Examining the Influence of Academic and Non-academic Responsibilities on Academicians' Job-related Stress in Higher Education

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Abstract: Academicians are commonly associated with academic tasks of teaching and research. However, recent scenario reveals that academicians' workloads are not restricted to merely academic tasks. Academicians also hold administrative positions, involved with students' development activities, community services and professional development. Shouldering with numerous responsibilities, academicians may be stressful to prioritize the assigned tasks and meeting deadlines. This necessitates serious attention to ensure that academicians can focus on the assigned responsibilities and perform their best. Thus, this study attempts to establish a relationship between academic and non-academic responsibilities with job-related stress among academicians. Through survey method, 120 usable responses received out of 391 questionnaires distributed to academicians in a public university. Using SPSS, a preliminary analysis indicates that the respondents were moderately stressful with their job. However, multiple regressions test demonstrates that job-related stress is not influenced by academic responsibilities but marginally contributed by non-academic responsibilities. The findings give insights to the university management on academicians' reaction to their present job tasks and useful as guidance in any efforts or policy towards academicians' workload setting. However, this study is confined to only one public university in the East coast region of Malaysia. Thus, future research may be expanded to the public universities in the West region of Malaysia with different working environment and lifestyle.

Keywords Academicians, Academic Responsibilities, Non-academic responsibilities, Job-related Stress, Teaching workloads

1. Introduction

Academicians are important assets in achieving universities' excellence. The tasks of academicians are commonly associated with teaching and research. However, in the current universities' scenario, the academicians' workloads are increasing year by year. The work has become increasingly stressful due to intense and wide-ranging change within university sector (Kinman & Wray, 2020). The academicians' workloads have reached an almost unbearable level with the expectation that faculty

members in most institutions to carry out teaching, research, and community service (Whitman et al., 1999). Much of the increased workload has come in the form of administrative demands to document and justify all of teaching, research and publication activities, filling in forms and undergoing evaluations (Tight, 2010). Additionally, academicians or sometimes refer as academic staff or lecturers at a university are with multiple roles namely as a teacher, clinician, researcher, student supervisor and even administrator (Shaiful et al., 2017).

The increasing workload is also geared to serve the higher education stakeholders such as students, parents, employers, education managers, government, administrators and academic assessors, who are expecting utmost performance from academicians especially in the aspect of current technology usage and knowledge dissemination. Furthermore, the demands for changing of internal and external working environment as initiated by the university management lead to increasing academicians' workloads and fears concerning job security or stability. This causes an "unmatched" between job demand and job control, hence difficulties among the academicians to cope with the job stressors (Shaiful et al., 2017).

The issues of overwork due to numerous responsibilities among academicians need to get serious attention as the attempts to fulfil many responsibilities and imbalance allocation of reward may create tension and dissatisfaction among academicians. Past research has concluded on the relationship between academicians' tasks and stress. These tasks mostly concentrated on work overload requiring lots of time to be performed, which lead to "unbalanced nature", and ultimately resulted in the job-related stress (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Forgasz & Leder, 2006; Jamali, Roziah, Zoharah, Siti, Zeinab & Seyedali, 2021; Salmi et al., 2019; Salwa & Fatma, 2017; Timms et al., 2007; Zuraida & Nur Farahiyah, 2015). A misfit between job rewards and individual and/or organizational needs will lead to stress on the individuals (Doyle & Hind, 1998). Furthermore, a mismatch between effort and reward leading to the employees' emotional distress, is associated with job dissatisfaction and high turnover intentions (Siti Aisyah et al., 2012). Many academicians did not think that they had enough time to do research while one-third of all university staff felt that their job was having a negative impact on their health (Parr, 2015). Subsequently, the university academic staff faced plenty of stress and affected their satisfaction as well as physical or mental health (Ahsan et al., 2009).

As academic institutions are knowledge-intensive, its superior performance relies primarily on the commitment and engagement of their academic staff. Their low levels of engagement may affect quality of teaching and research (Aboramadan et al., 2020). Thus, the management must be proactive in safeguarding the academic staff from experiencing high levels of stress and excessive workload in order to allow the staff to have a balanced work life and at the same time, the organizational performance can be achieved (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Jamali et al., 2021). As complex institutions with limited resources, retaining highly committed and engaged staff should become a priority within academic institutions (Aboramadan et al., 2020).

In light of the above motivations, the current study aims to examine the relationship between academician involvement in academic and non-academic responsibilities with their job-related stress. The unique contribution of this study is to assist the university management in exploring academicians' reaction to their present job demands (academic and non-academic responsibilities) and to offer empirical evidence on the effect of academic and non-academic responsibilities towards academicians' job-related stress. Thus, the university management can acknowledge the presence of job-related stress in any efforts or policy to improve efficiency of academicians.

The remainder of this paper structure is as follows. The subsequent section provides a review of relevant literature. The following section offers a brief description of the theoretical framework and proposes hypotheses of the study. Then, the next two sections provide a description of the research methodology used and results of the study. The final section offers discussion of the main findings, implications, limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

2.   Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1   Academic and non-Academic Responsibilities of Academicians

Academic staff is primarily responsible for the academic activities of the institutions such as research and teaching (Fatma, 2003). The primary functions of teaching and research determine high satisfaction with the facilities which exist to enable them to carry out their tasks satisfactorily (Tietjen & Myers, 1998).

However, in the current universities' scenario, the academicians' workloads are increasing to encompass not only teaching and research but also fulfilling administrative demands. This study discusses on the academicians' workloads in the perspective of academic and non-academic responsibilities. These academic and non-academic responsibilities are to fulfil the physical and mental demands of variety university stakeholders (Russell, 2000 cited in Masuku & Muchemwa, 2015). Additionally, due to tremendous increase in the number of universities in Malaysia, the managements are facing competitive pressure from other universities, which prompt for the needs of academic staff involvement in the setting up of new goals to compete with other universities. The categorisation of universities in Malaysia into research, comprehensive and focused universities (Rozita et al., 2012) also gives impacts on the expectations of the academicians' tasks and performance at the respective universities. In this study, the academic responsibilities consist of academic workload, students' supervision, research/writing/publication, and consultation/expertise. Meanwhile, the non-academic responsibilities include administrative post, appointment in internal and external committees, involvement as external expertise, involvement in community services and involvement in professional development.

In line with the current workloads demand at the universities, the responsibilities of academicians at a public university are no longer confined to teaching tasks only, but also extended to the involvement with the students' development activities, administration, International Organization for Standardization (ISO) activities, and research and writing (Rohana et al., 2010). Criticisms were also made on the unfair allocation of workloads among academicians, with some academicians need to perform many academic and non-academic responsibilities, while some other academicians focus on academic responsibilities mainly teaching. At present, the expectations in most universities that academicians are to undertake teaching, research and administrative duties within specific subject area. Equally, they are also to participate in the decision-making at the management level, apart from enhancing learning environment through scholarly activities such as research. Academicians in Malaysia are expected to publish in journals, secure research grants, teach local and international students at undergraduate to postgraduate level, participate in research, and form the partnership between university and industry (Ahmad Zamri et al., 2011). The academicians today are with multi tasks not only to teach but also to conduct research, produce publications, provide consultation and perform administrative duties (Shah et al., 2018).

Inevitably, the academicians are loaded with not only academic responsibilities but also non-academic responsibilities including administrative posts and committee responsibilities to deliver to the management. Performing administrative duties, which often resulted in overwhelming amount of committee and administrative duties, can be time consuming and done at the expense of the instruction of students (Whitman et al., 1999). If the administration and management is accepted as part of the university lecturer's core functions, the situation would become more complex (Tietjen & Myers, 1998). This is coupled with the responsibility of academicians to realize performance accountability on the core components (learning process), essential components (curriculum/faculty/learning facilities/funding/research) and supporting components (management and leadership) that meet the stakeholders' expectation (Hanif, 2015). The performance accountability is closely related to career development criteria. The career development that measure performance of academicians also act as predictor for job stress among the academicians (Ahsan et al., 2009; Arma & Noor Hassim, 2016; Jamali et al., 2021).

With the long list of possible tasks demanded from the academicians, they are exposed to stressful situations due to insufficient time in completing the tasks. They are facing the dilemma to balance between their academic and non-academic responsibilities, which may lead to poor health

(mentally and physically), injuries, lack of concentration that leads to academic mistakes, absenteeism from work, unhappy workplace, dissatisfaction which all bring to discredit to the academic profession and the institution. Work-related stress can lead to significant economic implications namely employee dissatisfaction, lowered productivity and lowered emotional and physical health of the employees (Dua, 1994). Thus, in meeting the needs of today's challenges, the educators must work with balanced or stable emotions (Shah et al., 2018).

2.2   Job-Related Stress

Stress refers to "a process in which environmental events or forces threaten the well-being of an individual in the society" (Ofoegbu & Nwadiani, 2006: 66). Stress arises when the individuals' needs misfit their capacity and the conditions surrounding them (Smith & Bourke, 1992). Specifically, occupational stress is commonly defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the demands of the job exceed the capabilities, needs or resources of the worker (Mohajan, 2012). It can therefore be viewed as the strain or mental ill health associated with the nature of one's job.

In any profession with no exception to the academicians, occupational stress will emerge if no early precautions are made. Academicians are ranked as one of the top six of the most stressful jobs together with the police, ambulance drivers, call operators, correctional officers and social service officers (Johnson et al., 2005). A higher tendency for anxiety among staff in academic institutions is found to be related with the perception of high workplace responsibility (Jamali et al., 2021; Salmi et al., 2019). It was found that academics in the UK are at considerable risk of increasing psychological distress namely depression and anxiety, as well as associated symptoms including cognitive disturbance and sleeping difficulties (Kinman & Wray, 2020).

Five identified dimensions of stress in higher education include firstly the inadequate professional rewards, unclear expectation and insufficient professional recognition; secondly, time constraints due to general duties including paperwork, meetings, telephone and visitor interruptions; thirdly, departmental influence with regards to evaluation criteria; fourthly, pressure to keep professional identity at professional meetings and to maintain scholar reputation in securing research grant support; and, lastly, student interaction relating to students' evaluations, instruction and advising (Gmelch & Burns, 1994). Additionally, five types of stressors, which are work-related stressors; work role stressors; pay and work growth stressor; status of job, and work-family conflict were found to be significant to job stress among academic staff of UAE universities (Jawabri et al., 2019).

Assessing the academicians' workloads is important as unbearable and excessive workloads may lead to occupational or job-related stress among these academicians. Barkhuizen and Rothmann (2008) found that the academicians in South Africa have a high level of stress towards pay and benefits, overload (i.e the time constraint given to them in fulfilling the responsibilities), work relationships and work life balance (i.e. spend more hours during weekends to settle their job, thus takes lots of time that should be spent with their families and friends). A study investigating the interaction between job demands/resources in the academic environment and multiple dimensions of faculty well-being found that stress, mostly through work-family conflict is primarily connected to job demands in the academic environment (Mudrak et al., 2018). Other research reported that most of the academicians who experienced working more than normal working hours due to work overload led to excessive pressures where the job is placed as first priority that resulted in "unbalanced nature" of the workload (Forgasz & Leder, 2006; Timms et al., 2007). In addition, workload is the main factor positively significant related with stress, followed with time pressure, and work interruption (Zuraida & Nur Farahiyah, 2015). Similarly, high job stressors are found to be related to work overload, with a significant correlation between job stressors and work hours/day, work hours/week (Salwa & Fatma, 2017).

A study on occupational stress among academicians in a Malaysian research university found that 22.1% of academic staff was stressful due to career development, closely followed by research while teaching was ranked last as it has been a routine activity carried out by an academic staff (Arma & Noor Hassim, 2016). Similarly, it was also concluded that research and supervision highly attribute towards stress and burnout among academicians that correlate with career development as research and publications were desired for professional development and promotion in universities (Shaiful et al., 2017). In addition, almost every three respondents among Polish researchers suffered from some kind

of psychological problems including depression, a longer-period depressed mood, addictions and the needs for therapy (Wolniak & Szromek, 2020). The negative outcome of stress can be prevented or minimized if the symptoms of burnout are identified as early as possible before it affects the person, institution and other stakeholders.

In short, based on past research described earlier, this study posits the following hypotheses:

H₁: There is a significant positive relationship between academic responsibility and job-related stress among academicians.

H₂: There is a significant positive relationship between non-academic responsibility and job-related stress among academicians.

3. Research Framework

This research is guided by a research framework, which is developed based on empirical evidence on the academicians' responsibilities and the common key performance indicators of Malaysian academicians. The research framework as depicted in Figure 1 demonstrates how the research inquiry has been conducted.
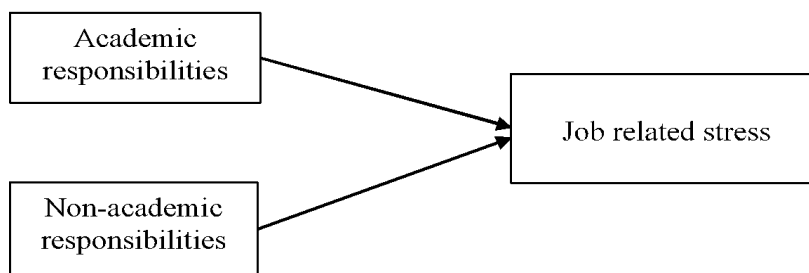
Fig. 1 Research framework

The research framework shows the relationship between academic and non-academic responsibilities, with job related stress. The academic and non-academic responsibilities are the independent variables while job related stress is the dependent variable. In this study, the academic responsibilities consist of academic workload, students' supervision, research/writing/publication, and consultation/expertise. Meanwhile, the non-academic responsibilities include administrative posts, appointment in internal and external committees, involvement as external expertise, involvement in community services and involvement in professional development.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative approach using survey method, in which self-administered questionnaires employed as the instrumentation in obtaining the primary data. This research conducted on the academicians at a public university in east coast region of Malaysia. The selection of academicians as respondents was done using cluster and systematic sampling. In this sampling technique, the target population is first divided into clusters and a random sample of is drawn. The sample then includes either all the elements or a sample of elements for each selected cluster (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Based on this sampling technique, the academicians from 10 different faculties were

involved in this survey. At an initial data collection stage, the researchers provided survey link using Google Form in getting the responses from the target group. The data collection procedure later extended to questionnaire distribution to encourage more responses. There were 391 questionnaire distributed in total.

4.2   Research Instrument

The structured self-administered questionnaire used in this study comprised of four sections. Section A is on the demographic and general job information; Section B is on academic responsibilities (29 items), Section C is on the non-academic responsibilities (16 items) and Section D deals with stress and work pressure (5 items). The respondents rated their opinions according to a 5-point Likert-type scale, where 1 represents "strongly disagree" up to 5 which means "strongly agree". The questionnaire items were adapted from Schulze (2006), Houston, Meyer and Paewai (2006), Chalmers (1998) and, Rahman and Avan (2016).

4.3   Data Analysis

A total of 120 (30.7%) usable responses received out of 391 questionnaires distributed. The data analysis has been conducted using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM SPSS Statistics 24). Statistical tests carried out for descriptive and multiple regressions in respect of the individual objective and hypothesis discussed earlier. The results are discussed in the subsequent section.

5.   Findings and Discussion

5.1   Respondents' profile

The respondents comprised of 36.7% male and 62.5% female, from various faculties in a public university in east coast region of Malaysia. The highest respondents were from Faculty of Business and Management (23.3%), followed by Faculty of Computer Science and Mathematics (15.8%) and Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management (15.0%). The majority of the respondents were married (83.3%) and aged between 31 – 40 years (44.2%). Almost half of the respondents (45.8%) were those of senior lecturer (DM52) level followed by the DM45 lecturers (40.8%). In terms of length of service, 49.2% of the respondents were with length of services more than 10 years in the selected public university. Most of the respondents still had traditional focus, which is on teaching and learning, indicated by 75% on the teaching and learning track followed by academic leadership (5.8%), research (1.7%) and 0.8% for experienced practitioners. Based on the demographic information, the respondents of the current study had appropriate job positions and considerable experience as academicians. Hence, their responses deemed reliable for the current study.

5.2   Internal reliability of the instrument

The results of Cronbach's Alpha to test the internal reliability of the instrument as shown in Table 1. The values between 0.829 and 0.985 indicate that all variables under each factor can be highly considered as measuring the same concept and valid for further analysis.

Table 1. Internal reliability

Variable	Factor	Number items	of Cronbach's alpha
Academic responsibilities	Academic Workload (AW)	15	0.864
	Students supervision (SS)	2	0.910
	Research/Writing/Publication (RWP)	5	0.829
	Consultation/Expertise (CE)	7	0.946
	Administrators (ADM)	7	0.985
Non-academic responsibilities	Internal and External Committees (IEC)	5	0.934
	Involvement in community services (CS)	4	0.951
Job-related stress	Stress and Work Pressure (STRESS)	5	0.887

5.3 Descriptive statistics

Table 2 shows the mean scores and standard deviations for all variables. The interpretation of mean scores level is done with reference to the level described by Landell (1997 as cited in Abdul Halim et al., 2017; and,; Hairuzila & Muhammad Ridhuan, 2018), as shown in Table 3.

Table 2. Mean and standard deviation

Variables	Mean	S.D	Min	Max
Academic responsibilities	3.170	.554	1.73	4.23
Non-academic responsibilities	2.424	1.104	.00*	4.79
Job-related stress	3.116	.947	1.00	5.00

Note: Min of 0.00 indicates "not relevant"

Table 3. Interpretation of mean score

Level of perception	Mean Score
Low	1.00 to 2.33
Medium	2.34 to 3.67
High	3.68 to 5.00

(Source: Landell, 1997 as cited in Abdul Halim et. al., 2017; and, Hairuzila and Muhammad Ridhuan, 2018)

Based on Table 2 and 3, the mean scores for all variables fall within the medium range. Specifically, the mean scores for academic responsibilities and non- academic responsibilities are 3.170 and 2.424 respectively, indicating that the respondents were of the perception that they had greater academic responsibilities as compared to their non-academic responsibilities. This is consistent with their job nature as academicians. For non- academic responsibilities, the standard deviation value of 1.104 (greater than 1.00) indicates inconsistencies in responses given, which reflects some

respondents who were not involved with non-academic responsibilities as defined in this study. This is supported by the min value of 0.00 indicating "not relevant" response to the questions gauging the non-academic responsibilities.

Likewise, in terms of job-related stress with the mean score of 3.116, the respondents perceived that they were moderately stressful with their job. However, the factors contributing to their job-related stress requires further analysis.

5.4   Multiple regressions

As the respondents indicated their involvement in academic and non- academic responsibilities and they were moderately stressful with their job, it is therefore important to determine as to which tasks that contributed most to their job-related stress. Regression analysis is suitable in analyzing such relationship, which requires for normality test on the data. In this study, normality is assessed by obtaining skewness and kurtosis values. Skewness evaluates the symmetrical distribution of a variable, while kurtosis measures the peak of the variable's distribution (Hair et al., 2014).

Table 4. Normality Test

Variables	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Academic responsibilities	-.407	.221	-.254	.438
Non-academic responsibilities	-.259	.221	-.356	.438
Job-related stress	-.198	.221	-.164	.438

A skewness value of not more than 3 and a kurtosis value of not more than 10 are acceptable in assessing normality (Chou & Bentler, 1995 and Kline, 1998 in Dayana, 2010). The results of normality test as shown in Table 4 indicate that the normality assumption is met.

In addition, multicollinearity assumption is also tested for. The cut-off points for determining the presence of multicollinearity is tolerance value of less than .10, or a VIF value of above 10 (Pallant, 2010). Results as depicted in Table 5 indicate no violation of multicollinearity assumption.

Table 5. Collinearity Statistics

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)		
1 Mean_AcadRes	.981	1.020
Mean_NonAcadRes	.981	1.020
a. Dependent Variable: Mean_STRESS		

In testing for the relationship between academic and non- academic responsibilities, with job related stress, multiple regressions test is conducted. The results are shown in Table 6 and 7.

Table 6. Summary of Regression Model[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.305[a]	.093	.077	.91006

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mean_NonAcadRes, Mean_AcadRes

b. Dependent Variable: Mean_STRESS

Table 7. Analysis of Varianceᵃ

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	9.918	2	4.959	5.988	.003ᵇ
1 Residual	96.901	117	.828		
Total	106.819	119			

a. Dependent Variable: Mean_STRESS

b. Predictors: (Constant), Mean_NonAcadRes, Mean_AcadRes

The results indicate that the academic and non-academic responsibilities are significant predictors of job-related stress, which explain 9.3% of the variation in job-related stress among the academicians. This is consistent with past research that concluded on the relationship between work overload and job-related stress (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Forgasz & Leder, 2006; Jamali et al., 2021; Salwa & Fatma, 2017; Timms et al., 2007; Zuraida & Nur Farahiyah, 2015).

Further examination for each variable (refer Table 8) shows that the regression coefficients for academic and non-academic responsibilities are -0.111 and 0.300 respectively. However, the academic responsibilities is not a significant predictor (sig= 0.214 > 0.05), whereas non-academic responsibilities is a significant predictor (sig= 0.001< 0.05), of job-related stress.

Table 8. Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig. Tolerance
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.095	.499		6.207	.000
1 Mean_AcadRes	-.190	.152	-.111	-1.249	.214
Mean_NonAcadRes	.257	.076	.300	3.370	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Mean_STRESS

Thus, the respondents indicated that they were not stressful due to their primary tasks (i.e. academic responsibilities) as academicians comprising of academic workload, students' supervision, research/writing/publication, and consultation/expertise. This may indicate that the respondents were enjoying their academic responsibilities as their routine activities. Furthermore, the respondents' profile indicated that majority of the respondents were focussing on the teaching and learning as their track for performance. This is consistent with a finding that work-related stressors negatively influenced job stress among academic staff of UAE universities (Jawabri et al., 2019). However, this finding contradicts namely with the conclusion that stress increases aligned with heavier research and teaching load (Arma & Noor Hassim, 2016) and a higher tendency for anxiety among staff in academic institutions is found to be related with the perception of high workplace responsibility (Salmi et al., 2019).

On the other hand, the respondents showed that their non-academic responsibilities (include administrative post, appointment in internal and external committees, involvement as external expertise, involvement in community services and involvement in professional development) contributed to their job-related stress. This might be due to the role or work overload as these responsibilities are additional to their existing academic responsibilities as academicians. This finding is supported by previous studies, which found that role or work overload has taken lots of time and led to excessive pressure to the academicians' work life balance. Ultimately, role or work overload are associated with the academicians' job stress (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Forgasz & Leder, 2006; Jamali et al., 2021; Salwa & Fatma, 2017; Shaiful et al., 2017; Timms et al., 2007; Zuraida & Nur Farahiyah, 2015).

This finding suggests that the management should have policy regarding the number of non-academic involvements that should be entrusted to each academician in each year or each academic

calendar. This could become a preventive or control measure to reduce job-related stress among the academicians.

These findings prompt for further analysis on the relationship between non-academic responsibilities and job-related stress. Based on Table 9 and 10 below, although significant, non-academic responsibilities explain only 8.1% of the variation in job-related stress among the academicians.

Table 9. Summary of Regression Model[b]
(Non-academic responsibilities)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.284[a]	.081	.073	.91222

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mean_NonAcadRes
b. Dependent Variable: Mean_STRESS

Table 10. Analysis of Variance[a]

(Non-academic responsibilities)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	8.625	1	8.625	10.365	.002[b]
1	Residual	98.194	118	.832		
	Total	106.819	119			

a. Dependent Variable: Mean_STRESS

b. Predictors: (Constant), Mean_NonAcadRes

Overall, the findings indicate that together, the academic and non-academic responsibilities explained 9.3% of the variation in job-related stress, but only the non-academic responsibilities were the significant predictors. Independently, the non-academic responsibilities explained 8.1 % of the variation in job-related stress. This shows that the respondents' job-related stress level was not due to their academic responsibilities and the respondents were experiencing low level of job-related stress due to non-academic responsibilities. As such, other factors that are not within the scope of this study may contribute to job-related stress among the respondents. The management should continuously observe and survey other factors in order to understand the problems and needs that could influence academicians' work commitment (Najeemdeen, 2018).

The University management should carefully evaluate the findings as the non-significant predictor of academic responsibilities may demonstrate that the respondents were highly committed academicians with positive mind to give the best in educating the students. Similarly, low contribution of non-academic responsibilities towards job-related stress may be due to the respondents were always ready to take the challenge for the given responsibilities in support of management's mission and vision towards the university's excellence. Equally, the findings may reflect the existence of positive working environment with strong teamwork and moral support among colleagues, which need to be sustained. Several aspects of work environment such as support from co-workers and management, recognition and achievement, high morale, flexible working conditions helped staff cope with stress (Gillespie et al., 2001). In addition, positive organization culture affects behaviours and attitude towards work commitment (Najeemdeen, 2018). When academics find a way to make their work more pleasant, their work commitment increases, which can influence their level of contributions to enhance the universities' performance (Alzyoud et al., 2015; Jamali et al., 2021).

6.   Conclusion

Academicians are significant players in any universities. As the managements of universities are facing competitive pressure from other universities coupled with the need to meet stakeholders' demand towards university's excellence, the tasks of academicians are also expanding not only academic but also non-academic responsibilities.

The academicians that are overloaded with academic and non-academic responsibilities may be facing job-related stress, leading to poor job quality and may negatively affect the university's image. However, this study shows interesting findings in which the job-related stress of the respondents is not affected by their academic responsibilities. The results also indicate that non-academic responsibilities give only minimal effect on the respondents' job-related stress. Thus, other factors that are not within the scope of this study may contribute to job-related stress among the respondents. Nevertheless, the results are consistent with previous study, which found that positive work environment and organization culture affects work commitment and assist staff to cope with stress. The results may well reflect the respondents' attitude who accept responsibilities in a positive manner and give their best commitment towards fulfilling the responsibilities entrusted to them. Further research examining the effect of work environment and organization culture on job-related stress may then be conducted to enhance these findings.

This study provides useful insights to the University's management that the University have employed very committed academicians whom always give the best support to the management and "enjoy" their tasks particularly on the academic scope as well as not feeling so much stressful with those tasks within non-academic scope. As such, the management should always ensure the recognition and rewards are fairly and adequately granted to them in compensation for their responsibilities.

The unique contribution of this study is to assist the management in exploring academicians' reaction to their present job demands (academic and non-academic responsibilities) and to offer empirical evidence on the effect of academic and non-academic responsibilities towards academicians' job-related stress. However, this study is confined to only one public university in the East coast region of Malaysia, which may not be generalised to those public universities in the West region of Malaysia with different working environment and lifestyle.

Future research may be conducted covering the academicians in other public universities in East coast region of Malaysia or may also be extended to those academicians of public universities in the West region of Malaysia, aiming at either to strengthen the existing findings or to provide the opposite findings in the similar research focus. In addition, further research may be conducted to include other possible factors influencing job related-stress to determine the most significant factor leading to job-related stress among the academicians.

6.   Acknowledgements

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