

## Effect of Workload on Organizational Commitment Among Academicians in Universities: Mediating effect of Emotional Exhaustion

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### Abstract

Increasingly, burnout is seen in both the academic and practical fields. Academicians may also experience burnout differently depending on where they work. Service and health sector burnout has been studied extensively, but education has received less attention. In order to predict burnout, the main predictor is emotional exhaustion. Excessive work pressure, personal demands, or accumulated stress can cause emotional exhaustion. A feeling of mental exhaustion caused by social interactions. This study aims to determine how emotional exhaustion affects academicians' workload and organizational commitment in Malakand division. In order to collect the data from 212 academicians, a cross-sectional method was used, and a variety of statistical tools were used to analyze the data. Workload correlates positively with emotional exhaustion, while organizational commitment correlates negatively. In organizational commitment and workload, emotional exhaustion is a mediating factor. As a result of this study, academicians will have a better understanding of how they interact and to what extent their emotions directly impact their organizational commitment. Results of the study were addressed to students, academicians, administration of universities and policymakers in higher education.

**Keywords:** Emotional Exhaustion; Workload; Organizational Commitment.

### 1. Introduction

In this fast-growing age of science and technology, education is crucial. The competitive world market presents new challenges to education. Globalization, technological advancements, globalization of resources, and some political conflicts are causing changes in the working environment that are causing it to become more complex. These changes in the working environment affect academicians. Research studies have shown that teaching is one of the least stressful professions (Khan, Yusoff, & Khan, 2014; Winefield. & Jarrett., 2001). Moreover, academicians are believed to have no workload and many opportunities in their future. Academicians were considered to have no administrative work, no meetings with parents or family, or political conflicts. As a result of changes to the educational system around the world, teaching is perceived as stressful and emotional, and academicians are dissatisfied, have low productivity, are less committed, turnover, and burnout. The authors claim that employees

work long hours in tight working conditions, lack resources, and are inadequately paid. Consequently, employees are fatigued and burnout (Khan, Nisar, & Malik, 2020).

Burnout has been around since the 1970s. According to Freudenberg, burnout is an exhaustion caused by excessive work demands. Leiter identifies emotional exhaustion as part of burnout syndrome, as well as a reduction in personal achievement. A negative change in attitudes and behaviors resulting from excessive work stress (Khan, Begum, Saeed, Hussain, & Naz, 2023; Kleiner & Wallace, 2017).

Research suggests that workload is one of the most important factors contributing to burnout. In Khan et al. (2020) definition, workload is the amount of work done within a specific timeframe. Research productivity, professional development, and time are used to define it. Workload and burnout have been shown to be positively correlated by several researchers. Workload had a negative relationship with emotional exhaustion and depersonalization dimensions of burnout. Lack of skills, career development, long working hours, the number of students in classes, and teacher shortages are some of the reasons for it in the profession.

Organizational commitment is one of the variables investigated in this study. In this field, decades of research have been conducted. It is possible that this is the case due to a variety of factors, such as the characteristics of today's markets and organizations. Innovative, continuous improvement, high-quality standards, and competitive and employee discretionary efforts require people's involvement. According to Meyer, Stanley, and Parfyonova (2012), organizational commitment is a mental association between an individual and an organization. Employees feel a sense of belonging and communicate with their organization when they have a psychological connection to it. According to a researcher, commitment to organizational goals stabilizes behaviour when desired circumstances do not transpire as planned (Khan, Khan, & Malik, 2020).

Another researcher defined organizational commitment as belonging to a particular organization or internal attachment (Khan., Khan, Kanwal, & Bukhair, 2018). As a result, there may be a high or low level of personal attachment to that organization. Employees have a strong reason to remain with the organization. Additionally, it was defined as a measure of employee identification and connection. A concept that has been identified as one of the most important is employee attachment. Marzuki and Yasmin (2015) found a negative correlation between burnout and organizational commitment, particularly in terms of emotional exhaustion, which was the core dimension of burnout. Emotional exhaustion is positively correlated with WL, whereas emotional exhaustion is negatively correlated with WL.

Emotional exhaustion is a major issue for organizations. The majority of people who work with others suffer from physical and mental disorders. Exhaustion symptoms include fatigue, lack of vitality, insomnia, irrational anger, apathy, family problems, dread, increased cynicism, and alcoholism (Khan., Khan, & Naz, 2017). This results in the employee no longer working for the company. Besides negatively affecting academicians, emotional exhaustion threatens their families, friends, colleagues, customers, and organizations.

Western and non-Western countries have conducted several studies on the education sector (Khan., Rasli, Yusoff, & Ahmad, 2015). In developing and non-western countries, especially Pakistan, more research is needed in the education sector. As such, determining whether academicians are committed to their careers is also crucial. In spite of experiencing stress and burnout, especially exhaustion, their employees remain committed to their jobs and organizations, reducing their commitment to them. Mediation is therefore necessary to explain

these relationships. Researchers examined how emotional exhaustion affects academicians' workloads and organizational commitments in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

1. To determine the effect of workload and emotional exhaustion on organizational commitment.
2. To examine the mediating effect of emotional exhaustion on the relationship between workload and organizational commitment.

## **2. Literature Review**

In 1964, Freudenberg defined burnout as prolonged mental and physical exhaustion due to heavy workloads and burdens. Maslach and Jackson (2014) described it as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment. Those who work with people are more likely to develop these syndromes than those who do not. Feeling tired and stressed while performing your duties is a symptom of burnout, which is part of the stress dimension of emotional exhaustion (Faisal Khan, Amran Md Rasli, et al., 2020). There is a risk of depersonalization when there is a negative attitude toward colleagues and coworkers (Khan, Ahmad, & Ali, 2023). A person may be less effective than he or she used to be when it comes to performing a particular task at hand. Dissatisfied individuals will also have this problem. There is a lack of resources in the workplace, which makes employees unhappy and inefficient. Burnout is a term used to describe a state in which a person feels exhausted after working continuously for a certain amount of time. It is commonly known that burnout is characterized by disengagement and emotional exhaustion as the primary symptoms. Besides causing a variety of problems, burnout can also have a negative impact on the performance of individuals and organizations in a variety of ways.

Burnout is the next step to stress. Emotional exhaustion can be caused by stressful working conditions. Excessive and prolonged cognitive, emotional, and physical stress can cause this intense fatigue (Khan, Khan, Naz, & Khan, 2017). Disengagement from a task is the act of distance (Khan, Habib, Khan, Ullah, & Naz, 2023). Low job satisfaction, low customer engagement, low organizational commitment, high absenteeism, and negative self-esteem are all effects of psychological tension.

Second variable of the study is workload. Academicians' workload affects their performance and commitment, making them more exhausted and burnout so they quit. A workload is defined by Meyer (2012) as academicians' assigned work, whereas Soliman and Soliman define it as teaching, research, and administrative duties. In order to facilitate academicians, various resources are provided to enhance productivity and commitment.

Another variable of the study is organizational commitment and for the success of the organization commitment is crucial. According to Mowday Porter and Steers, organizational commitment is defined as the belonging to and involvement of employees within the organization. There are many factors that can have a direct or indirect effect on an employee's commitment. Respect for the boss, the profession, and the workplace is key to workplace commitment (Khan., Sufyan, Naz, & Bibi, 2020). Organizational commitment explains the importance of employees' commitment to the organization. Organizational commitment is loyalty to an organization. As part of this commitment, you are expected to remain loyal to the organization's principles, ethics, and goals. According to Allen and Meyer (1996), organizational commitment can be defined as the mental link that exists between employees and the organization that they work for. There is a good chance that an employee will leave

your organization if their commitment level is low. Behavioral phrases describe how commitments are carried out, and individual commitment to a goal and path is a character trait. Normative, affective, and continuous mindsets affect employees' emotions, responsibilities, and needs in three ways. Commitment refers to conviction and persistence. An individual is connected to a plan and strategy relating to a particular object when they hold these views (Khan., Ali, Bashir, & Naz, 2021). There are many psychological factors to consider when it comes to maintaining membership, participating, meeting goals, and committing to respect, responsibility, and monetary commitments.

### **3. Research Methodology**

Data types and logic of the investigation are specified using research design. Through research design, the study specifies who and how the researchers can answer their research questions. Descriptive studies answer research questions by examining how, what, when, and where to answer them. A descriptive study uses descriptive statistics like mean and standard deviation. For this reason, the researcher used descriptive methods to analyze the data. The study's target population is academicians.

KP was chosen for this study due to the high amount of remittances it receives, which directly impacts Pakistan's economy. There It is the process of choosing a part of the population for measurement. Out of 543 participants, 212 will be selected for this study. All individuals in a sample are selected equally in simple random sampling. An exact and accurate representation of the larger population is provided by this method.

The questionnaire measures WL, emotional exhaustion, and organizational commitment on a 5-liket scale. Academicians are asked to provide their name, gender, age, marital status, and salary in the first section of the questionnaire. Twelve questions were about workload,(Khan, Khan, Malik, & Qureshi, 2017) and eight were about emotional exhaustion (Khan, Khan, Malik, et al., 2017), with an alpha of 0.80. Twelve questions about the organization's commitment and values had an alpha of 0.71 (Khan., et al., 2021).

### **4. Data Analysis**

An initial analysis of normality was conducted, followed by a control and management analysis for further research. Data distribution is determined by normality analysis. In order to evaluate data normality, histogram regression and Standardized Residual can be used. To calculate the normal distribution numerically, skewness and kurtosis were calculated. Thus, if the last value is below 0.60, it is considered poor reliability, and as a result, it represents fair reliability. We collected data from education sector employees in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Krejcie and Morgan conducted this study on a total population of 543, with a sample size of 254 participants. For data collection, the researchers distributed 280 questionnaires. 252 questionnaires were returned, of which 40 were incomplete. 75% of the remaining 212 questionnaires were returned for final data analysis.

It is important to note that the final data presented are the personal information of respondents. Gender, marital status, and age are among the demographic variables. 54.8% of 543 academicians were male, 63% were single, and 48% were 25-35 years old.

Descriptive statistics calculate means and standard deviations. In WL, the mean and standard deviation are 3.38 and 0.358. Emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment have mean and standard deviations of 3.35, .354, 3.33, and 0.350, respectively.

**Table 1 Normality and Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Skewness	Kurtosis	Mean	Std. Deviation
Workload	212	-1.07	-1.28	3.38	.358
Emotional Exhaustion	212	-1.78	1.68	3.35	.354
Organizational Commitment	212	1.79	-1.49	3.33	.350

Furthermore, correlation was used to test this hypothesis. In this study, WL was the independent variable, and emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment were the dependent variables. According to Table 2, the WL is positively related to emotional exhaustion. In Correlation Analysis, emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment are positively correlated. The p-value is less than 0.05, indicating that WL and emotional exhaustion are significantly correlated.

**Table 2 Correlation Analysis**

	Workload	Emotional exhaustion	Organizational Commitment
Workload	0.78		
Emotional exhaustion	.498*	0.690	
Organizational Commitment	.478*	-.310*	0.781

Sig\*p<0.05

Emotional exhaustion is hypothesized to mediate the relationship between WL and organizational commitment. To test this hypothesis further, the researcher followed four steps for mediation of Buren and Kenny's study to determine the mediating effect of emotional exhaustion. Step one is to ensure the independent variable significantly affects the mediating variable. The independent variable in the present study is WL, and the mediating variable is emotional exhaustion. The researchers used regression analysis to determine how WFC affects emotional exhaustion. Table 3 shows WL positively affects emotional exhaustion. There is a standardized Beta value of .288, a R square value of 0.048, and a p-value less than 0.05. Consequently, the first step is satisfied, and the result indicates that WL influences emotional exhaustion positively. Moreover, Table 3 shows that the R square of the independent variable WL and the dependent variable organizational commitment is 0.61, with a p-value below 0.05. A significant relationship exists between the independent variable, WL and the dependent variable, organizational commitment.

In the last step, Baron and Kenny Table 3 shows that both direct and indirect effects were significant. Also, after incorporating emotional exhaustion, there is a substantial effect between WL and organizational commitment. Therefore, emotional exhaustion partially mediates WFC-commitment relationships.

**Table 3 Barron and Kenney steps for Mediation**

Effect of WL on EE		
	Standardized coefficients Beta	t
Constant	2.321	7.854
Workload	.288	3.435
Adjust R Square	.048	
R Square	.059	

F Model	20.031	
<b>Effect of EE on OC</b>		
	Standardized coefficients Beta	t
Constant	3.445	7.998
Emotional Exhaustion	-.209*	-2.908
Adjust R Square	.061	
R Square	.068	
F Model	11.776	
<b>Effect of WL on OC</b>		
	Standardized coefficients Beta	t
Constant	3.211	14.004
Workload	-.238*	-3.936
Adjust R Square	0.058	
R Square	0.064	
F Model	14.122	
<b>Emotional exhaustion Mediates on WL and OC</b>		
<b>Dependent variable OC</b>		
	Standardized coefficients Beta	T
Constant	3.323	11.168
Workload	-.189*	-2.110
Emotional Exhaustion	-.158*	-1.100
Adjust R Square	.075	
R Square	.079	
F Model	10.342	

Sig\*p<0.05

## 5. Conclusion and Discussion

Emotional exhaustion affects employees' WL and organizational commitment in the banking sector, according to this study. WL and emotional exhaustion are significantly correlated, according to the results (Ugwu & Onyishi, 2020). Therefore, academicians are more likely to experience stress and emotional exhaustion as WL levels rise (Tabassum, Farooq, & Fatima, 2017).

Secondly, the study examines how emotional exhaustion affects organizational commitment. Academicians who are emotionally exhausted are less likely to be committed to their organizations. Academicians also experience emotional exhaustion, decreasing their dedication and loyalty. Likewise, organizational commitment decreases when emotional exhaustion increases or increases when emotional exhaustion decreases (Hakanen, Ropponen, De Witte, & Schaufeli, 2019; Khan, Sufyan, & Malik, 2020). The trust employees have in an organization's values is the determining factor of their commitment to the organization. Loyalty and active participation in the organization influence employees' willingness to cooperate with the organization's objectives. Those employees who feel part of the organization's values and are attached to the organization will enjoy working for it. This leads to higher performance because employees don't feel burdened. Organizational commitment also influences employees' decisions to remain with the organization and perform well.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of WL on organizational commitment (Khan, Zahra, Bilal, Sufyan, & Naz, 2021). The results of this study indicate a significant negative relationship between WL and organizational commitment. Moreover, WL increases organizational commitment, especially in the education sector and will decline if WL increases. Additionally, employees lose commitment and feel less effective when faced with personal and professional challenges.

Analysis of mediator effects by Baron and Kenny. It determines whether there is zero, partial, or complete mediation between the variables. WL and Organizational commitment are significantly impacted by emotional exhaustion when modeled multiple regression. In spite of the mediator, WL and Organizational commitment remained significant. Mediation occurs when both direct and indirect effects are significant.

### **Limitations and Recommendations**

As every study has some limitations, this study is not exempted from constraints. Many researchers determine the WFC by different dimensions, while this study only focuses on one dimension, the WIF direction. Secondly, the researcher collected the data in a single shot called cross-sectional data. Thirdly, the current research study uses only quantitative methods and the data was collected from one province in Pakistan. Last, this study utilized a Baron-Kenny step for the mediation analysis.

The researcher suggested studying longitudinal data in other fields such as nurses, lawyers, engineers, etc., as well as testing other outcome variables such as personality, depression, leadership, and anxiety. Furthermore, the current study is limited in its ability to collect and analyze quantitative data. In addition, the previous researcher recommended qualitative techniques. A mixed approach is recommended to understand the relationship between WL, emotional exhaustion, and organizational commitment. The current study also suggests a larger sample size and a variety of areas. Other cities and provinces in Pakistan should be sampled. To conclude, the study recommends other steps beyond Barron and Kenney.

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