

DETERMINANTS OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE AMONG ACADEMIC STAFF IN UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA (UITM) PERLIS

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Abstract: *There have been numerous concerns on the topic of work-life balance within higher institutions of learning since it is influenced by increased workloads, extended working hours, technology development, and workplace stress which might have adverse effects on the well-being and performance of employees. This research seeks to identify the factors affecting the work-life balance among the academic staff members at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Perlis by determining the correlations between workload, organizational support, working hours, job demands, workplace stress, and work-life balance. To conduct the research, a quantitative cross-sectional approach will be used with the help of questionnaires designed for the sample of 248 academic staff members selected through simple random sampling from a population of 674 people. The questionnaire uses a five-point Likert scale, and the obtained data will be analyzed using SPSS 27 with the help of descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression analysis.*

Keywords: *Work-Life Balance, Workload, Organizational Support, Working Hours, Job Demand, Workplace Stress, Academic Staff*

Introduction

The pitfalls of attaining a satisfactory work-life balance (WLB) for academic staff in higher education institutions in Malaysia, particularly in UiTM Perlis. Work-life balance is known as the ability to successfully manage job responsibilities while meeting family and personal obligations without compromising either domain (Gehrke, 2025). Malaysia was previously ranked as the second worst out of 60 countries in the Global Work-Life Balance Index, underscoring the pressing need for businesses to enhance workplace policies that promote employee's well-being (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2025). Academic staff occasionally struggle to balance between their work obligations and personal life, which is becoming worse by inadequate organizational support and heavy workload, despite the awareness of WLB as essential for both employee well-being and organizational effectiveness.

Workload is one of the major factors related to work-life imbalance, where most of the time, the academic staff is often expected to finish several teachings, administrative, research, supervision, and service-related tasks in a short period of time. Previous study indicated that excessive workloads hinder individual's capacity to attain work-life balance and are a major indicator of stress, burnout, and decreased job satisfaction (Chowhan & Pike, 2022; Munusamy et al., 2024). Conversely, an overwhelming workload has been proven to have a substantial impact on worker's psychological productivity and health, thrusting them into extreme fatigue and reducing their time for leisure activities (Adni et al., 2024).

Organizational support, or employee's perception that their company values their devotion and is concerned about their well-being, is another significant indicator. Employees who perceive greater organizational support often experience lower stress levels, higher job satisfaction, improved work-life balance, and firmer organizational commitment (Mat Zin et al., 2025). On the contrary, leaving it more difficult to successfully attain a balance between work and personal obligations, poor organizational support is thrusting lower worker's motivation and psychological health (Amzat et al., 2022).

Fast technological innovation and flexible working arrangements enable employees to prolong their working hours far beyond their normal office hours and post-hours contact (The Happiness Index, 2026). The academic staff often log extra hours in performing tasks like preparing lectures, overseeing students, grading exams, conducting research, and completing administrative tasks. Ugwu et al. (2021) assert that inconsistent and prolonged working hours decrease the opportunities for sufficient rest, leisure time, and family relationships, which lead to an increase in physical and emotional distress. Prolonged work hours have been proven to have a detrimental impact on employee's well-being and greatly hinder them from attaining a healthy equilibrium level of work and personal obligations (Munusamy et al., 2024; Mat Zin et al., 2025).

Job demand comprises the physical, emotional, psychological, and cognitive efforts needed to perform work-related responsibilities (Rizki & Purba, 2022). In addition to teaching responsibility, academic staff are ought to publish research, serve on university committees, participate in community service projects, and oversee postgraduate students. Psychological strain, elevated emotional fatigue, and frequent job overload are several significant obligations (Amzat et al., 2021). According to earlier research, high job demands have been linked to increased stress, burnout, poor work-life balance, and decreased personal time (Prakoso et al., 2025; Mat Zin et al., 2025).

When workers believe that the demands of their jobs are greater than their ability to cope and available resources, workplace stress arises (Lukan et al., 2022). Excessive workloads, conflicting job expectations, workplace conflict, performance targets, and insufficient organizational support are major indicators of workplace stress among academic staff. Prolonged workplace stress is known to have a positive influence on an employee's physical and mental health, work performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Amzat et al., 2021; Munusamy et al., 2024). Employees who are having excessive amounts of stress are often experiencing burnout and have difficulty juggling their personal and professional obligations (Adni et al., 2024).

Overall, although previous research has generally shown that workload, organizational support, working hours, job demand, and workplace stress have a significant impact on work-life balance, most of the studies currently in publication have focused on employee performance, job satisfaction, and organizational outcomes rather than looking at these indicators simultaneously. There is very little empirical evidence that relies on these correlations amongst academic staff in UiTM Perlis. By researching the impacts of workload, organizational support, working hours, job expectation, and workplace stress on work-life balance for academic staff at UiTM Perlis, this study aims to close this gap.

Literature Review

Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance refers to an individual's capability to balance both professional work and their personal life effectively without experiencing any excessive conflict. It shows how the employees can maintain both time and energy for personal and professional duties, hence the overall physiological well-being and job satisfaction. Based on Wan and Salahudin (2023), employees who achieve great work-life balance tend to show greater job performance due to being able to maintain personal responsibilities without compromising their work. Similarly, Adni et al. (2024) described work-life balance as an employee's perception of successfully integrating work, family and personal duties while reducing role conflict. Because various organizations have continued facing high development technology, competitiveness, and working arrangements, maintaining a good work-life balance has become quite a challenge for them. Recent studies show that work-life balance significantly influences employee's work-life balance, job satisfaction and work commitments. Employees with good work-life balance generally have lower stress levels while poor work-life balance often produce work-family conflict, burnout and poor job performance (Munusamy et al., 2024). These findings highlight the importance of having work-life balance to ensure that the work responsibilities will not interfere with an individual's personal life.

Workload and Work-life Balance

Workload is the quantity, complexity, and intensity of work that is assigned to employees within a specific period. The task of an employee is rather excessive because they must do multiple tasks which can mentally drain them. Beyond the mere volume of work, workload also encompasses employee's perceptions of whether assigned responsibilities can be completed within the available time and resources. Having an unbearable workload eventually leads to a high level of stress that may affect an employee's work-life balance. Recent studies also have mentioned that excessive amounts of work may lead to stress, emotional exhaustion, and job dissatisfaction which impede employees from achieving work-life balance (Marecki, 2023). Recent studies prove that there is a relationship between the workload and work-life balance as

mentioned by Munusamy et al. (2024), it has been found that when employees have tons of work it affects their personal life, mental health and overall well-being. Furthermore, being expected to complete an excessive amount of workload within a short period of time may drain the employees emotionally which can hinder their ability to manage work and personal responsibilities. Besides that, having an unbearable amount of workload may contribute to work-family conflict due to devoting too much time to work instead of focusing on their family (Adni et al. 2024). In addition, as mentioned by Reymert and Thune (2022), most academic staff in universities are required to handle multiple responsibilities including teaching, conducting research, and supervision tasks. Hence, these findings provide strong empirical evidence for a significant and positive relationship between workload and work-life balance among academic staff in university

Organizational Support and Work-Life Balance

Organizational support refers to when employees feel that the organization valued their work and recognise their effort for contribution in the company. The organization support can be demonstrated through various practices, such as a supportive supervision, supportive colleagues, flexible work arrangements, fair organizational policies, and a recognition system. Having comprehensive organizational support can result in good work-life balance. Employees who perceive positive organizational support tend to be able to manage their job demands and maintain their overall well-being effectively. Based on recent studies, it has been found that fair treatment towards employees can contribute to work-life balance as they might feel that their contributions and hardworks are being acknowledged by the organization (Mat Zin et al. 2025). Other than that, In the context of work-life balance, organizational support provides employees with the necessary psychological and organizational resources to effectively manage competing demands between work and personal life.

Recent studies found that supportive workplace relationships can reduce employee turnover (Ertürk, 2022). Besides that, a supportive workplace environment may contribute to reducing employee stress, enhancing job satisfaction, and overall well-being (Amzat et al, 2022). In the context of higher education institutions, an adequate amount of organizational support correlates with employee motivation and psychological health while on the other hand, inadequate support leads to the deduction of these domains (Akter et al., 2022). Overall, these findings suggest a strong empirical support for a significant and positive relationship between organizational support and work-life balance among academic staff in universities.

Working Hours and Work-Life Balance

Working hours refers to the time employees spend on completing their task which includes the schedule, overtime, and extra hours to complete tasks given. The amount of time can affect their time for their personal life like families and hobbies. Due to the fast-paced world, increasing technological advancement and increasing digital connectivity have significantly affected the boundaries between work and personal life, allowing employees to remain continuously accessible beyond official working hours (Bello et al., 2023). If the employees spend too much time on their work, they will have less time to rest and relax which can produce stress and conflict between work and personal life. According to Ertürk (2022), employees who work beyond their time scope will negatively affect their happiness and productivity. Without any opportunity to rest and recharge, employees are vulnerable to tiredness, stress and emotional exhaustion all which affect their ability to achieve a healthy work-life balance.

There are studies that have found that working long hours is bad for employees who have a balance of both work and personal life. Munusamy et al. (2024) found that working long hours makes it hard for employees to take care of their family and personal responsibilities. Adni et al. (2024) found that employees who spend much time working have a harder time balancing work and life, are less happy with their job, and are not as healthy mentally. Mat Zin et al. (2025) found that working long hours makes employees tired, burned out, and unhappy, which affects how well they do their job and their quality of life. These studies show that having working hours is important for academic staff to be happy and for the organization to do well because of their frequent extended working hours and may negatively affect their work-life balance. Overall, these findings suggest strong empirical support for a significant and positive relationship between working hours and work-life balance among academic staff in universities.

Job Demand and Work-Life Balance

The job demands are tough on employees. It means they must do a lot of psychological and emotional work to get their jobs done. This involves doing tasks simultaneously, like going to meetings, catching deadlines, and doing administrative work. When the job demand is high, employees will have no choice but to put in a lot of time and effort to complete it. This can give them stress and make it hard to gain work-life balance. Based on Amzat et al. (2021), having much work to do can lead to burnout, emotional exhaustion, and tiredness. This is based on true events where they can complete expected tasks within a short amount of time. To summarise, excessive job demands may limit an employee's ability to maintain a healthy balance between professional career and personal life.

Other studies have shown that job demand has an impact on how employees balance their work and life. Recent studies by Prakoso et al. (2025) having high levels of job demand can contribute to job dissatisfaction, high levels of stress, and an inability to handle personal responsibilities effectively. Other than that, being under too much work pressure can also affect employees' overall well-being and lead to burnout (Mat Zin et al., 2025). Munusamy et al. (2024) state that when employees have much work and are in a demanding work environment, it affects their mental health and hinders their ability to balance work and personal life. As academic staff perform their work responsibilities like teaching, research, supervision, and administrative work, job demand remains an important factor influencing their work-life balance. Hence, these findings suggest that there is a significant and positive relationship between job demand and employee's work-life balance.

Workplace Stress and Work-Life Balance

Workplace stress means employees' emotional, psychological, and well-being response towards the pressure and expectations from their working environment. The sources of workplace stress are mainly because of the influence of too much work, personal conflict, poor performance expectations, no organizational support, and limited resources. Consistent workplace stress may influence employee's capability to perform effectively while maintaining their personal commitments, well-being, and motivation. Biswas and Gupta (2026) refer to workplace stress as employees' reactions to continuous workplace pressure that are way beyond their capacity and affect both their performance and their personal life. Consequently, workplace stress has become one of the most significant occupational challenges affecting employees across various industries, particularly in professions characterized by high workloads and multiple responsibilities.

Empirical studies have shown that workplace stress can influence an employee's ability to maintain work-life balance. Munusamy et al. (2024) found that employees who are under a lot of stress at work often have problems with their family life, feel exhausted, and have mental health problems. Based on Mat Zin et al. (2025), increasing workplace stress can influence employees to become burned out, have poor job satisfaction, lower motivation, and affect organizational commitment. This is because employees who often have stress will find it hard to balance both work duties and their personal lives. This reduces their quality time for relaxation and interaction with their family. The worse they feel overall. Consequently, reducing workplace stress has become an important organizational priority for promoting work-life balance among academic staff because they consistently do multiple jobs, making workplace stress an important factor in work-life balance among academic staff. Overall, these findings have provided strong empirical evidence that there is a significant and positive relationship between workplace stress and work-life balance.

Methodology

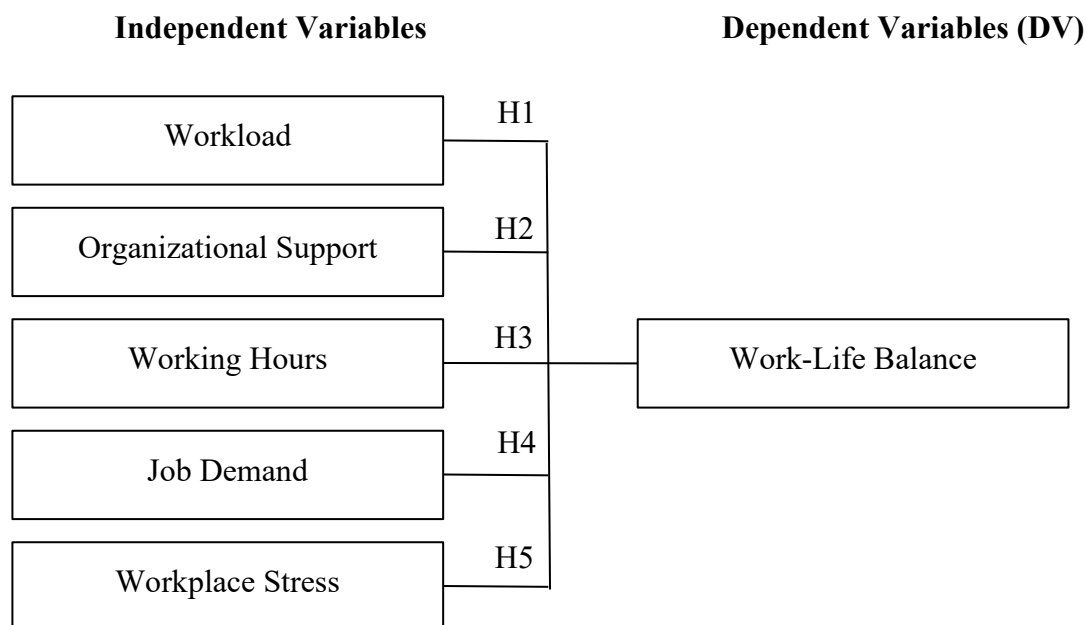


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Illustrating the Relationship Between Independent Variables and Work-Life Balance

H1: The significant positive relationship between workload and work-life balance of academic staff in UiTM Perlis.

H2: The significant positive relationship between organizational support and work-life balance of academic staff in UiTM Perlis.

H3: The significant positive relationship between working hours and work-life balance of academic staff in UiTM Perlis.

H4: The significant positive relationship between job demand and work-life balance of academic staff in UiTM Perlis.

H5: The significant positive relationship between workplace stress and work-life balance of academic staff in UiTM Perlis.

Discussion and Conclusion

The objective of the current research is to examine the determinants of work-life balance among UiTM Perlis academics with an emphasis on the aspects of workload, organizational support, working hours, job demands, and workplace stress. Following the conceptual model proposed for the study and the literature reviewed, all five independent variables are anticipated to have significant positive correlations with the work-life balance of academic staff. According to the research, all the mentioned variables are related to each other and affect the ability of academic staff to maintain balance in their professional and personal lives. Understanding such relationships may help understand the determinants of work-life balance in HEIs, which can be used in organizational practice (Melika et al., 2022).

The goal of this study is to optimize understanding of work-life balance in higher education by combining five key workplace factors into a single conceptualization. Some previous research has explored the links between workload, organizational support, working hours, job demands, workplace stress, and work-life balance, but these have tended to be studied individually or in separate workplaces. Consequently, little research has examined these workplace factors in relation to the work-life balance of academic employees in Malaysian public universities, specifically at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Perlis. Due to the multiple roles expected of academic staff, such as teaching, research, supervision and administration, it is important to investigate the interplay of these working conditions to gain a better understanding of work-life balance (Ramachandran et al., 2024). The study attempts to fill the gap in the literature by combining these five determinants into a proposed framework and to offer a more comprehensive view of the factors that can potentially affect academic staff in their ability to manage their work and personal lives. Moreover, the proposed framework will help enrich the body of knowledge by providing useful conceptual guidance for future research in human resource management, organizational behavior, and higher education.

This proposed study acknowledges the existence of workload, organizational support, working hours, job demands, and workplace stress as important workplace factors identified in the existing literature that affect employees' work-life balance (Rosnani et al., 2023; Wong et al., 2023). Rather than analyzing the variables individually, the present study combines all these variables into one conceptual framework to examine the relationship between these variables and work-life balance among the academic staff of UiTM Perlis. This is especially applicable, as academics are expected to have multiple roles and simultaneously manage their personal well-being. A rise in teaching, research, supervision, and administrative duties can affect an employee's work-life balance, as pointed out by Ramachandran et al. (2024). Academic staff may also have to fulfill several roles in the workplace, which can lead to workplace stress, a recognized factor in employees' work-life balance (Lukan et al., 2022; Munusamy et al., 2024). Nevertheless, organizational support has also been found to be one of the variables in the workplace that will assist academic staff in fulfilling their roles efficiently (Garriod et al., 2023; Alhaider & Alqatani, 2025).

In general, this study has established the factors affecting the work-life balance among the academic staff at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Perlis. Through this study, it will be possible to have an in-depth understanding of work-life balance within higher education through the incorporation of various aspects such as workload, organizational support, working hours, and job demands, and workplace stress. The proposed framework is expected to contribute to current knowledge and serve as a reference for future research on work-life balance among academic staff in Malaysia. Overall, the study highlights the need to build a positive and sustainable working environment where academic staff are able to achieve a healthy work-life balance and lead an overall well-being.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the sample in this study is restricted to the academic staff of one university and focuses solely on one industry, which has reduced the generalizability of the findings to other industries. Additionally, in this study, self-report questionnaires were used, which could have introduced bias in the results, as respondents may not have accurately reflected their actual experiences of work-life balance. In addition, the use of a cross-sectional research design has limited the validation of causal relationships among workload, organizational support, working hours, job demands, and workplace stress, since data were collected only once. Lastly, in this study, only five independent variables were used in the analysis, without accounting for other variables that affect work-life balance, such as organizational culture and family life.

Future research should focus on increasing the external validity of results by including a wide range of samples from different industries and universities. Longitudinal studies would be beneficial for understanding changes in staff work-life balance. Additionally, future research may adopt a mixed-method approach by combining the quantitative survey with the qualitative interviews to gain deeper insights into employee's perception of work-life balance. Future researchers may also investigate other variables in the studies, such as organizational culture, leadership styles, employee engagement, and family responsibilities, to develop more comprehensive insight into the factors that influence work-life balance among academic staff.

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