



Unethical Practices in Tanzania Public Universities: Does Workload Matter?

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ABSTRACT

Globally, the operations of universities rely on workload distribution. The extent to which the workload shouldered by employees is excessive or insufficient has implications for ethical behaviour and well-being in academic careers. This paper examined the effect of workload on unethical practices in Tanzanian public universities. Karasek's Job Demand-Control Model served as the foundation for the study. The quantitative research approach was utilized, and questionnaires were used for data gathering. The study adopted a correlational research design. The study gathered data from three public universities, aiming to reach 245 respondents who were sampled using stratified sampling and administered questionnaires. However, only a total of 209 respondents completed the questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. STATA MP version 17 was used for analysis to conduct the multivariate regression model. The finding revealed workload has a significant positive effect on unethical practices, indicating that both excessive and insufficient workloads contribute to unethical behaviour among academic staff. The study concluded that although workload in higher learning institutions is a lifeblood of curriculum implementation, it is not fairly distributed and thus affects both individual and organizational operations. Therefore, the study recommends that the universities should play a crucial role in developing and implementing internal workload policies that link with academic integrity to foster high-quality services in university operations.

Keywords: Ethics, Job Demand Control Model, Unethical Practices, Workload, Work Overload, Work Underload

I. INTRODUCTION

Workload in universities plays a crucial role in shaping the behavior and ethical standards of both academic staff and students. In that regard, it is considered to be an effective tool to ensure the work of the institutions is performed based on resources directed to each activity. This tool is used by both government and private institutions to smooth operations and foster accountability of individuals for the assigned task. The literature points out that workload covers almost every sector as well as a profession where education is among them (Gonzales et al., 2022). It is without a shadow of a doubt that a well-balanced workload is essential to maintaining high ethical standards in universities. This goes to show that if it is properly allocated, it may ensure that faculty or school and students are engaged, motivated, and capable of meeting their responsibilities without resorting to unethical practices (Mwita et al., 2023). Evidence shows the proper distribution of workload promotes goal achievement, effective utilization, and the well-being of academic staff (Jerrim & Sims, 2020; Mwita et al., 2024).

Anecdote evidence shows that both excessive and insufficient workload can be tantamount to unethical behaviour. According to Park (2017), when academic staff or students are overwhelmed with excessive workload, the pressure can lead to various forms of unethical behaviours. First, numerous lecturers may resort to cutting corners in their teaching or research. For instance, they might recycle old lecture materials without updating them or plagiarize research content to meet publication deadlines. Students, on the other hand, might resort to cheating, copying assignments, or using unauthorized aids during exams due to their inability to cope with the heavy academic demands. In line with that, Buchanan & Hvizdak (2009) are of the view that academic staff with too many responsibilities may neglect certain duties, such as providing timely feedback, adequately preparing for lectures, or mentoring students. This neglect can lead to a deterioration in the quality of education and, in extreme cases, to unethical practices such as falsifying grades to manage workload.



Contrariwise, when the workload is too low, it can also lead to unethical behaviour due to complacency or a lack of engagement (Voss & Gruber, 2006). Members of the academia's low workload might not be motivated to stay up-to-date with new developments in their field, leading to outdated or irrelevant teaching. This can result in a lower quality of education and a disservice to students. Academic staff with insufficient workload may misuse university resources or time for personal projects that do not benefit the institution or students. For example, a lecturer might focus on consulting work rather than their teaching or research duties, which can be seen as an unethical use of university resources.

An excessive or ineffective distribution of it can lead to dissatisfaction. It has been found that most teachers in the teaching industries, including primary and secondary education, are dissatisfied with their workload (Cooper, 2018; Jerrim & Sims, 2020). This is due to the unrealistic number of activities assigned with the pressures for deadlines to accomplish such activities and insufficient resource allocations to support activities and other work-stress-related matters.

In the case of universities, workload streamlines the way in which academic members perform in teaching, research, and consultancies (Mwita et al., 2023; Ujir et al., 2020). However, Danner et al. (2018) highlighted that the allocation of fair and equitable teaching-related duties to academic staff is a problem for worldwide universities because individual faculty members frequently believe that their workloads are more than normal while considering the assignment process in their department is unjust. This can directly affect the employee's morale and how they act to meet the demands of the workload. For this reason, adherence to ethics while executing their assigned duties may also be a challenge due to unethical practices among academic staff. Supportively, the challenge in workload distribution at all educational levels and unfair work distribution among academics may jeopardize the quality of teaching and research at the university level (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2009; Danner et al., 2018; Kanwal et al., 2023).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Workload is now a key component of decentralization and supports worker equity on a global scale. Thus, the degree of responsibility entrusted to an individual determines the efficacy of their work. For Tanzania universities, workload assignment to academic staff needs to comply with standards and guidelines for university education in Tanzania. The Commission reorganizes that academic staff workload in universities is quite enormous as the staff members are involved in various tasks (Tanzania Commission for Universities [TCU], 2019). While literature shows excessive and heavier workloads make academic staff experience burnout, stress, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, reduced personal accomplishment, anxiety/depression, and fatigue (Fernet et al., 2012; Jerrim & Sims, 2020; Mwita & Mrema, 2023; Smith, 2019). Furthermore, Fournier et al. (2011) and Hewett (2022) found heavy workload influences employees to always diverge from an ethical point of view to create conducive atmospheres that make them feel comfortable and out of stress. Consequently, the workload may result in malpractices that question the ethical behaviour of academic staff while executing their assigned work.

1.2 Research Objective

- (i) To examine the effect of work overload (excessive) on unethical practices
- (ii) To examine the effect of work underload practice (insufficient) on unethical practices

1.3 Research Hypotheses

H₁: Work overload significantly influences unethical practices

H₂: Work underload significantly influences unethical practices

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 The Job Demand-Control Model

The Job Demand-Control (JDC) model, developed by Robert Karasek in 1979, is a widely recognized framework used to understand how job demands and control over work result in academic staff or employee well-being, stress levels, and productivity. In this context, the model underpins this piece of work as it describes how job characteristics affect the well-being of employees and is designed to predict negative outcomes in the workplace (Kain & Jex, 2010). The model displays job demands such as heavy workloads, tight deadlines, higher targets, role ambiguity, and work pleasure that, if not controlled, may affect employees' well-being. The model delves into two aspects: job demand and job control. The former (activities/job roles assigned to individuals) stress at work is caused by the high demand for a job. In a nutshell, job demand covers the physical, psychological, and emotional requirements of a job, such as workload, time pressures, and the complexity of tasks. On the other hand, decision latitude or job control (how



individuals control their work and take action over them), where stress increases for individuals when they fail to have control over their activities. This implies that academic staff reduces stress from work, anxiety, depression, and all pressure from work caused by the heavy workload such as teaching (preparing lectures, marking assignments, tests, and examinations), research, and publication (submission of book chapters, manuscripts), consultancy, and other administrative functions. They might find a simple path (control mechanism) including manipulation of normal rules and procedures established. Hence, they violate the integrity and ethical principles to ensure the intended results are met and to have control over the high-demand job at that moment. Kain and Jex (2010) claim when the assigned work is in high demand and employees have little or no control, it attracts high job strain, while if there is high job demand that matches with decision latitude, the results are active, which means low stress and high job satisfaction.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Work Overload and Unethical Practices

The literature points out that there are mixed feelings when it comes to the work assigned to employees. The idea of the way an employee feels comfortable when they are assigned a huge amount of work may not be perfect for all employees. Researchers have shown high levels of workload among employees attract them to be creative at the same time to find any way possible to attain the intended results, at this point adherence to the professional code of ethics among employees remains moderate (Dadkhah-Tehrani & Adib-Hajbaghery, 2022). On the other hand, Abbasi, (2015); and Yulihardi et al. (2024) showed there is a link between work stress and heavy workload among employees which also affects employees' satisfaction with healthcare work. Similarly, Calais, (1985); Zahednezhad *et al.*, (2021) and Mwilongo *et al.*, (2024) point heavy workload has adversely affected the mental health of staff and patients/customers as the service provider may intend to reduce stress to receivers to find relief from workload burden, hence they may commit unethical practices. This shed a view that a higher workload may compromise ethical standards and influence inappropriate action. This view is supported by Cleaton-Jones, (2012) when claiming the increased workload is a serious challenge and has to be tackled at the workplace.

H₁: Work overload significantly influences unethical practices

2.2.2 Work Underload and Unethical Practices

Employees who are assigned heavy tasks consider employees with low workloads to be lazy. However, the literature points such kind of employees are in a position to perform better compared to those with heavier workloads with deadlines (Utari, *et al.*, 2022). Despite the lower pressure, they can effectively utilize their workload. However, this doesn't guarantee them to act more ethically when executing duties. Westgate, (2020) highlighted that due to the fact they experience boredom when they accomplish the assigned task, may easily engage in unofficial/unacceptable practices such as malpractices. Aldino and Franksiska, (2021) show people who don't have a heavy workload often feel undervalued and disregarded at work, which can lead to job stress. The reason behind work underload in an academic setting may be influenced by academic rank, which tends to differentiate workload distribution among academics. Furthermore, the ability of academic members determines the workload to be assigned. Furthermore, Schunk, (2023) added people who have a high ability to perform are always assigned a wide range of activities to perform while people who are unable to perform are assigned few responsibilities.

H₂: Work underload significantly influences unethical practices

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study embedded a quantitative research approach while involving a correlational research design to assess the relationship between workload level (excessive or insufficient) assigned to academic staff and the likelihood of the occurrence of unethical practices in Tanzania public universities. Correlation research design is effective for identifying patterns of relationships/associations between variables as it involves collecting data from the target population at a single point in time to ensure the robustness of the results (Mwita, 2022b).

3.2 Study Population

The participants for this study were selected from academic staff at various public universities in Tanzania. The target population included academic members with different academic ranks and education qualifications who were directly involved in teaching and research activities. To be eligible for inclusion in the study, participants had to meet the following criteria: must be currently employed as academic staff at a Tanzanian public university, must be actively involved in teaching and research responsibilities, and must have at least one year of experience in their current role to



ensure familiarity with the workload and academic expectations. Meanwhile, participants were excluded from the study if they; were on any kind of leave during the data collection period, and did not have direct teaching or research responsibilities, such as purely administrative staff.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

A stratified random sampling method was employed to ensure representation from different academic ranks and faculties. This approach aimed to capture a diverse range of experiences and perspectives related to workload and unethical practices. The sample size was determined using power analysis to ensure sufficient statistical power to detect meaningful relationships between the variables (Mwita, 2022a). The final sample included 209 participants, which is deemed adequate based on the calculated power analysis.

3.4 Data Collection Tools and Analysis

Data for the study were gathered using a well-structured questionnaire by strictly ensuring the confidentiality of the respondents during the process of filling them. Only 209, out of 245 questionnaires that were administered to respondents using the drop-and-pick approach were completed and taken into account for analysis. The data gathered was then analyzed using the multivariate linear regression model to quantify the effect of the workload level of academic staff on the incidence of unethical practices. After analysis results were presented using descriptive and inferential statistics.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The study involved a total of 209 respondents with consideration of their unique demographic characteristics. Out of 209 respondents, 124(59.33) were males and 85(40.67) were females. On the other hand, 14(6.7) respondents had ages ranging from 20-24, while 62(29.67) respondents had ages ranging from 25-29, the ranging age from 30-34 had 44(21.05) respondents, the age from 35-39 had 30(14.35) respondents, and 58(27.75) respondents were above 39 while 1(0.48) is a missing value. On the other hand, the Education level of respondents was considered whereby 46(22.01) respondents hold a bachelor's degree, while 92(44.02) respondents hold a master's degree, 59(28.23) hold a doctoral degree, and 12(5.74) respondents hold a postdoctoral degree. Additionally, the marital status of respondents demonstrates that 81(38.21) of respondents were single, while 124(59.33) respondents were married. Lastly, the year of experience shows 30(14.35) respondents had 0-4 years of experience, 69(33.01) respondents ranged from 5-9 years, 61(29.19) ranged from 10-14 years, and 46(22.01) were above 14 years while 3(1.44) is a missing value. Table 1 below provides a summary of demographic characteristics.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics	Category	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	124 (59.33)
	Female	85 (40.67)
Age-group	20-24	14 (6.7)
	25-29	62 (29.67)
	30-34	44 (21.05)
	35-39	30 (14.35)
	Above 39	58 (27.75)
	Missing value	1 (0.48)
Education level	Bachelor's degree	46 (22.01)
	Master's degree	92 (44.02)
	Doctoral degree	59 (28.23)
	Postdoctoral degree	12 (5.74)
Marital status	Single	81 (38.21)
	Married	124 (59.33)
	Missing value	4 (1.91)
Years of working experience	0-4 years	30 (14.35)
	5-9 years	69 (33.01)
	10-14 years	61 (29.19)
	15 and above	46 (22.01)
	Missing value	3 (1.44)
Total		209



4.2 Descriptive Results

Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the mean and standard deviation of each variable involved in the study. The results are presented below.

4.2.1 Work Overload

The results from Table 2 below provide a weighted mean and standard deviation score on work overload statements. It shows the weighted mean score was 3.89 which is close to 4 in the 5-point Likert scale, implies on average respondents agreed with the constructed statement on work overload. This is to say most respondents agree that work overload is a serious issue that impacts their workplace behavior and ethics. The weighted standard deviation was 1.170 which implies there is a moderate level of variation in responses. This is to say while others agree with the constructed statements on work overload and their effects on unethical behavior, others might be neutral or disagree with it.

Table 2

Descriptive Results for Work Overload

Statements	Mean	S.D
WOL1: I believe that the pressure from overwork can contribute to academic staff engaging in unethical practices	3.94	1.156
WOL2: Overwork and unrealistic workload expectations negatively impact my ability to maintain ethical standards	3.85	1.298
WOL3: I sometimes feel forced to compromise my ethical principles due to the demands of my workload	3.92	1.228
WOL4: Overwork leads to exhaustion, which increases the likelihood of engaging in unethical practices	4.03	1.199
WOL5: I often experience high levels of stress and burnout due to my workload, and I find it difficult to adhere to or maintain high ethical standards in teaching, research, and consultancy	3.73	.968
Weighted mean & standard deviation	3.89	1.170

4.2.2 Work Underload

The results in Table 3 indicate the weighted score for work underload in mean score was 2.91 which is close to 3 which represents neutral on the 5-point Likert scale. This implies on average respondents neither strongly disagree nor strongly agree with the constructed statement related to work underload. On the other hand, the weighted standard deviation was 1.303 which implies there is a moderate to high level of response variation. This is to say while other respondents strongly agree/disagree, others are more neutral about the effects of work underload towards unethical practices. This might be due to work pace demand, and differences in ranks and job roles between each member (Mwilongo et al., 2024).

Table 3

Descriptive Results for Work Underload

Statements	Mean	S.D
WUL1: I believe that underwork can contribute to academic staff engaging in unethical practices out of boredom or frustration	3.08	1.257
WUL2: Underwork can lead to a lack of fulfillment, which may increase the likelihood of academic staff engaging in unethical practices	3.06	1.256
WUL3: I sometimes feel compelled to engage in unethical practices due to a lack of challenging or meaningful work	2.63	1.356
WUL4: I sometimes engage in unethical practices to fill the time when faced with underwork	2.47	1.319
WUL5: I lack sufficient time and resources to meet my job requirements, which puts me in a position where I may compromise my ethical standards.	2.86	1.314
WUL6: The workload in my academic position is overwhelming, making it challenging for me to meet my responsibilities effectively	2.92	1.287
WUL7: Academic staff at my institution lack access to resources and support to handle their workload effectively	3.18	1.231
WUL8: The workload distribution among academic staff is unfair and inequitable, to the extent that it can adversely affect ethical observation in discharging duties.	3.05	1.324
WUL9: Workload pressures sometimes tempt one to compromise ethical standards to meet job demands	2.98	1.385
Weighted mean & standard deviation	2.91	1.303

4.3 Inferential Statistics

This section presents the findings of the study, focusing on the relationships between workload (overload and underload) and unethical practices (plagiarism, fabrication, and falsification) among academic staff in Tanzanian public universities. The analysis includes Cronbach's alpha values for internal consistency, multivariate analysis of variance



(MANOVA) results, and multivariate linear regression models. The findings provide a comprehensive overview of how varying levels of workload impact the prevalence of unethical behaviors in an academic setting.

4.3.1 Internal Consistency Test

Cronbach's alpha is a widely used statistic to measure the internal consistency or reliability of a set of scale or test items. Higher values indicate greater internal consistency of the items in the scale. A commonly accepted threshold is that a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 or above indicates acceptable reliability (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Table 4

Cronbach Alpha Values for the Variables

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items
Work overload	.822	5
Work underload	.932	9
Unethical Practices	.795	3

A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.822 for the work overload variable indicates good internal consistency among the five items used to measure this construct. This suggests that the items are well-correlated and reliably measure the concept of over workload. Values between 0.80 and 0.89 are typically considered good which supports the reliability of this scale (Boß *et al.*, 2016).

The work underload variable has a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.932, which signifies excellent internal consistency. This high alpha value indicates that the nine items used to measure work underload are highly correlated and provide a reliable measurement of the construct. For this case, values above 0.90 are considered excellent (George & Mallery, 2016).

For the unethical practice variable, Cronbach's alpha value is 0.795, indicating acceptable internal consistency among the three items used to measure unethical practices (fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism). This value falls within the range of acceptable reliability, suggesting that the items are reasonably correlated and effectively measure the intended construct (Mackenzie *et al.*, 2011).

4.3.2 Multivariate Linear Regression Model

The Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) tests whether there are any statistically significant differences between the means of multiple dependent variables (D1, D2, D3) across levels of the independent variables (Work Over Load [WOL] and Work Under Load [WUL]). In this analysis, the dependent variables are plagiarism (D1), fabrication (D2), and falsification (D3), and the independent variables are WOL) and WUL. Wilks' lambda, Lawley-Hotelling trace, Pillai's trace, and Roy's largest root tests provide a slightly different way of testing the multivariate effect, but all are generally consistent in construal. Table 2 shows the Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) generated from the STATA 17 whereby the statistical tests consider two workload conditions including overload (excessive) and underload (insufficient).

Table 5

Multivariate Analysis of Variance

Source	Statistic	Df	F(df1, df2) =		F	Prob>F
Model	W 0.8431	2	6.0	408.0	6.06	0.0000 e
	P 0.1615		6.0	410.0	6.00	0.0000 a
	L 0.1806		6.0	406.0	6.11	0.0000 a
	R 0.1419		3.0	205.0	9.70	0.0000 u
Residual	206					
WOL	W 0.9464	1	3.0	204.0	3.85	0.0104 e
	P 0.0536		3.0	204.0	3.85	0.0104 e
	L 0.0566		3.0	204.0	3.85	0.0104 e
	R 0.0566		3.0	204.0	3.85	0.0104 e
WUL	W 0.8876	1	3.0	204.0	8.61	0.0000 e
	P 0.1124		3.0	204.0	8.61	0.0000 e
	L 0.1266		3.0	204.0	8.61	0.0000 e
	R 0.1266		3.0	204.0	8.61	0.0000 e
Residual	206					
Total	208					

e = exact, a = approximate, u = upper bound on F



The overall MANOVA test shows significant multivariate effects for the model:

Results for Wilks' Lambda ($W: 0.8431, F(6, 408) = 6.06, p < 0.0001$), Pillai's Trace ($P: 0.1615, F(6, 410) = 6.00, p < 0.0001$), Lawley-Hotelling Trace ($L: 0.1806, F(6, 406) = 6.11, p < 0.0001$) and Roy's Largest Root ($R: 0.1419, F(3, 205) = 9.70, p < 0.0001$) indicate that there are significant differences in the combined dependent variables (D1, D2, D3) based on the levels of the independent variables (WOL and WUL). Since the p -values are less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis, which states that the population means of the dependent variables are equal across the independent variable levels.

Besides, the results for work overload indicate that this variable significantly affects the combined dependent variables. The p -values for all statistics are less than 0.05, leading us to reject the null hypothesis for work overload. This suggests that work overload significantly impacts the levels of fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism. Meanwhile, the results for work underload also indicate a significant effect on the dependent variables. With p -values less than 0.001 for all test statistics, we reject the null hypothesis for work underload. This suggests that work underload significantly affects fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism.

After performing a (MANOVA) to assess the overall effect of workload on unethical practices, it is essential to understand the specific relationships between the independent variables (work overload and work underload) and each of the dependent variables (fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism). To achieve this, researchers fit a multivariate linear regression model for each dependent variable. The multivariate linear regression model provides detailed insights into how changes in workload variables predict each unethical practice. The coefficients of the model will indicate the direction and magnitude of the relationship between workload factors and unethical behaviors.

Table 6 below presents the coefficients from the multivariate linear regression analysis, showing the relationship between the independent variables (work overload and work underload) and each of the dependent variables (fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism).

Table 6

Multivariate Linear Regression Model

Equation	Obs	Parms	RMSE	F	P	
Plagiarism	209	3	0.1079	12.45887	0.0000	
Fabrication	209	3	0.1106	12.81439	0.0000	
Falsification	209	3	0.0598	6.550774	0.0017	
UP	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Plagiarism						
WOL	-.0977754	.1134937	-0.86	0.030	-.3215336	.1259828
WUL	.3961752	.0801322	4.94	0.000	.2381908	.5541597
_cons	2.833428	.4996942	5.67	0.000	1.848257	3.818598
Fabrication						
WOL	-.2404175	.1156874	-2.08	0.039	-.4685006	-.0123345
WUL	.3827755	.081681	4.69	0.000	.2217376	.5438135
_cons	3.518957	.5093524	6.91	0.000	2.514745	4.523169
Falsification						
WOL	-.54803	.2189568	-2.50	0.013	-.9797136	-.1163465
WUL	.4175298	.1545944	2.70	0.007	.1127398	.7223199
_cons	4.907567	.9640306	5.09	0.000	3.006936	6.808199

Source: Research data generated by STATA 17

4.3.3 Model Fit

The results of the multivariate linear regression models indicate that both WOL and WUL significantly influence the dependent variables of plagiarism, fabrication, and falsification.

The plagiarism model shows that the overall model is statistically significant with an F-value of 12.45887 ($df = 3, 205, p < 0.0001$). This indicates that the independent variables (WOL and WUL) significantly predict the dependent variable (plagiarism). The Root Mean Square Error (RMSE) for this model is 0.1079, which represents the standard deviation of the residuals or prediction errors. This value suggests that the model's predictions are relatively close to the actual observed values, indicating a good fit (Black & Babin, 2019).

The fabrication model also shows statistical significance, with an F-value of 12.81439 ($df = 3, 205, p < 0.0001$). This result suggests that the independent variables significantly predict fabrication. The RMSE for this model is 0.1106, indicating the standard deviation of the residuals or prediction errors. This value reflects the model's accuracy in predicting fabrication, with lower RMSE values generally indicating a better fit (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2021).



For the falsification model, the F-value is 6.550774 ($df = 3, 205, p = 0.0017$), which demonstrates that the overall model significantly predicts falsification. The RMSE for this model is 0.0598, reflecting the standard deviation of the residuals or prediction errors. This relatively low RMSE indicates that the model provides a reasonably accurate prediction of falsification, confirming the model's effectiveness in capturing the relationship between the independent and dependent variables (Field, 2024).

4.3.4 Regression Coefficients

The regression coefficients provide insights into the specific impact of WOL and WUL on plagiarism, fabrication, and falsification.

The coefficient for WOL is -0.0978 with a p-value of 0.030, indicating that higher levels of overwork are associated with a slight decrease in plagiarism. Although statistically significant, this effect is relatively weak. In contrast, the coefficient for work WUL is 0.3962 with a p-value of 0.000, indicating a significant positive effect. This suggests that higher levels of work underload are strongly associated with increased plagiarism. The intercept (`_cons`) is 2.8334, indicating the baseline level of plagiarism when both WOL and WUL are zero (Kish-Gephart et al., 2010).

For fabrication, the coefficient for WOL is -0.2404 with a p-value of 0.039. This indicates that higher work overload is significantly associated with a decrease in fabrication. On the other hand, the coefficient for WUL is 0.3828 with a p-value of 0.000, showing a significant positive effect. Higher work underload levels are associated with increased fabrication. The intercept (`_cons`) is 3.5190, indicating the baseline level of fabrication when both WOL and WUL are zero (Kish-Gephart et al., 2010).

The coefficient for WOL in the falsification model is -0.5480 with a p-value of 0.013, indicating that higher work overload significantly reduces falsification. The coefficient for WUL is 0.4175 with a p-value of 0.007, showing a significant positive effect. This means that higher work underload is associated with increased falsification. The intercept (`_cons`) is 4.9076, indicating the baseline level of falsification when both WOL and WUL are zero (Osborne, 2017).

4.4 Discussions

The study results indicate that work overload has a significant negative effect on fabrication and falsification and a weak negative effect on plagiarism. Specifically, higher levels of overwork are associated with decreased instances of fabrication and falsification. This may be because overburdened staff are too occupied with their responsibilities to engage in these activities, or they may perceive the risks and consequences as too high (De Clercq et al., 2019). Literature showed that work overload could also lead to burnout, which is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Burnout might reduce the inclination to engage in time-consuming unethical practices such as fabrication and falsification (Brady et al., 2020; Rumschlag, 2017). However, the weak effect on plagiarism might be due to the relatively lower effort required to commit plagiarism compared to fabrication or falsification. In disparity, work underload shows a significant positive effect on all three unethical practices: plagiarism, fabrication, and falsification. This depicts higher levels of underwork are strongly associated with increased instances of these behaviors. This finding aligns with the literature suggesting that insufficient workload may lead to boredom and a lack of engagement, which can foster unethical behavior as individuals seek ways to fill their time or achieve undeserved recognition (Clemons, 2020; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2013; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2013; and Westgate & Wilson, 2018). The job demand-control model reflects that when there is low job demand then people may experience "boredom proneness" which suggests that individuals with a low workload may experience higher levels of boredom, which is associated with increased risk-taking and unethical behaviors when demonstrating an inability to have total behavior control (Dhal et al., 2022; Verwaeren & Nijstad, 2022). Moreover, work underload can lead to decreased job satisfaction and organizational commitment, further increasing the propensity for unethical conduct as a form of retaliation or as a means to seek excitement (Kish-Gephart et al., 2010). On the other hand, this is in line with the broader literature on the relationship between workload and unethical behavior. For instance, studies in organizational psychology have shown that both excessive and insufficient workload can lead to negative outcomes, although through different mechanisms (Grobelna, 2021). Work overload can lead to stress and burnout, reducing the likelihood of engaging in complex unethical behaviors due to lack of energy and motivation. Conversely, work underload can lead to boredom and a lack of engagement, increasing the likelihood of unethical behaviors as individuals seek to alleviate their boredom or artificially inflate their performance metrics.



V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

To guarantee that universities are providing high-quality education and high-quality research that observes ethical values, the workload distribution should be considered a major priority in ensuring that the activities these institutions perform fulfill national and international standards. Ensuring a balanced, equitable, and just distribution of workloads is crucial in mitigating misconduct that may result from excessive or insufficient workload, which could jeopardize university operations. Universities should ensure adequate training and support for academic staff to help mitigate the effects of workload imbalances. Training programs focused on time management, stress reduction, and ethical standards so that staff can possess the skills needed to handle their responsibilities effectively and ethically.

5.2 Recommendations

There is a need to develop and implement internal workload policies that link with academic integrity. These policies should include mechanisms for detecting and addressing unethical practices, as well as support systems for staff who may be struggling with workload-related issues.

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