: There is a significant relationship between workload (working hours) and psychological well-being among TVET academicians.
- Ha3: There is a significant relationship between workload (task schedule) and psychological well-being among TVET academicians.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Proposed conceptual framework



A conceptual framework presented above in Figure 1 describes the relationship of variables of workload towards well-being, particularly psychological well-being. In this study, workload act as an independent variable which consists of three variables which are Job Demand, Working Hours and Task Schedule. Meanwhile, the dependent variable is well-being and in this study it emphasizes on the psychological aspect of well-being. Through the use of this conceptual framework, it can guide the researcher to develop an understanding and investigate further on how all of the three constituent components of workload affect psychological well-being of academics, whether the outcome is positive or negative.

Significance of the study

The present study produces and contributes to exploring and improving the body of knowledge of having excessive workload and the significant consequences if not managed well. This study highlights the importance of protecting the well-being of employees especially among TVET academicians, by discovering ways to manage workload and reduce the burden borne by TVET academicians. The findings of this study would also allow HR practitioners to realise the

importance of safeguarding the well-being of employees. This paper provides information on the effects of the studied variables and the amount of workload generated. Findings from the research can help employees to be cognizant of the excessive workload they may not realise and how it is costly to employees' well-being in the workplace. HR practitioners can also be informed of the factors that drives the amount of workload and identify the threshold of when a certain amount of workload is considered excessive. By addressing the issue and understand how the dynamics of the factors contribute the amount of workload, both HR practitioners as well as employees can carve up plans to solve the issue at hand. HR practitioners should be concerned about the well-being of their employees because the performance of employees in an organization is heavily dependent on the well-being of employees, be it physical, psychological or both. All the questionnaires used in this study have been adopted by various papers written by numerous scholars to fulfil the purpose of this study. The finding provides an extension on the existing theory to explain the relationship of the factors that contribute to the number of workload and its effects on psychological well-being. In this study, workload interference such as demands in the well-being domains are mutually incompatible so that participation in one role is made more difficult by participation in another role. Transient fluctuations in labour demand and spillover effects on well-being are likely to occur, based on the findings obtained by a research done by Wood et al. (2013). Spillover theory can help develop a deeper understanding for TVET educators develop effective workload management and enhance psychological well-being. The current study will also contribute to the workload literature in several ways such as developing understanding of the relationship in the context the education sector as well as possibly discover more underlying questions that may be resourceful in tackling the issues of this relationship. In addition, many previous studies were conducted in western countries, which is not suitably applicable for Asian societies context. Therefore, this study will contribute heavily

to the Malaysian perspective on the relationship and provide new findings in the context of Asian culture.

Limitation of study

As researchers, acknowledging some of the limitations associated with the research design is vital to ensure the study is well-developed. In this study, there are several limitations that can be identified and need to be addressed. First, the study was conducted in the academic sector and the respondents involved were lecturers from local institutions. The study was conducted only on the selected institution, Politeknik Kuching. This study cannot also be suitable in the context of foreign nations because of the different cultures and outlook that may differ from the objective and plan that is designed suitably for Malaysians. However, the researcher believes that this study can still be used as a tool to aid future researches to understand the relationship that can be applied much more generally. Besides, the data collection was done only based on the questionnaires that were distributed to the TVET academicians, but all the information collected was kept confidential and used for the research purposes only. This is to ensure that all the information can be collected by using the fastest way possible and to avoid any unwanted problems in terms of time and cost. Moreover, the workload is measured only using these variables; job demand, working hour and task schedule. Thus, limited variables have been used in this study as the researcher believes there are much more variables that may affect the outcome of this study that is not attainable for this research.

Definitions of terms

Table 1 Conceptual and operational definition of terms

Terms	Conceptual Definition	Operational Definition
Workload	Workload can be described as a term that encompasses any component that reflects the amount or complexity of one's work (Bowling et al. 2015).	Total work and challenges faced by TVET educators are influenced by external factors such as job demand, working hours and task schedule which requires organizational and management skills to regulate it.
Psychological Well-being	The psychological, social and physical resources prowess of an individual to encounter specific psychological, social and/or physical challenges (Dodge, Daly, Huyton, & Sanders, 2012).	Composed of <i>Ryff 's Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWB)</i> have six dimension which consists of Autonomy, Environmental mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations, Purpose in life and Self-acceptance of TVET educator when undergoing specific tasks that tests on a person's resilience which can be affected directly and indirectly by the educator's perception on a given task.
Job Demand	Job demands are physical, psychological, social, and organizational characteristics of a job that involves sustained physical and/or psychological (i.e. cognitive or emotional) effort. Therefore, it is related to certain physiological and/or psychological costs (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).	Academicians will be satisfied that the skills they possess can meet current job demand and if the job demands are able to match their skills, employees can manage their workload efficiently and workloads will not be accumulated and, in turn, improve the state of their well-being.

Working Hours	Working hours are defined as the amount of time someone spends during the day at work (Cambridge University Press, 2019)	To observe how their level of satisfaction / opinion relates to the amount of time someone spends during the day at work besides looking at their perspectives on working hours related to workload and how it affects well-being.
Task Schedule	The way in which the employee manages their time and resources to perform various tasks and task schedules also depend on external factors. For example, instructions, guidelines, info accessibility, deadlines, duration given (Huey, Wickens, & Transition, 1993).	Management in the task schedule of an employee in an organized and reasonable working deadline with the tasks assigned to them can greatly improve their well-being.

Conclusion

In summary, this chapter discussed the main ideas of this research which is the relationship between workload and its effects on psychological well-being among academicians in selected local TVET institutions. This chapter has also discussed the vital information needed to conduct the research such as the objectives of this study, questions arise from this research as well as past studies, the hypotheses used throughout this dissertation, the significance and limitations of the research as well as the definition of important terms used throughout this study. Having identified the problems at hand, it is important to review any literature and past studies that have been done in the context of the relationship. Thus, the next chapter delves into the literature review in this context.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

There are numerous sections for this chapter. This chapter will start with the discussion on the issues related to the relationship between workload and psychological well-being as well as lay out the foundation for the research on said relationship. Then, the idea for this research as well as the theories used to hypothesize on the outcome of the study would be presented and explained. Also, there would be discussion on similar findings found by previous studies that can be used to further explain the current research. This dissertation aims to explain the relationship between workload and psychological well-being by focusing on the main drivers that constitutes the change in the amount of workload. This paper will focus on how variables, namely job demand, working hours and task scheduling may change the amount of workload and how it both directly and indirectly affects an individual's psychological welfare. The literature used to explain this research and used to support any claims made in this study were obtained from various sources which are journal articles, newspaper articles, books, and online sources.

Workload

Based on previous studies related to workload, it is central to the study to review past research on workload before comprehending the relationship to psychological well-being. First, it is vital to understand what workload means to employees. Most workers do not wish to solely work hard using brute force while being mindless and create a path of apathy towards the work that they do instead they wish to experience in work that is fulfilling and rewarding to them. Understanding workload builds the pillar of understanding of its relationship with psychological well-being. To understand workload, we must understand what drives them to change, albeit increasing the amount or reduce it. Bowling et al. (2015) used the term 'workload' to refer to any

variable that represents the quantity or complexity of one's work. For any occupation or profession, there must be a certain amount of workload attached to it because an individual or a group will hold responsibilities and assigned duties that comes with the job. Thus, any claims that a job without workload exists can be negated as every work comes with workload no matter how minuscule it is.

Workload affects employees differently between each other as some may have differing connotations and perceptions attached with the changes to the amount of workload they receive. It is often associated that having a rise in the amount of workload above the threshold of the capacity of the employee and without any form of compensation may lead to detrimental effects on the employee's well-being. Thus, it is paramount for organisations and companies to provide support for their employees to have a sustainable level of psychological and physical well-being. Therefore, organisations and companies should be concerned with issues, situation, and external workload that their employees might have. Lam et al. (2010) reaffirmed the longstanding belief that excessive workload is one of the main sources of stress among working adults. Hence, if there is intermingling between workload at the workplace and personal workload from home among employees, any changes – often a rise – in the amount of workload among employees will harm an individual's physical and psychological well-being. This would be terrible for the performance of the employee and as a result a decline in an organisation's performance. Previous papers written by Rajan (2018); Ilies et al. (2010); Lindfors et al. (2006) mentioned that excessive workload does not only affect an individual's mental health, but could also cause negative effects on one's physical health and capability to complete their tasks. Since every job requires some form of physical exercise or problem-solving skills and cognitive skills, having harmful effects on one's well-being would be disastrous. Therefore, an employee's well-being should not only be a concern of oneself but should be a concern of everyone including colleagues and employers. Once the amount of workload experience sudden changes that overwhelms an