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The Influence of Career Commitment and Workload on Academics' Job Satisfaction: The Moderating Role of a Supportive Environment

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Abstract. This paper serves to study the influences of career commitment and workload on job satisfaction among academics in higher education. We investigated whether a supportive environment is a significant moderator between workload and job satisfaction. For this cross-sectional study, the stratified random sampling method yielded 191 academics from five research universities in Malaysia. Partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) showed that high levels of career commitment correspond with high levels of satisfaction at work of academics. Also, a greater workload diminishes job satisfaction among academics. The analysis of the interaction-moderation dynamics showed that a supportive environment reduces workload effects on academics' job satisfaction. This study contributes to confirming the important roles of career commitment and workload in predicting job satisfaction. It also expands literature on the buffering role of a supportive environment in the interaction between workload and job satisfaction among academics.

Keywords: academic staff; career commitment; job satisfaction; supportive environment; workload

1. Introduction

Higher education is the driving force in closing socio-economic inequalities within broad national development goals. The quality of higher education is integral to the human capital value that determines a country's prosperity. Countries are paying closer attention to higher education delivery, as indicated by institutional and technological reforms spearheaded by intellectually esteemed and dedicated faculties. In addition to meeting institutional requirements, job satisfaction should be promoted among academics to ensure that each university is the beneficiary of the positive impact on employees' experience at work. Indeed, academics, as success determiners, walk and talk the university's vision and mission. Escardíbul and Afcha (2017) concurred that high-quality faculty

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members contribute to the success of a supportive educational system. Therefore, academics' job satisfaction should be given utmost attention.

Job satisfaction is significant when examining the performance levels of employees and organizations. As succinctly put forth by de Lourdes Machado-Taylor et al. (2016), faculty members who are satisfied and well-motivated tend to enhance their reputation as academics, representing national and institutional standards, as well as impacting student learning in the classroom. Without a doubt, the academic workforce is the backbone behind every successful university. Previous studies have equally shown that job satisfaction directly influences the retention of academics in higher education (De Sousa Sabbagha et al., 2018). The norm is that satisfied employees pose reduced absenteeism and turnover issues to organizations and chart higher productivity (Singh & Jain, 2013). In contrast, unsatisfied employees are less productive, leading to constant thoughts of moving on to a better job. Liu et al. (2019) called on organizations to take note of human resource goals, which include the job satisfaction of academics.

Given the importance of job satisfaction among academics, extant literature on job satisfaction predictors was reviewed, focusing on academic context. One of the most important aspects that we need to consider for academics could be increasing their job satisfaction through positive career commitment (Gendron et al., 2016). Career commitment to a given task allows employees to explore the meaning of work, and in the process, offers some recovery from emotional exhaustion. Positively, career commitment could establish the job crafting process in which academics could create the meaning of their job at emotional, social, and institutional level (Amin et al., 2017). Cerci and Duumludag (2019) highlighted that this intrinsic motivation of academics contributes to a high level of commitment, not so much attributed to the extrinsic factors of remuneration and workplace conditions. Another employee job satisfaction determiner is workload assigned. Literature has shown that in recent decades, the research on workload issues has gained momentum and undergone scrutiny. Higher education institutions around the world have noted it as a serious concern (Tight, 2010).

In the distant past, the working conditions and requirements of university teaching were relatively less demanding, such that employees enjoyed less academic constraints and pressure (Mudrak et al., 2018). Following global changes, universities have undergone a shift in quality and standards, resulting in managing higher expectations on performance (Wolf et al., 2021). Without a doubt, academics' performance is now more complex, characterized by the function of universities in the duality of generating and transmitting knowledge through various teaching and research endeavors (Houston et al., 2006). According to Akob (2016), there is a significant connection in the mix of workload, work ethics of educators and job satisfaction, and work execution performance. Besides, work overload impacts educators' job satisfaction negatively (Imondi, 2011), where teachers have commonly professed that an excess of workload strongly relates to low performance. In the same vein, lecturers subjected to excessive workload in the form of academic activities have been reported to

experience lower job satisfaction (Sabagh et al., 2018). Song et al.'s (2013) study further validated that excessive workload is the main cause of defusing job satisfaction. Ahmad et al. (2015) researched pharmacy academics' level of workload and job satisfaction in India's public and private universities. More than half (57.9%) of the cohort professed their satisfaction over the amount of workload they have. Generally, private-sector faculty members have reported that a greater burden of teaching load resulted in diminishing satisfaction levels.

Past researchers have advocated the use of specific resources to manage the negative effects of heavy workload (Ahmad et al., 2015). One of the resources that has been robustly examined is how a supportive environment moderates the interaction between workload and job satisfaction (Marsaditha, 2017). It makes sense for organizations to maintain a learning and working ecosystem that fosters a valued workforce (Caldana et al., 2021). Organizations are obligated to provide a sustainable supportive environment that nurtures employees' positive growth and performance outcomes (Newman et al., 2018). Accordingly, "organizational support" is the vital element for employee performance, characterized as an individual's effort, support, and ability (Laihonen & Mäntylä, 2017). Researchers have found that a workplace ecosystem that provides a supportive camaraderie results in positive employee outcomes, in particular job satisfaction (Berberoglu, 2018).

It is interesting to note that although the value of a supportive environment is widely recognized and researched, there is a resounding gap in the investigation of its effect on the interactions between workload and job satisfaction, more so in faculty settings. Responding to this, this study aimed to provide empirical evidence of the benefits of a supportive environment among academics. We examined if a supportive environment could moderate the relationship between workload and job satisfaction. Therefore, this study aims to study the performance of academics by investigating: (i) the link between career commitment and workload with job satisfaction, and (ii) the moderating role of a supportive environment on the relationship between workload and job satisfaction.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Testing

In this study, Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory of motivation is utilized to determine which motivational factors are linked to job satisfaction among academics in Malaysian research universities. Herzberg's two-factor theory has been widely used in employee satisfaction research (Alrawahi et al., 2020). According to Herzberg's theory of motivation, there are two categories of motivating factors applied to the workplace – satisfiers and dissatisfiers (Herzberg, 1966). According to this theory, in order to increase productivity, satisfiers and dissatisfiers must be identified and addressed. A previous study has revealed that a heavy workload is a major source of dissatisfaction in organizations (Halder, 2018). Employees, according to Herzberg et al. (1959), are dissatisfied with the fulfilling of lower order requirements at work, such as those related to minimum pleasant working conditions. On the other hand, other studies have shown that recognition for high commitment to do something

meaningful and a supportive environment in organizations are the main sources of satisfaction (Agbozo et al., 2017; Indarti et al., 2017). The motivators provide positive satisfaction, arising from intrinsic conditions of the job itself. Acknowledging this theory, workload was identified as a negative factor of job satisfaction in this study, while career commitment and a supportive environment were identified as positive ones.

2.1 Career Commitment and Job Satisfaction

Dorenkamp and Ruhle (2019) defined career commitment as the level of desire to work in a certain field. Initially, career commitment was thought to be a professional obligation for professionals. As defined by Hall et al. (2018), a career is a set of events and activities associated with a person's life-long employment. Thus, the notion of career dedication has shifted from professionals to anybody who establishes a career. It was further characterized as the emotional notion of linking career commitment with a connection to one's career objectives, the emotional concept of equating oneself with the work required in a specific area, and the capacity to persevere in pursuing career goals in following research (Kim et al., 2020). In sum, career commitment refers to a strong psychological attachment to one's present field of work and a firm psychological mindset of continuing to do a series of duties relevant to that profession.

Job satisfaction can be defined as the employee's subjective feelings towards how satisfied they are at the workplace based on their state of physical and psychological well-being (Hsiao & Lin, 2018). Indeed, job satisfaction is determined as a basic and principal factor that can be the main cause of performance, behavior, and staff reactions at the workplace (Hee et al., 2019). Accordingly, Choi and Chiu (2017) suggested the possibility of a link between an employee's work satisfaction and commitment to their career. Xie et al. (2017) believed that an individual's positive attitude towards career identification would improve their job satisfaction and thus reduce their turnover intention. On this basis, Duffy et al. (2017) showed that the level of professional commitment is directly related to the employee's satisfaction at work. If an employee has a high degree of identification with their occupation, their feelings about work would not be affected by external conditions such as salary, promotion, and so on. Therefore, we formulated the following hypothesis:

H₁: Career commitment has a positive effect on job satisfaction among academics.

2.2 Workload and Job Satisfaction

Inegbedion et al. (2020) defined employee workload as the perceived relationship between the volume of mental processing or resources required and the completion of a task. Researchers have provided empirical evidence that workload affects job performance and satisfaction (Liu & Lo, 2018). Osifila and Aladetan (2020) studied the workload of lecturers at Adekunle Ajasin University. They found that excessive workload assigned to lecturers reduced their job satisfaction causing an adverse effect on performance. Increased workload intensity thus hampers academics' work performance. Liu and Lo (2018) also determined an important relationship between workload, news autonomy, and

burnout. The researchers reported a significant negative relationship between the interaction of burnout and job satisfaction that affect turnover intention significantly. Kenny (2018) observed that when workload and pressure are increased, academics' job satisfaction diminishes. A mounting workload has been observed as the main contributor to stress, against the backdrop of an absence of recognizing effort being put in. Unsurprisingly, demotivation and poor work performance ensue. It is well recognized that academics are motivated to deliver their core skills of teaching and research. However, being subjected to obstacles, the pursuit of academic interests is hindered, thus significantly affecting overall job satisfaction (Kenny, 2018). Given these empirical findings, we formulated the following hypothesis:

H₂: Workload has a negative effect on job satisfaction among academics.

2.3 Moderating Effects of Supportive Environment

A supportive environment is characterized as a workplace ecosystem that hosts supervisory or peer support. It also has elements of constraints and opportunities for individuals to perform learned skills as they work (Bibi et al., 2018). Within a supportive environment, employees enjoy support and encouragement from peers and the management. Researchers have identified support from supervisors, the organization, and peers as factor affecting the work environment (Chong & Thi, 2020). The legacy theories of organizational and social support have promoted how "organizational support" establishes affective commitment among employees, strengthening the employees' emotional bond towards their organization (Suifan et al., 2018). Given this, it makes sense for higher education institutions to nurture a supportive environment to meet diverse sectoral challenges in the present and future.

It has been observed that employees in a supportive environment enjoy a boost of interest towards their job, which translates into improved productivity (Prieto & Pérez-Santana, 2014). In addition, it provides valuable inputs for employees regarding desired workplace behavior, which also promotes innovative work behavior. A notable study reported that excessive workload coupled with vague or opposing role demands inevitably creates undesirable work experiences. In terms of supervisory support, employees respond positively to some degree of work practice that calls for their self-directedness and autonomy (Clarke, 2015). Employees who are highly satisfied with their jobs enjoy various aspects of their jobs and meaningful friendships with co-workers. At the workplace, an employee's capacity to build supportive relationships is one of the requisites of a productive environment (Clarke, 2015).

On the contrary, the act of organizations extending support may be subjected to negative reactions from employees. According to social exchange theorists, employees establish relationships if they deem the benefits offered to be worthwhile and administered fairly (Ali et al., 2020). However, in a highly demanding environment, it is more likely that valuable benefits and fair conditions will be violated. Employees competing in highly demanding jobs can account for their stress as a cost of investment incurred from staying in their work

organization. When job pressure is high, these employees tend to view their organization's supportive actions negatively because they perceive them as being in the self-interest of the organization or management. The employees feel that these supportive actions do not particularly benefit or suit their work situations (Naseer et al., 2018). Therefore, highly demanding environments may hinder an organization's efforts to establish social exchange relationships with potential benefits. As a result, this negative effect may reveal itself in the form of lower job productivity. Also, with the lack of social exchange relationships, the workplace may see increasing turnover, reduced commitment, and diminishing job satisfaction. This logical structure is referenced against the model of an "energy reservoir", where the coping energy of employees is used for positive behavior or adopt potentially harmful consequences within their organization (Naseer et al., 2018). From this follows our next hypothesis:

H₃: A supportive environment moderates the relationship between workload and job satisfaction among academics.

3. Methodology

3.1 Study Design and Participants

This study was a cross-sectional study. The model in this study is quite similar to the model employed in a previous study that used the same data set (Janib et al., 2021). The population of this study consisted of faculty members serving five Malaysian research universities, including USM, UM, UPM, UKM, and UTM. A total of 191 respondents were selected through stratified random sampling. The sample consisted of 102 males and 89 females, with an average age of 45 years. From the sample, 87% were married, 11% single, and 2% widowed. About 93.2% were PhD holders and only 6.8% of the respondents had a master's degree as their highest academic qualification. Regarding academic position, 13.1% were professors and 33.5% associate professors, followed by senior lecturers (47.6%) and lecturers (5.8%). In terms of employment, 49.1% of the respondents stated that they were involved in various administrative positions at the faculty level, such as the dean of faculty (3.5%), the deputy dean (18.4%), and head of the department (27.2%). The remaining 50.9% were appointed in other positions. Table 1 shows the academic background of the respondents.

Table 1: Respondents' area of study (N = 191)

| Background | n | % |
|--------------------------------------|----|--------|
| Engineering and architecture | 46 | 24.08% |
| Social sciences | 32 | 16.7% |
| Physical sciences | 29 | 15.18% |
| Medical sciences and health sciences | 26 | 13.6% |
| Business and administrations | 21 | 10.99% |
| Humanities and arts | 20 | 10.47% |
| Education | 17 | 8.98% |

3.2 Procedure

Permission to complete the questionnaire was then sought from the respective universities and faculty deans. After respondents had signed a consent form, the questionnaires were distributed. Data were collected over a period of two months,

wherein the respondents spent an average of 30 minutes on questionnaire completion. A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed with a return rate of 78% (195 questionnaires). We excluded four incomplete questionnaires, leaving only 191 questionnaires for this study.

3.3 Measures

3.3.1 Career commitment

The scale of Blau (1985) was utilized to measure career commitment. Some sample items are: "I don't want to give up my advocacy work since I enjoy it" and "I am dissatisfied with my career as a lawyer" (reverse-scored). A five-point scale assessed this measure, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This scale has a Cronbach alpha of 0.90.

3.3.2 Job satisfaction

This measure was assessed using a scale developed by Ather and Nimlathasan (2006). The sample items of this six-item scale included: "What level of satisfaction do you have with the nature of the work you do?" and "How pleased are you with your present career position, given everything?" A five-point scale assessed this measure, ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). This scale has a Cronbach alpha of 0.79.

3.3.3 Workload

This component of the construct consisted of nine items, including academic workloads in management over the past 12 months; education and research-related activities, both in terms of quality and quantity; sufficient time; and a sufficient number of consultations (Houston et al., 2006). A sample item is: "I often need to work after hours to meet my work requirements." The responses were obtained using a five-point Likert scale. This scale ranged from the lowest score of 1 (strongly disagree) to the highest score of 5 (strongly agree). This scale has a Cronbach alpha of 0.872.

3.3.4 Supportive environment

This construct was measured using an adaptation of four multiple-item scales, which are perceived climate, supervisory relationship, peer group interaction, and perceived organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Before deployment, modifications were made on two scales, supervisory relationship and perceived organizational support. All the responses were obtained using a five-point Likert scale. This scale ranged from the lowest score of 1 (strongly disagree) to the highest score of 5 (strongly agree). This scale has a Cronbach alpha of 0.801.

4. Statistical Methods

Data analysis was conducted using components-based structural equation modeling (SEM) with the support of the SmartPLS v. 3.3.3. The partial least square (PLS) method yielded numerous advantages to this study. First, it is suitable to analyze a proposed model that studies a small sample size. Next, it is insensitive to data normality and is proficient in the analysis of complex path models. Finally, the PLS method allows the analysis of moderation (Ringle et al., 2020). After making comparisons against various regression models, we decided on the PLS

method as it better serves complex study models, such as the one in this study. In addition, this method is suitable as an analysis technique for this study as it has a small sample size ($N = 191$) (Hair et al., 2019).

We employed the interaction-moderation method to test if the supporting environment moderates the association between workload and job satisfaction. Then, a bootstrapping procedure was conducted and the standard error for t -value computation was obtained. Mean effects are significant at 0.05 when confidence intervals do not contain zero. The evaluation of model fit was conducted by both the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) and Bentler-Bonett normed fit index (NFI). The discrepancies between observed and anticipated correlations were assessed by SRMR. Meanwhile, NFI displays the goodness-of-fit incremental measure.

5. Results

5.1 Measurement Model

We maintained all items, as the results indicated factor loading scores above 0.60. Table 2 shows that each research variable item achieved convergent validity. As mentioned by Hair Jr et al. (2014), convergent validity is achieved with the following values: average variance extracted (AVE) = 0.50, composite reliability (CR) = 0.70, and Cronbach alpha = 0.70, respectively (see Table 2).

Table 2: Partial least squared- confirmatory factor analysis results

| Construct | No. of items | α | rho_A | CR | AVE | VIF |
|-----------|--------------|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| CC | 7 | 0.879 | 0.888 | 0.907 | 0.582 | 1.77 |
| WL | 7 | 0.778 | 0.801 | 0.847 | 0.527 | 1.175 |
| JS | 7 | 0.898 | 0.903 | 0.919 | 0.620 | 1.54 |
| SE | 17 | 0.933 | 0.988 | 0.965 | 0.618 | 1.014 |

Note. CC = career commitment, WL = workload, JS = job satisfaction, SE = supportive environment, VIF = Variance inflation factor.

Discriminant validity was tested. We found that the square root of each construct's AVE was larger than the correlation values of the other constructs, according to the Fornell-Larcker criteria (see Table 3). The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) values were smaller than 0.85 (range 0.122 to 0.513) (Franke & Sarstedt, 2019).

Table 3: Measurement model: discriminant validity

| | Construct | Fornell-Larcker criterion | | | | HTMT | | |
|---|-----------|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------|-------|-------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | JS | 0.788 | | | | | | |
| 2 | CC | 0.467 | 0.763 | | | 0.513 | | |
| 3 | SE | 0.141 | 0.074 | 0.786 | | 0.122 | 0.094 | |
| 4 | WL | -0.305 | -0.376 | 0.056 | 0.726 | 0.341 | 0.460 | 0.137 |

Note. JS = job satisfaction, CC = career commitment, SE = supportive environment, WL = Workload

5.2 Structural Model

H₁ and H₂ were evaluated by path analysis. The path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R²), and predictive relevance (Q²) of the structural model were all evaluated. To obtain the β and associated *t*-values, the model was evaluated using a nonparametric bootstrapping technique with a resample of 5,000 (Table 4).

Table 4: Structural model (bootstrapping)

| Path | | | β | SE | <i>P</i> | <i>t</i> | Bias corrected bootstrap (95%) | | Decision |
|------|---|----|----------------|----------------|----------|----------|--------------------------------|--------|-----------|
| | | | | | | | LL | UL | |
| CC | → | JS | 0.41 | 0.099 | 0.000 | 4.148 | 0.005 | 0.194 | Supported |
| WL | → | JS | -0.178 | 0.088 | 0.042 | 2.036 | -0.021 | -0.315 | Supported |
| JS | | | R ² | Q ² | | | | | |
| | | | 0.254 | 0.335 | | | | | |

Note. CC = career commitment, JS = job satisfaction, WL = workload

The R² statistic was used to quantify the variation in job satisfaction based on career commitment and workload. Job satisfaction had an R² of 0.254, indicating a weak association (Henseler et al., 2015). Collinearity was determined by computing VIF values, which were less than 5 for all constructs in the investigation, suggesting that collinearity did not pose a concern (Henseler et al., 2015). Job satisfaction had a medium predictive significance in Q², with a score of 0.335. Thus, the model fit well due to SRMR values less than 0.08 and NFI values greater than 0.8 (Henseler et al., 2016). According to Henseler et al. (2015), when the SRMR is less than 0.10, the overall fit of the PLS structural model can be validated.

The results from the structural model showed a significant positive relationship between career commitment and job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.41$, $t = 4.148$, $p < 0.000$), and a significant negative association between workload and job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.178$, $t = 2.036$, $p < 0.042$). As shown in Figure 1, these results support H₁ and H₂ (see Table 4).

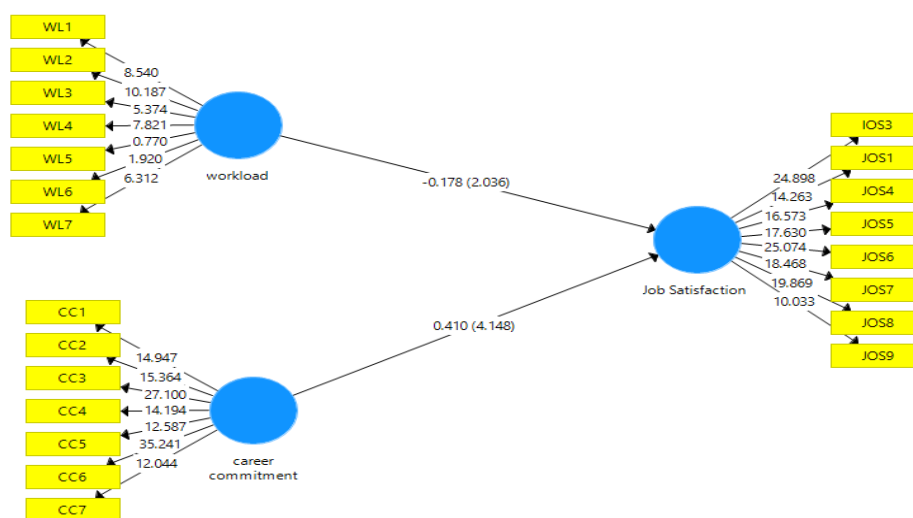


Figure 1: Structural model for job satisfaction in academics

5.3 Moderating Effect of Supportive Environment

The moderating impact of a supportive environment on the connection between workload and job satisfaction was investigated using the interaction-moderation approach in Smart-PLS. According to Hair Jr et al. (2020), moderation, according to this approach, distinguishes between the roles of the two factors involved in the interaction. The outcomes revealed significant relationships between supportive environment and job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.178, t = 1.987, p < 0.038$), and between workload and job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.512, t = 2.036, p < 0.042$). The interaction between workload and supportive environment had a negative and significant relationship with job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.165, t = 3.61, p < 0.001$), indicating that supportive environment played a moderating role in the link between workload and academics' job satisfaction. Thus, H₃ is supported.

6. Discussion and Implications

The PLS-SEM results are consistent with those of prior studies (Al-Sada et al., 2017) which reported that greater career commitment was closely linked to greater levels of job satisfaction among Indian and Qatari university faculty members. Most studies have argued that career commitment has a significant and positive influence on job satisfaction (Zhang et al., 2014). It thus follows that highly committed academics would not compromise on high standards of professionalism, would chart a prolific career, and would thus become highly satisfied with their jobs. Even if the high career commitment levels increase in congruence with job satisfaction levels, the momentum may not be sustained at a high level without the intervention of training and development for career growth. Therefore, training and development programs employing psychological assessment could be expanded to play a major role in providing opportunities where academics perceive the type of regulatory focus that they have and adjust it according to the job situation. Psychological assessments can be conducted to confirm which regulatory focus they have. Academics may be encouraged to have a promotion focus for academic positions through training and development sessions.

Another finding that was consistent with past studies is that a heavier workload is linked to low levels of job satisfaction among staff (Hee et al., 2019). This finding is also in line with Toropova et al.'s (2021) study that found workload influences job satisfaction. Correspondingly to improve job satisfaction, organizations can reconsider the amount of work loaded onto their employees, as it has been observed that an excessive workload causes great dissatisfaction (Liu & Lo, 2018). A descriptive clarification of this finding is that work-induced stress, such as pressures and extended working hours, can lead to multiple health risks that impact the quality of work among staff, ultimately diminishing job satisfaction (Purba, 2017). In the absence of good self-regulation, employees subjected to high work pressure can experience interpersonal conflict, which results in inferior performance.

Unsurprisingly, high job satisfaction will influence the staff's productivity. Therefore, seeking a balanced workload should be a priority, because failure to do so will result in health and psychological consequences on academics. Human resource (HR) managers should be concerned about managing staff perceptions

of workload balance as these influence how satisfied they are with their job, which translates into staff turnover and performance. Thus, university HR managers should first measure employees' displayed talents and capabilities within their work conditions before tasks are defined and assigned. For assignments that are challenging, direction and supervision should be provided, including reasonable and negotiable deadlines, so that academics can achieve optimal quality in task completion. New assignments should be accompanied by clear instructions and ready assistance. Accordingly, managers should adjust assignment loads against employees' physical and cognitive abilities. The desired outcomes of these efforts are proper task execution, employees feeling satisfied with the results of their work, and a maintained motivation in task completion.

This research has made a significant contribution to the field of human resource management (HRM). Although numerous studies on employee workload have been conducted, none have confirmed that a supportive environment could reduce the effects of workload and increase the likelihood of job satisfaction among academics.

Our interaction-moderation analysis showed that a supportive environment mitigates the impact that workload has on job satisfaction among Malaysian university academics. This moderating role of a supportive environment can be potentially clarified. Academics will adjust their perception about workload and work-related problems upon receiving support from their co-workers and supervision from superiors. In addition, they will practice autonomy/authority for work completion. Our results also demonstrated that a healthy workplace ecosystem incorporating elements of managerial support, a supportive work environment, and open communication with superiors would boost the satisfaction of academics. Understandably, the features of a supportive environment act as a protective cushion against workload which provides potential satisfaction among academics in Malaysian higher education. We deduce that by improving the features of a supportive environment in higher education, the mental workload of academics would decrease and job satisfaction would increase. As an extension, organizational best practices should incorporate aspects of employee communication, reward, recognition, and employee development as a means to foster robust engagement within the organization. In summary, the dynamism of supportive faculty environments should be encouraged and nurtured in universities to realize motivation and retention goals.

7. Limitations and Recommendations

The current study had some limitations. The sample size was small, data collection was conducted on a self-reporting basis, and a cross-sectional method was used. We therefore recommend that future studies examine a larger sample size using the longitudinal method. Another recommendation is the use of other data collection methods, specifically interviews and observations. Faced with an unequal gender sample size between the male group (102) and the female group (89), we found it impossible to conduct a variance analysis for the proposed model. Therefore, future studies should benefit from a variance analysis for gender on the proposed model, accounting for approximate and equal sample

sizes of male and female respondents. As far as geographical and cultural contexts are concerned, this study was limited to a sub-context within the Malaysian context of public universities. As such, cross-regional, cross-national, and cross-institutional generalizations and comparisons of the findings and conclusions should be done with caution. Finally, we suggest that future research include other Asian countries and other types of universities, such as private universities, and to place performance at the core of such research. As our study was only restricted to workload as the sole job demand, future studies should consider other job demands and resources, because these may provide comprehensive information into how the faculty workplace may affect its academics' ability to function. Notwithstanding, we cautioned workload as a hindrance stressor, while other studies either reported it as a challenge stressor or a stressor with curvilinear effects, such that an individual's functioning may not chart adverse effects before a threshold. Further study could scrutinize if workload presents counterintuitive effects on academics' function quality in higher education.

8. Conclusion

This study intended to expand the literature by developing an integrated model that articulates the theoretical linkages among career commitment, workload, and job satisfaction of academics in Malaysia. The results provided support for the hypothesized model linking career commitment, workload, and job satisfaction. The study found that career commitment is one of the intrinsic aspects that increases job satisfaction among Malaysian academics in universities. On the other hand, the results of the study suggest that workload has a negative influence on job satisfaction. These findings shed some light on how career commitment and workload influence the job satisfaction of academics in universities and colleges. Furthermore, this study provided a deeper understanding of the role of a supportive environment as a moderator between workload and job satisfaction among academics. This has implications for human resource development in higher education, through which highly skilled personnel, such as academics, are trained and developed.

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