

# **Moderating Effect of Social Support on the Relationship between Workload and Disengagement among the Academicians**

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## **Abstract**

*The current study examines the influence of workload on disengagement among academician. In addition, the researcher explores the moderating effect of social support on the association between the workload and disengagement. The researcher collected data through an adapted questionnaire from 159 academicians of universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. Regression analysis revealed workload has a positive association with disengagement. Furthermore, the results suggest that academician's disengagement might be minimized by making reasonable demands in the working environment. Moreover, results suggested that social support moderates the relationship between workload and disengagement. From the current study, it has been concluded that the level of disengagement will decrease as the level of resources increases. The findings are significant for the academicians, researchers, and policy makers.*

**Keywords:** Workload; Disengagement; Social Support; Academicians

## **Introduction**

Teaching profession is considered one of the responsibilities of the society. Teachers are the nation builders. Every nation grows out of the skill and knowledge, where teachers help in installing in the youth. Higher education plays an important role in the uplifting of political standards and socio-economic of the society. In the recent changes in the Higher education sector of Pakistan, increases the workload on the teachers. Due to these changes, the problems are created that affect both the individual and organizational life and productivity of the academicians. From the previous studies, it has been concluded that teaching profession is one of the low-stress profession among others. Similarly, it was thought that academicians have no workload and having many opportunities in life. Moreover, the academicians were busy in administrative works like meeting with parents, family problems and political problems (Khan, Yusoff, & Khan, 2014). Therefore, the academicians in the recent

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changes is considered as a very stressful, less productive and not committed in the job due to higher demands and less resources(Khan, Rasli, Yusoff, & Ahmad, 2015).

The current study has reviewed different ideas and association of demands and burnout. According to Rothmann and Joubert (2007)academicians are sensitive about the burnout in this recent society. From few decades, numerous studies have been examined burnout (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2000; Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004; Kahill, 1988a, 1988b; Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Perlman & Hartman, 1982). Stress is the first stage of burnout. Burnout is related with motivation, turnover, commitment, psychosomatic diseases, job satisfaction, absenteeism, performance and organizational citizen behavior (Cropanzano, Rupp, & Byrne, 2003; W. B. Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000).

Burnout is occurring in every profession like health and education(Bakker., Van Der Zee, Lewig, & Dollard, 2006; Karasek & Theorell, 1990;Khan et al., 2014). Moreover, in education, several studies identified the direct relationships with burnout, but few of studies have conducted in the academicians of the universities. Therefore, the main themes of the current study have to examine the factors affecting burnout among academicians in the universities of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (KP) Pakistan. The results of the current study allow the researcher the concepts of stress and burnout both individual and organizational examined in different situations, where different measurement tools has been adopted or adapted(Demerouti., Bakker, Vardakou, & Kantas, 2003; Khan., Rasli, Khan, Yasir, & Malik, 2014).In addition, the current study has to investigate the moderating effect of social support on the relationship between workload and disengagement among the academicians of universities in KP Pakistan. The study was cross-sectional in nature. For the current study, the researcher used Job Demand Resources model.

### **Research Objectives**

On the bases of above discussion, the following research objectives have been formulated.

1. To investigate the relationship between workload and disengagement among the academicians of universities in KP Pakistan.
2. To examine the effect of workload and disengagement among the academicians of universities in KP Pakistan.
3. To determine the moderating effect of social support on the relationship between workload and disengagement among the academicians of universities in KP Pakistan.

### Literature Review

From last few decades, burnout has been examined by several researchers like Freudenberg (1974), Maslach(1981), Schaufeli, Leiter and Maslach (2009), Yusoff and Khan, (2013) and Bakker, Croon and Bressers(2005). According to Tsigilis(2004) that Freudenberg (1980) examined burnout as a “state of fatigue or frustration brought about by devotion to a cause, the way of life, or relationship that failed to produce the expected reward” p. 666-667. Similarly, Burnout is defined as “to fail, to wear out, or become exhausted by excessive demands on energy, strength or resources”(Freudenberg, 1974) p. 159.

Burnout was first time introduced in 1970s(Khan., Khan, Naz, & Rasli, 2016). Burnout was defined as a multidimensional consist of emotional exhaustion, disengagement and personal accomplishment(Bakker. & Demerouti, 2016). Similarly, reduction in the employee performance, weariness and disinterestedness is called burnout. Burnout occurs where demands increase from the level of employees within the organization(Maslach, 2003; Maslach & Jackson., 1981; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001).

Moreover, burnout is defined “as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion Disengagement and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with people in some capacity” (Maslach., Jackson., & Leiter., 1996) p.4. From the recent studies, conducted on burnout indicated that stress increases the level of burnout but stress is not the main factor of burnout(Burisch, 2006; Khan et al., 2015). It is the instability between the demands and resources. Burnout is the part of strain, where it decreases the level of performance and commitment while increases the level of absenteeism, turnover and dissatisfaction level among the academicians(Maslach et al., 2001; Schwab, Maslach, & Jackson, 1993).

Job demands as defined by Sargent and Terry, (1998) “is the amount of work required from the employee, the extent to which he or she has to work under time pressure, and the degree to which the employee is expected to complete conflicting job demands” (p. 219). From literature, it has been identified that stressors are directly correlated with Burnout (Bakker, Demerouti., & Verbeke., 2004; Chen & Chen, 2012; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001; Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli. & Taris, 2014). Job demand like workload also contributed to burnout, especially disengagement. The workload is the dimension of job demands(Bakker, Demerouti, Boer, & Schaufeli, 2003; Bakker et al., 2004; Mastenbroek., Jaarsma., Scherpbier., Beukelen., & Demerouti.,

2012). Burnout occurs as the level of demands exceed from employees control. In the current scenario, the main problem is overload in the life, when there is lack or misuse of resources (Pines & Maslach, 1978).

According to Golden (2008), workload defined as “hours per day, week, year or to work beyond, one’s physical and mental capacity” p.223. in the same way, workload increases stress, strain and burnout (Embriaco et al., 2007; Lindholm, 2006). Workload is defined as the work done in the specific time (Qureshi et al., 2013; Qureshi et al., 2012). Workload will be identified in the current study due to productivity, development both individually and professionally. According to studies, Bakker *et al.*, (2006), Demerouti, *et al.*, (2000), Blue, (2003), Miller, Ellis, Zook and Lyles, (1990) concluded that workload have positive relationship with burnout (Bakker. *et al.*, 2006; Blau, 2003; Demerouti et al., 2000; Elloy, Terpening, & Kohls, 2001; Miller, Ellis, Zook, & Lyles, 1990).

In the current study, the most important variable is job resources. Proper utilization of resources within the organization decreases the level of demands and helping in the achievement of the organizational objectives (Hobfoll, 1989). Job resources is defined as the psychological, physical, both social and organizational views of the task, which decrease the level of demands and developed both the individual and organizational growth (Chen & Chen, 2012; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Job resources like support administrative, performance feedback, social support, organizational or and job control are important for the organizational growth (Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2003; Demerouti et al., 2001). In the same way, there is negative relationship found among resources and demands. Moreover, it explains that as the level of job resources increases the level of demand will be decreased. Furthermore, few studies suggested that resources are negatively correlated with disengagement (Bakker, Demerouti, & Euwema, 2005; Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2003; Bakker et al., 2004; Demerouti et al., 2001; Hakanen et al., 2006). From earlier studies, it has been indicated that burnout occurs not only from workload but also due to lack of social support from both colleague and coworker.

Social support decreases the effect of stressors within the elimination of the physical environment (Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Maslach & Goldberg, 1998; Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998; Yasir, Batool, Khan, Imran, & Qureshi, 2016). Lack of social support has a direct relationship with emotional exhaustion and disengagement (Bakker et al., 2004; Janssen., Peeters., Jonge., Houkes., & Tummers., 2004).

### **Research Hypotheses**

Based on literature review, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H<sub>1</sub>: Workload has a positive relationship with disengagement.

H<sub>2</sub>: Social support moderates the relationship between workload and disengagement.

### Research Methodology

For the current study, the data were collected from the selected respondent to answer the questions. In the study, the questionnaire has been distributed among 234 academicians from different KP universities in Pakistan. After distribution 159 questionnaire were used for further data analysis. The response rate was 68%.

### Instruments

In the current study different scale has been used to determine the variables. The first dependent variable disengagement was measured by 08 items of Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI (Demerouti., Mostert, & Bakker, 2010) and reported the reliability values 0.82 (Demerouti et al., 2001; Demerouti. et al., 2003).

On the other side the independent variable workload was evaluated through adapted Twelve items, five items of Gmelch and Miskin, (1993), four items of Fimian and Fastenau (1990) including three items of Boyd *et.al.*, (2011), reported Cronbach's alpha values are 0.62, 0.80 and 0.75 (Boyd et al., 2011; Fimian & Fastenau, 1990; McAfee, 2008). In the same way, social support was examined by six items having reliability value of 0.90 (Iverson, Olekalns, & Erwin, 1998).

### Preliminary Analysis

For answering the research objectives, a preliminary analysis was carried out. As well as, for final finding in the basic social science standard, different multivariate and normality test were calculated to check out the suitability of the data which ensure that the following assumption of multivariate analysis was not violated.

Table 1 shows the normality values of skewness and kurtosis, which is within of the acceptable range of  $\pm 2$  and confirm the normality of the data.

Table 1: Preliminary Analyses

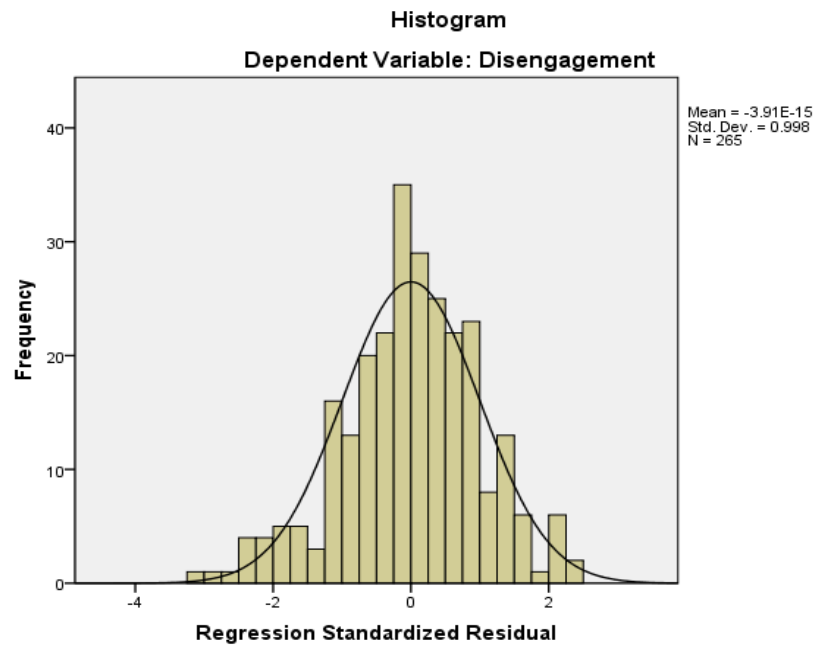
Variables	N	Skewness		Kurtosis		Tolerance	VIF
		Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error		
Workload	159	-0.050	0.151	-1.052	0.295	0.542	1.333
Disengagement	159	-0.262	0.151	-0.366	0.295	0.543	1.321
Social Support	159	0.250	0.151	-1.028	0.295	0.554	1.000

For further analysis of the Figures 1, shows that the regression standard residual histogram of workload and Disengagement is symmetrical bell-shaped curve, while the Figures 2, shows the normal probability plot of regression standardized residual of workload

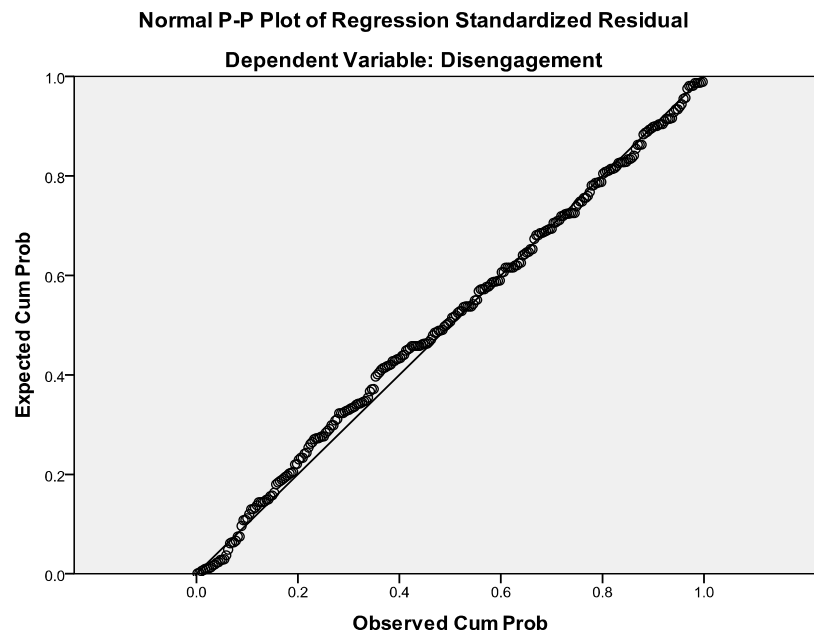
and Disengagement indicated a straight line, where it is determined that no variation has been found in the data.

In the study, multicollinearity test was also evaluated for check the preliminary analysis of the data and the table 1 shows that no violation in the data has been found for further analysis of the data.

**Figure 1: Regression Standardized Residual Histogram of WL, DIS and SS**



**Figure 2: Normal Probability Plot of Regression Standardized Residual of WL, DIS and SS**



### Reliability

After preliminary analysis the reliability of the questionnaire has been checked that whether the questionnaire can be used for further data collection and analyses of the data. Table 2, shows Cronbach's Alpha for workload, disengagement and social support of the study variables are in the range 0.70 to 0.88, which are in the acceptable ranges. Therefore, the current instrument can be used for the further process.

Table 2: Reliability

Study Variables	Cronbach alpha
Workload	0.72
Disengagement	0.70
Social Support	0.88

### Data Analysis

After the normality of the data the data has been analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 18.0, by calculating different statistical tools. Correlations have been used between dependent and independent variable. After this, the hierarchical regression analysis was examined for the moderating effect among the independent and dependent variables. The findings of the current study indicated that positive association has been found between workload and disengagement as shown in Table 3. The current study findings of

the current study is in line with the studies (Cohen et al., 2004; Greenglass, Burke, & Fiksenbaum, 2001).

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

Variables	Workload	Disengagement
Workload	1	
Disengagement	0.62	1

Furthermore, Table 4 shows that findings of the study in the of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Model (HMRA) the independent variables workload entered and shows that there is 18.9% variance found in disengagement. In the second step of HMRA, the moderating variable job resources especially social support has entered, where the finding shows that the results indicated 25.0% variation independent variable disengagement. Accordingly, in the third step of HMRA, the interactions of both the workload and social support entered, where the result indicated 27.9% variance in the disengagement. Therefore, it has declared that social support moderates the relationship between workload and disengagement, which support the study hypothesis.

Table 4: Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Workload

	Disengagement
<i>STEP 01</i>	Standardized $\beta$ Coefficients
Workload	0.412
R <sup>2</sup> Model	0.189
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.187
F Model	54.453
<i>STEP 02</i>	
Workload	0.377
Social Support	-0.339
R <sup>2</sup> Model	0.250
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.245
F Model	44.321
<i>STEP 03</i>	
Workload	0.350
Social Support	-0.351
WL x SS	0.198
R <sup>2</sup> Model	0.279
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.287
F Model	33.002

Note: a= Dependent Variables; WL= Workload; SS = Social Support;  
\*Significant at  $p < 0.001$ ; \*\*Significant at  $p > 0.001$



From the Figure 3, it has been declared that high level of social support will decrease the level of workload and disengagement among the academicians while a low level of social support will increase the workload as well as disengagement as shown in Figure 3.

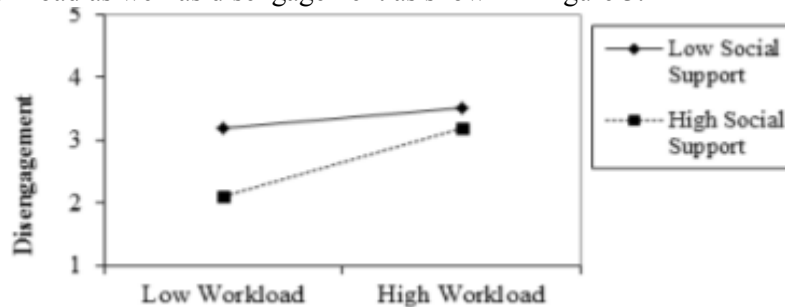


Figure 3: Moderating effect of social support on the relationship between workload and disengagement

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The current study investigated that disengagement is the factor of burnout where it contributes towards burnout among the academicians. Furthermore, the study examined that as the level of workload increases among the academicians in the universities it will increase the level of disengagement, so it means that there is positive association between workload and disengagement (Cohen et al., 2004; Demerouti et al., 2001; Khan, Rasli, et al., 2014).

In addition, another objective of the study was to examine the moderating effect of job resources especially social support on the relationship between workload and disengagement among the academicians of universities. In the light of above analysis, it has been found that social support moderates the relationship between independent variable workload and dependent variable disengagement. The findings of the current study are in line with previous studies (Khan et al., 2014; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Moreover, it has been cleared that as the level of resources increases the level of demand will increase in results the burnout level will decrease (Karasek & Theorell, 1990; Khan, Rasli, et al., 2014; Khan, Yusoff, & Khan, 2014).

In the light of the current study, the study has few limitations and recommendations. The study is limited to quantitative, cross-sectional method and the data has been collected from universities in KP Pakistan. Therefore, the study recommended to qualitative and longitudinal study.

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