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The Impact of Workload on Work Life Balance towards Job Satisfaction of Non-Academic Administrative Officers of Higher Education Institutions in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

In the current scenario of the world, issues pertaining to job satisfaction, workload work life balance are penetrated to most of the professions. Notably, the employees in the higher education sector in Sri Lanka are undergoing similar issues. The researcher investigated relationships among workload, work life balance, and job satisfaction among non-academic administrative officers in Sri Lankan Universities. The mediating role of work life balance towards the relationship between workload on job satisfaction was also explored. 300 non-academic administrative officers drew from 9 universities in Sri Lanka. A structured questionnaire administered among the respondents. The research discovered a significant impact of workload towards job satisfaction, whereas no impact of work life balance with job satisfaction and workload. Further, the study highlighted that there is no mediation by work life balance towards the relationship between the workload and job satisfaction of non-academic administrative officers of Universities in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Work Life Balance, Workload, Non-Academic Administrators, Higher Education Institutes

INTRODUCTION

Work-life balance and job satisfaction have recently drawn attention from businesses and workers alike (Ortiz-Bonnin et al., 2023). In recent decades, work-life balance is becoming more widely accepted as a concept for businesses and individuals. Work life balance has been demonstrated a significant increase in employee productivity, which benefits both organizational performance and human resources (Bataineh, 2019; KR et al., 2023). Work life balance promotes the growth of job satisfaction when an individual can balance their living situations both at the family and work (Latiep, 2023).

Job satisfaction is an extremely imperative aspects in individual and organizational performance and it is a core factor which reflect the personal career advancement, employee retention, and the company achievements (Krishnan et al., 2018; Robinson, 2019; Wahyudi et al., 2023). Job satisfaction is important to research since it has substantial consequences for the well-being of both the organization and the employees (Abdirahman et al., 2018; Kamran et al., 2017; Krishnan et al., 2018; Malik et al., 2020; Rifadha & Sangarandeniya, 2015; Tegor et al., 2023). Job satisfaction is influenced by a number of elements; working environment, workload, responsibility, kind of work necessary skills, job status, benefits, security, pay and promotion prospects. (Trita & Enrika, 2020).

Workload is a set of activities that a department or office holder must do within a specified timeframe. As a result, determining the quantity, task, principle, and function of each employee is critical in ensuring that the employee's burden is not too heavy, as this has a notable influence on the worker's job satisfaction (Setyanti et al., 2022). Further, workload was discovered as a contributing reason to improved exhaustion, which lead to the performance (Syihabudhin et al, 2019). Employees will be unhappy and uninterested in working in an overloaded environment, which will affect their performance (KR et al., 2023). According to Omar et al. (2015) the most important element affecting work-life balance was workload. Overwork can result in a loss of work life balance. In contrast, an excessive workload also can be beneficial to a person's work life balance if the task is viewed as a challenge.

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In most professions, problems in relation to work life balance, job satisfaction and workload are serious, and they are even worse for professionals. Non-academic administrative officers in Universities, the study's target group, are accountable for the institution's administrative and financial performance and operations of management and finance strategic aspects and due to a heavy workload, poor working atmosphere, prejudice, lack of career possibilities, an absence of independence and flexibility, disagreements between university authorities and staff, and other elements which impact compensation and benefits, non-academic administrators are less satisfied with their jobs (Dompelage et al., 2019; Jayathilake, 2017). Therefore, identifying the issues that this set of employees faces is critical. Ignoring their needs could be harmful to both the individual and the university.

Even though there is previous research done on the work life balance, job satisfaction and workload of university academics. There is little empirical research on the work life balance, job satisfaction, and workload of university non-academic administrative officers in western literature (Aziz-Ur-Rehman & Siddiqui, 2020), and there is hardly any research on these topics in Sri Lankan literature (Dompelage et al., 2019; Jayathilake, 2017). Further, opposing findings of previous Western and Sri Lankan studies in relation to the relationships among workload, work life balance and job satisfaction necessitated further investigation into the link between the aforementioned variables by the researcher. Therefore, this study focused to identify the relationships between the work life balance, job satisfaction, and workload of non-academic administrative officers of higher education institutes and the mediating role of work life balance on the relationship between workload and job satisfaction.

This research study's significance is astounding because there is very few research have done on the relationships between workload, work life balance and job satisfaction of non-academic administrative officers at Sri Lankan State Higher Education Institutions (Gamage, 2016). Further only very few studies have been done in the other parts of the world as well. Hence, these findings fill the gap in the literature regarding the relationship among workload, work life balance and job satisfaction of non-academic administrative officers in State Higher Educational Institutes in Sri Lanka.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job satisfaction means feelings that an employee goes through and is attitudinal to his career, his work environment and his work tasks. These experienced feelings and attitudes can be influenced by a variety of things a worker meets. These factors include opportunities for progress, workload, working conditions, work life balance, and interpersonal relationships with supervisors, coworkers, and juniors (Metz, 2018).

The work life balance is linked to different outcomes related to work, such as increased satisfaction at jobs, retention, manageable workload, working and productivity. (Oktosatrio, 2018). Deery (2008), defined that the concept of work-life balance is a complicated task, as defined as life, work and their balance. Greenhaus et al. (2003) indicated that the work-life balance as the degree to which an individual participates in and happy with their role as a worker and family.

Employee workload represents the burden of their work and how they can manage tasks to satisfy the requirements of the operating system (Syihabudhin et al., 2019). The workload was divided into two quantitative and qualitative working loads, there is more work to be done on a quantitative basis, such as sufficient working hours and significant work stress. When too many tasks have to be completed, quantitative workload occurs. The ability of employees to do their job is related to quality working loads (Koesomowidjojo et al., 2017).

A workload balance or imbalance is the perception of an employee as a result of perceived differences between his and other organizational members' workloads. A quantitative study has shown that workload may be viewed as the primary factor obstructing the capacity of women to strike a healthy work-life balance in the banking industry in East Java (Fuadiputra and Novianti, 2020). Paramitadewi et al. (2017) demonstrated that high workloads will influence job satisfaction and work life balance of workers. Syihabudhin et al. (2019) pointed out that one of the crises brought on by workload is the employee's capability to manage work and

life. The balance between work and life can be negatively impacted by overwork. In contrast, an additional workload can be beneficial for the balance of one's working life if the person views it as a challenge and an opportunity for growth. When workload is perceived to have increased because employees can manage their workload, they satisfy employees' needs and help them attain a healthy work-life balance. Previous research has illustrated that workloads have a notably impact on work life balance (Fuadiputra & Novianti, 2020; Fan & Smith, 2017; Mas-Machuca et al., 2016). Further, Syihabudhin (2019) revealed a notable influence on the work life balance and workload. Similarly, Omar et al. (2015) showed that workload is the core factor which affects the work life balance. However, some fields have revealed a positive relationship between workload and work life balance (Chiew et al., 2018; Sravani, 2018). Further few studies revealed that there is no direct impact of workload on work life balance (Goh et al., 2015; Pandu et al., 2013).

High workload is an important trigger for teachers to achieve a balanced work life and non-work life, which also affects their job satisfaction (Mukhtar, 2012). Chaaban and Du (2017) identified that the severe workload strain was a key factor contributing to teachers' dissatisfaction. Similarly, many studies also found a favorable correlation between the workload and job satisfaction (Inegbedion et al., 2020; Yaddehige & Arnold, 2020; Naheed et al., 2018). A negative relationship between workload and job satisfaction was identified in a study done related to agriculture and service sector (Lando et al, 2023; Mandjar and Turangan, 2023). In contrast, the positive relationship between workload and job satisfaction was also identified in some research studies (Rima & Kusdarianto, 2023; Siregar et al., 2023).

Favourable association between work life balance and job satisfaction at the place of employment related to higher education sector was identified in several parts of the world. These studies provided important consequences for higher education institutions to improve their job satisfaction to consider the work life balance between employees of the higher education institutes (Sari & Seniati, 2020; Malik & Allam, 2021). In Sri Lankan context most employees are not satisfied with their jobs, so workers cannot achieve a correct work life balance (Arunashanta, 2019). Jayasinghe et al. (2022) indicated a highly positive association between work life balance and job satisfaction. Moreover, research in several disciplines indicated a harmonies association between work and life which has a favorable impact on employee happiness. These studies showed that when people who are content in their professions are more devoted to the business, do their duties effectively, and produce great results (Jayatilake, 2017; Adikaram and Jayatilake, 2016; Kumari et al., 2019; Abeykoon and Perera, 2019).

In contrast some studies have observed negative association between work life balance and job satisfaction at workplace (Fuadiputra & Novianti, 2020; Holland et al., 2019; Okeke, 2017).

A conceptual framework of this study was developed based on the proceeding literature review (Figure 1). The underline theory for this framework is Job Demand Resource Theory. Further since there are opposing findings of previous studies as identified in the proceeding review in relation to the research on the relationship of working environment and workload towards the job satisfaction, the following hypotheses were built up to examine the relationships among workload, work life balance and job satisfaction of nonacademic administrative officers of Sri Lankan Universities.

H1: There is a relationship between workload and job satisfaction of the non-academic administrative officers of Higher Education Institutions in Sri Lanka.

H2: There is a relationship between workload and work life balance of the non-academic administrative officers of Higher Education Institutions in Sri Lanka.

There is a relationship between workload and work life balance of the non-academic administrative officers of Higher Education Institutions in Sri Lanka.

Work life balance has a mediating effect of workload on job satisfaction of non-academic administrative officers of State Higher Educational Institutes in Sri Lanka.

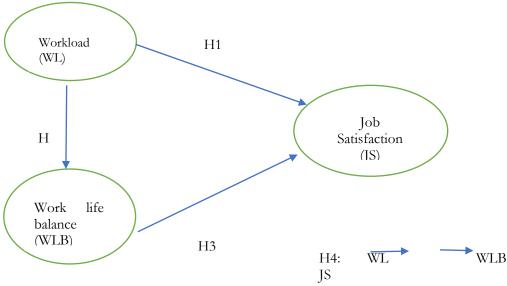


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study

METHOD

This research study was executed to probe the connections among workload, work life balance and job satisfaction and the mediating role of work life balance towards the relationship between workload and job satisfaction. The deductive approach was adopted for the research study as this research focuses on hypothesis testing while making the conclusions by series of analysis of data. The target population was non-academic administrative officers in the Sri Lankan State Higher Education Institutions. The research survey was conducted using personally administered structured questionnaire which distributed among 300 non-academic administrative officers of 9 Higher Education Institutes in Sri Lanka. Sampling was carried out using proportionate stratified random sampling design in order to identify the best representation of the sample. The sampling survey that is being used as the primary research tool for the study consisted of closed-ended questions and demographic questions. job satisfaction, work life balance, and workload were the primary constructs of this study, and they were all primarily measured using closed-ended questions. The structured questionnaire consisted of questions related to demographic variables and research variables such as workload, work life balance and, job satisfaction. The Likert Scale was used, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire was found reliable based on Cronbach alpha 0.785.

Data analysis was conducted utilizing the AMOS 23.0 graphics software to describe the relationship between study variables. A structural equation modeling was created to achieve the objectives and identify the anticipated relationships among work life balance, workload and job satisfaction and the mediating role of work life balance on the relationship between workload and job satisfaction. Items were examined for convergent validity, reliability, and discriminant validity and model fitness was tested using structural equation modeling (SEM). The Sobel Test was used to identify the mediating effect of work life balance on the relationship between workload and job satisfaction.

RESULTS

Data Collection

Data collection occurred in situ at various higher education institutions. Questionnaires were disseminated among the study participants, with a total of 300 distributed. The response rate achieved was 82.3%, indicative of a robust engagement from the respondents. However, a subset of these questionnaires was deemed incomplete and, consequently, excluded from further analysis. Ultimately, 233 responses met the criteria for completeness and relevance, and were thus accepted for inclusion in the study. These valid

responses were systematically coded and recorded in an SPSS dataset. Table 1 below presents a comprehensive summary of the key demographic and academic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1. Demographic information of the sample

Demographic Factor	Percentage (%)
University	<u> </u>
Uva Wellassa University	5.6
Rajarata University	7.7
Sabaragamuwa University	7.7
Wayamba University	9.0
South Eastern University	10.3
University of Ruhuna	12.4
University of Peradeniya	14.6
University of Jaffna	14.6
University of Colombo	18.0
Designation	
Registrar/Bursar	4.3
Deputy Registrar/Deputy Bursar	23.2
Senior Assistant Registrar/Senior Assistant Bursar	33
Assistant Registrar/Assistant Bursar	36.9
Other Admin Staff	2.6
Highest Qualification Achieved	
Bachelor's Degree	37.3
Master's degree	61.8
Age	
20-29	10.3
50-60	21.9
30-39	28.8
40-49	39.1
Gender	
Male	43.8
Female	56.2
Executive Level Service	
20+	13.7
1 -4 years	20.2
5 - 9 years	20.2
10 - 14 years	22.7
15 -19 years	23.2
Marital Status	
Divorced	0.4
Widowed	0.4
Single	9.9
Married	89.3

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was employed to evaluate measurement items used in the research study. The construct validity of the instruments was measured using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) utilizing the principal component analysis (PCA) of orthogonal varimax rational method. Total variance explained by the three factors was 61.6. Due to poor loading and cross loading on another component, a few items were eliminated during the principal component analysis. The rotated component matrix resulted in 3 components and 12 number of items remained. All loadings of items are more than 0.6. It showed that items in all the constructs are highly correlated to each other (Table 2).

Table 2. Rotated Component Matrix

	Component		
	1	2	3
WL1		0.78	
WL2		0.759	
WL3		0.724	
WL5		0.691	
WLB6			0.739
WLB7			0.854

WLB9		0.638
JS1	0.604	
JS2	0.78	
JS3	0.702	
JS5	0.75	
JS6	0.701	

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory Factor Analysis was utilized to measure the data set's unidimensionality and confirm its factor structure using theoretical information derived from literature (Mueller, 1996). The data were analyzed using a maximum likelihood method. With this method, it is possible to assess the overall fitness of the structural model using a number of pertinent metrics. In this study, normed chi square, comparative fit index (CFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) were considered in evaluating the model fitness. The final structural model is displayed in figure 2.

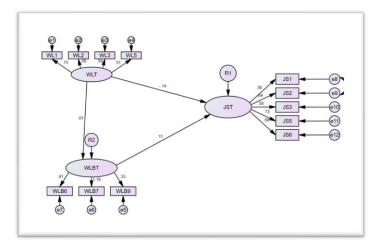


Figure 2. Final Best Fit Structural Model

The analysis of changing structural models to make the model fit in comparison to the goodness of fit criteria led to the development of the best fit model. In order to see the goodness of fit, the structural model is modified by the fit model. (Figure 2).

Table 3. Best Fit Indices Scores

Good of Fit Index	Threshold Value	Results	Model fit /Not
Normed Chi Square	<5	2.060	Model Fit
CFI	>0.9	0.912	Model Fit
RMSEA	< 0.08	0.068	Model Fit

The results of normed chi square, comparative fit index (CFI) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) yielded 2.060, 0.912 and 0.068 respectively. All scores are within the recommended level. Hence, the results for the normed chi square, comparative fit index (CFI) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) yielded an overall good fit for the final structural model (Table 3).

Testing Validity and Reliability

The study tested convergent validity, composite reliability (CR), cronbach alpha reliability, and discriminant validity. Average variance extracted (AVE) was used to calculate convergent validity and discriminant validity of the construct was calculated by comparing the square root of AVE and relevant construct correlation values (Table 4).

Table 4. Convergent Validity and Reliability

Variable	AVE	CR	Cronbach alpha
Workload	0.471	0.833	0.728
Work life balance	.0556	0.825	0.701
Job satisfaction	.0374	0.820	0.754

To assess the reliability, composite reliability (CR) and cronbach's alpha were analyzed. Over 0.7 was the cronbach's alpha value. The model was trustworthy since these metrics fall within the suggested threshold levels.

The composite reliability measure for the final model was above the acceptable level of 0.7. However, the average variance extracted (AVE) of the final model constructs were less than the acceptable level of 0.5 except work life balance. But the model can be accepted as per the findings of Fornell and Larcker (1981) where they presented the construct's convergent validity is still adequate if AVE is less than 0.5 but composite reliability is better than 0.6 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Further discriminant validity was measured. The square root of average variance extracted was higher than the correlations of all corresponding constructs. In the table the diagonal values which are the square root of AVE, whilst other values are the correlations between the respective constructs. Therefore, it concluded that the discriminant validity for all constructs was achieved (Table 5).

Table 5: Discriminant Validity

	WL	JS	WLB	
WL	0.64			
JS	0.14	0.61		
WLB	0.01	0.11	0.75	

The Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis testing was conducted at the significance level of 0.05. The significance of the direct and indirect effects between the variables were also identified.

Table 6. Results of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	Direct Effect	Significance (5% level)	Findings
H1	Workload to Job Satisfaction	(0.3)	0.004 Significant	Supported
H2	Workload to Work life balance	(0.015)	0.861 Not Significant	Not Supported
Н3	Work life balance to Job Satisfaction	0.032	0.681 Not Significant	Not Supported
		Indirect Effect	Significance (5% level)	Significance
H4	WL – WLB - JS	0.001	0.967 Not Significant	Not Supported

Table 6 presented a significant relationship between workload and job satisfaction of the non-academic administrative officers of the Higher Educational Institutes in Sri Lanka where the significance level is less than 0.05 and the relationship is a negative. Hence, H1 is accepted. H2 and H3 are not supported, and it showed no significant relationship between workload & work life balance and work life balance & job satisfaction of non-academic administrative officers of the Higher Educational Institutes in Sri Lanka as the significant level is not less than 0.05. H4 hypothesis linked with the mediating effect of work life balance is not supported by data where there is no mediation effect by work life balance on the relationship between workload and job satisfaction.

Sobel Test

For this investigation, structural equation modeling was applied (SEM) to examine the mediating effect, the previously specified hypothesis, in order to determine whether the mediation was displayed in the theoretical model. The conclusions arrived based on the indirect effect between the constructs, showed that there is no mediation by work life balance on the relationship between workload and job satisfaction.

In addition, Sobel Test has been utilized to identify the mediation of work life balance towards the relationship between workload & job satisfaction. The significance of the mediation calculated by Sobel Test was 0.13, which is less than 1.96, which is the Z value. Therefore, it proved that the work life balance does not have mediation towards the association between workload and job satisfaction.

DISCUSSION

The workload of non-academic administrative officers of Sri Lankan Higher Education Institutes was found to be negatively associated with their job satisfaction. These results are supported by the literature (Chaaban & Du, 2017; Holland et al., 2019; Mukhtar, 2012; Cayupe et al., 2023; Inegbedion et al., 2020; Lando et al., 2023; Liu & Lo, 2017; Mandjar & Turangan, 2023; Naheed et al., 2018; Siregar, et al., 2023). Holland et al. (2019) supported that increased workload has a detrimental effect on people's wellbeing by decreasing women employees' satisfaction with maintaining a decent and healthy work-life balance. Additionally, middle management positions, where employees are thought to be more capable of doing tasks, account for a sizable percentage of the power at higher education institutions. These findings highlighted the importance of attentive attention to improve job satisfaction of administrators of higher education institutes in Sri Lanka. It is considered that less extensive workloads will lead to higher job satisfaction.

In contrast to what was predicted based on prior research findings, the findings of this research revealed that there is no significant relationship between workload and work life balance. This main reason for this could be the workload differences of the same level staff / same designation. The workload assigned is different from place to place even if they are in the similar designation. There are cases where an administrative officer with a low designation is assigned to a place which has a high workload while assigning a higher designated officer to a place with low workload. Hence, a firm impact cannot be identified. There are few previous research that supports the findings of the current research. Goh et al. (2015) revealed that workload and work life balance had no direct impact, although his findings added that workload and life satisfaction may have a distinct relationship impacted by need and challenge, people do not judge life satisfaction adversely due to excessive work demands. Sravani (2018) reported that organizational structure functions constitute workload and task complexities of workers. The task requirements of employees vary even within the same organization since staff of the equal level may be unequally assigned. Differences in the workload can be influenced heavily by education skills, specialization field or position within the organization. The variability of the workload of employees in most organizations is largely dependent on their departments. But there is no guarantee that workload is balanced even in the same department. A workload balance or imbalance is the perception of an employee because of perceived differences between his and other organizational members' workloads. Pandu et al. (2013) also argued that the association between workload and work life balance is not significant.

Moreover, the study found that there is no connection between job satisfaction and work-life balance of non-academic administrators of the Higher Education Institutes of Sri Lanka. Which is the novel finding to the Sri Lankan Higher Education Sector.

The reason could be the pressure at work prevents administrative officers from maintaining a healthy balance between their personal and professional lives of them which leads to lower job satisfaction levels. Therefore, the officers may not feel fully satisfied because they frequently perceive this as being routine. However, empirical findings of non-western research have supported the insignificant association between work life balance and job satisfaction. Okeke (2017) mentioned that the balance of professional and personal life has both beneficial and bad effects on individuals in a study conducted with Nigerian banking employees. At first,

it benefits the workers, but if it persists for a while, it has a negative effect on people, increasing frustration, worry, and delays. It was advised that the employer develop an effective management plan for combining work and family, lowering workload demands, conflicts of role, and family stress in order to enhance employees' job satisfaction. Additionally, Fuadiputra & Novianti (2020) found that female employees' work-life balance has no appreciable influence on job satisfaction. These findings support the study done by Holland et al. (2019).

Further the research study identified that there is no significant mediation of work life balance on the workload and job satisfaction of non-academic administrative officers of State Higher Educational Institutes in Sri Lanka. It can be concluded that workload directly decreases job satisfaction of non-academic administrative officers and there is no contribution from work life balance for that relationship. Fuadiputra & Novianti (2020) supported the above finding of the research, and it was said that work-life balance has no indirect influence on female bank employees' job satisfaction or a mediating influence on their workload.

CONCLUSION

This study tries to identify the issues related to workload, work life balance and job satisfaction of employees in order to enhance performance and productivity. The study's findings show that manageable workload is required to advance job satisfaction among the non-academic administrative employees of Higher Education Institutes. Therefore, universities and higher education institutes in the state sector need to put more emphasis on fostering a manageable workload because this will directly affect how well the State University's non-academic administrative personnel performs. Further this study offers important insights for non-academic administrators in higher educational institutions, who seek to attain higher job satisfaction in their work life. The state higher education institute and the government have a role to improve job satisfaction by creating stress free workload which eventually enhances their job satisfaction towards the institute.

This study identified no direct impact on work life balance from workload and job satisfaction of non-academic administrative officers, which are the novel finding to the Sri Lankan Higher Education Sector.

This study selected nine universities in Sri Lanka from the nine provinces in order to obtain a better representation. However, this sample might not produce conclusive results and the conclusions may carry less weight. The study could be more generalized if it was done for all seventeen universities to incorporate diverse groups and get a bigger picture. Hence, in future research this study could be repeated with data obtained from all seventeen universities.

This research study provides some implications, where the Universities can set policies for non-academic administrative staff and other university employees to recognize their requirement for job satisfaction, such as flexibility in resources to work, and manageable workload. Further, the university grants commission should offer supportive policies to enhance the job satisfaction of non-academic administrative officers in state higher education institutes in relation to timely recruitment and timely promotion of non-academic administrative staff with the coordination of the higher authorities of the higher education institutes. This will be a solution to reduce the workload of the non-academic administrative officers. Due to the delays in recruitment and promotions of the non-academic administrative officers which ultimately leads to job dissatisfaction.

Policy makers with the hand of university authorities can design jobs in a manner that will minimize discrepancies in workloads across designations. This requires that deliberate efforts be made, where possible, to balance the workload and to make the employees have a sense of fairness. Where workload balance is not possible, the discrepancies between workloads should be significantly minimized and employees must be carried along in this respect. University authorities should ensure job roles of non-academic administrative officers align with their competencies and capabilities.

This research study could be a precursor for upcoming future investigations related to workload, work life balance and job satisfaction. It is recommended that future research uses various variables in order to broaden the framed conceptual framework by adding dependent variables such as job performance, well-being and

influential factors for better job satisfaction. Similarly, moderating variable and mediating variables which influence the relationships of the working environment & job satisfaction and workload & job satisfaction can be added to broaden the study's focus.

Furthermore, this research can be expanded by doing a comparative study to explore the differences in the job satisfaction of non-academic administrative officers in public and private higher educational institutes depending on the workload of them and can be expanded to explore the differences of non-academic administrative staff, and academic staff, academic administrators, or executives in other organizations.

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