


The Mediating Role of Affective Commitment and Job Satisfaction Between Workload and Intention to Stay: The Case of a Private University

İş Yükü ve İşte Kalma Niyeti Arasında Duygusal Bağlılık ve İş Tatmininin Aracı Rolü: Vakıf Üniversitesinde Bir Saha Çalışması

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine how job satisfaction and affective commitment mediate the relationship between workload and intention to stay. Academic staff from İstanbul Gelişim University made up the sample population for the study (N=233). Structural equation modeling has been used to test the relationships between the variables, and the results show that the hypotheses are strongly supported. As a result of the research, it was found that academicians, who consider their workloads as reasonable, are more likely to stay at their workplaces. Moreover, the affective commitment and job satisfaction levels of academicians are also influenced by their workload. When academicians feel that their workload is too excessive, their affective commitment and job satisfaction levels decline, and as a result, they are less likely to stay with their jobs. The universities are struggling to keep their qualified academicians in today's competitive work environment while it is very critical for academic performance. In this framework, it is anticipated that this research would be useful in examining the necessary factors for academics to stay at their workplaces and presenting new methods to university administrations.

Keywords: Workload, Intention to Stay, Affective Commitment, Job Satisfaction

Özet

Bu çalışmanın amacı, iş tatmini ve duygusal bağlılığın iş yükü ile işte kalma niyeti arasındaki ilişkiye nasıl aracılık ettiğini incelemektir. İstanbul Gelişim Üniversitesi öğretim elemanları araştırmanın örneklemini oluşturmaktadır (N=233). Değişkenler arasındaki ilişkiyi test etmek için yapısal eşitlik modellemesi kullanılmış ve sonuçların hipotezleri güçlü bir şekilde desteklediği görülmüştür. Araştırma sonucunda iş yüklerini makul bulan akademisyenlerin işyerlerinde kalma olasılıklarının daha yüksek olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Ayrıca akademisyenlerin duygusal bağlılıkları ve iş tatminleri de iş yüklerinden etkilenmektedir. Akademisyenler, iş yüklerinin aşırı olduğunu hissettiklerinde duygusal bağlılıkları ve iş tatmin düzeyleri düşmekte ve sonuç olarak işlerinde kalma olasılıkları da azalmaktadır. Akademisyenler, üniversitelerin akademik performansları için kritik öneme sahiptir, bu nedenle günümüzün rekabetçi çalışma ortamında, üniversiteler de nitelikli akademisyenlerini elde tutmak için mücadele etmektedirler. Bu çerçevede, bu araştırmanın, akademisyenlerin iş yerlerinde kalmaları için gerekli unsurların incelenmesi ve üniversite yönetimlerine yeni yöntemler sunulmasında faydalı olacağı öngörülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İş Yükü, İşte Kalma Niyeti, Duygusal Bağlılık, İş Tatmini

For Citation: Keçeci, M. & Tetik Küçükkelçi, D., Vural Allaham, M. (2022). The Mediating Role of Affective Commitment and Job Satisfaction Between Workload and Intention to Stay: The Case of a Private University. *Journal of Academic Value Studies*, 8(4), 339-347. <http://dx.doi.org/10.29228/javs.64551>

Received: 12.09.2022

Accepted: 15.12.2022

This article was checked by *intihal.net*



1. Introduction

Organizations struggle to keep and retain their personnel in today's competitive marketplace. Losing employees have monetary consequences like hiring and training a new employee which would cost up to %50 of employees' early salary (Johnson et al, 2000) but also non-monetary consequences like the loss of knowledge and skills (Kodwani & Kumar, 2004).

As the number of universities increase, this competition had spread to universities as well. While university administrators work to recruit the best qualified academicians, they also work to retain these highly competent academic members because employee departures have a detrimental influence on the organization's efficiency and productivity.

The complexity of the workload of university staff can be underestimated due to the relatively flexible working hours and working conditions. However, considering the increasing demands and expectations towards education, and the variety of tasks expected from lecturers and research assistants, it is observed that there are periods of intensity that reduce job satisfaction and even make one think about leaving the job.

The academic performance and the education quality are highly related to academician's professional qualifications, experience, and personal characteristics (Yıldırım, 2012). After emphasizing the importance of keeping qualified and valued academicians, this article tries to light the way for understanding employee retention by investigating affective commitment and job satisfaction which are also influenced by employee workload. Although there have been various studies in this area in the past, studies on the workload of academic staff in universities are very limited. This study provides new knowledge about the workload, affective commitment, job satisfaction and retention of the academicians working in today's private universities, and in this respect, offers a new perspective to university administrators.

2. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

2.1. Workload and employee turnover

Workload can be defined as the amount of work an employee must do and his/her perception that it is beyond normal (Cedoline, 1982). Workload above the acceptable limit can be defined as a feeling of having to work too hard, time pressure and a backlog of work, or being overwhelmed with too much work to finish. In contrast, circumstances that call for a workload that is inadequate or below the permissible level are known as low workload conditions. All these two scenarios have the potential to affect people negatively in very diverse ways (burnout, stress, etc.) (Sherf et al, 2019). Being given more work than one's existing qualifications and talents, feeling less competent on projects, having less time to accomplish a job than one can handle, falling behind deadlines, and having too many duties at once are all associated with a high degree of workload (Nyugen, 2015). The workload may become excessive, and the employee may feel overworked if there are too many tasks to complete in a short period of time (Burke, 2003). Workload can also be created by the interaction of different components such as the amount of general work to be done during the day, the degree of difficulty of the work, the time allocated for the task, the frequency and duration of breaks, skilled personnel, the amount of attention required for the job (Holden et al, 2011).

Although they may be used interchangeably, employee turnover and intention to leave suggest different implications (Moblely et al, 1979). However, the intention to leave can be considered the main predictor of employee turnover (Liou, 2009). The lower the intention to leave or in other words, the higher the intention to stay in the company, the lower turnover occurs in actual life.

Workload is considered as one of the most significant factors influencing turnover (Rizka et al., 2020; Tulangow, 2018; Putra and Prihatsanti 2016; Gibson (2009). Junaidi et al (2020) figured out that workload explained 49% of turnover intention in organizations. Parallel to this view, Anees et al (2021) in their research with 140 academicians and administrators working at the university, revealed that people who think their workload is higher than it should be, have a higher intention to leave. In the academic environment, the urgency and work pressures can be very challenging, especially during examination weeks, may put pressure on all academic staff, and as a result the academicians may start to think that it is not worth staying any longer.

H1: Workload has a significant impact on the intention to stay.

2.2. Mediating role of commitment and job satisfaction

Organizational commitment is a psychological condition that describes an employee's strong feelings to stay with the organization and to follow its aims and goals. (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Meyer and Allen's (1991) Three-Component Model of commitment identifies affective commitment as the emotional attachment to the organization, continuance commitment as a perceived cost associated with leaving the organization, and normative commitment as a perceived obligation to stay in the organization. Empirical studies and previous meta-analyses on organizational commitment (Solinger et al, 2008; Cooper-Hakim&Viswesvaran, 2005) revealed that affective commitment has stronger correlations with absence, performance, organizational citizenship behavior, and turnover than normative and continuance commitment, and can be considered a core essence of organizational commitment (Meyer et al, 2002; Mercurio, 2015). Therefore, affective commitment was chosen for the current research.

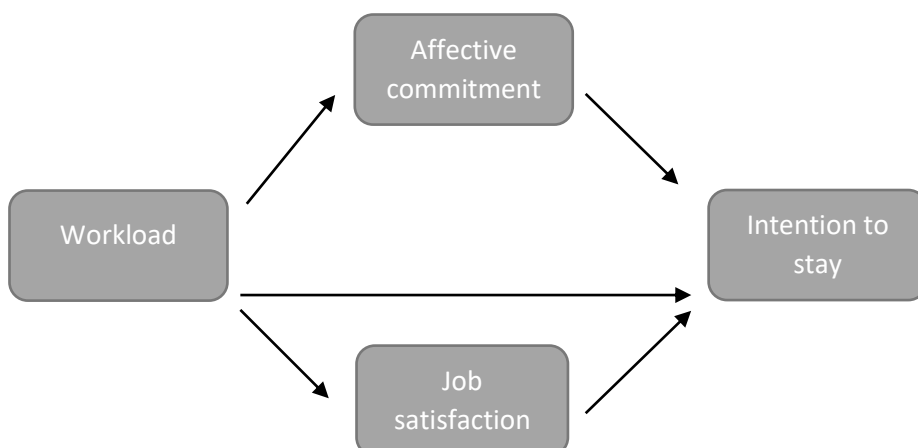
Excessive workload causes a decrease in organizational commitment, and job satisfaction. It is one of the most important reasons for employees to leave the job, which is one of the biggest cost items for organizations (Jones et al., 2007; Zeytinoğlu vd., 2007). Research on intention to stay has investigated the factors contributing to this process and figured out that employees who experience high levels of organizational commitment would be less motivated to change their jobs (Thatcher et al, 2002; Joo, 2010; Cooper-Hakim&Viswesvaran, 2005). Ahsan et al (2009) and Janib et al (2021) revealed a link between academic staff job satisfaction and job overload in their studies conducted in university settings. The mediating role of organizational commitment between workload and intention to stay workload has been investigated by different researchers (Christy and Priaitini, 2019; Nababan et al. 2022) and clear evidence has been provided that when employees' workload is increased, their commitment would be decreased and in return, their intention to stay in the organization would also decrease. Erat et al (2017) have investigated the relationship between workload, work stress, emotional commitment, and turnover intention, and have conducted research with 892 academic personnel. The results showed that increased workload reduces affective commitment and increases turnover intentions of the academic staff.

H2: Organizational commitment mediates the relationship between workload and intention to stay.

Job satisfaction is "pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (Locke, 1976, p.1304). In the most general terms, job satisfaction indicates how employees feel about their job and it is a strong predictor of turnover (Mishra, 2013). When employees feel dissatisfaction with their jobs, they would be more willing to leave and find a more satisfying one. In other words, when workers are happy in their jobs, they are more likely to stay with that company (Griffeth et al., 2000, p.469; Meyer et al., 2002, p.38). Previous studies also provide evidence on the mediating impact of job satisfaction between workload and intention to stay (Zeytinoğlu et al, 2007). The research by Anees et al (2021) also presented the evidence supporting this relationship.

H3: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between workload and intention to stay.

Figure 1. Hypothesized Model



2.3. Method

A quantitative research approach was applied in this study. The screening pattern was employed as the research pattern. Data collection was done using an online survey methodology. The survey responses obtained for the research were analyzed using the SPSS 24.00 program and the tables obtained with the analyzes were interpreted. Cronbach's Alpha model was used to evaluate the reliability analyzes of the research scales. Correlation analysis was applied to determine the size and direction of the relationship between the scales. In order to examine the mediation effect, Preacher and Hayes (2004) SPSS PROCESS plugin, which has bootstrap method infrastructure, is used. 6-point Likert scale was employed (1: totally disagree, 6: totally agree). Through this method, the participants were kindly asked to avoid central tendency and signify their opinion for more accurate statistical results.

2.4. Participants

Istanbul Gelisim University was selected as the study's sample. The sampling selection method employed was the basic random sampling approach under the probability sampling methods. Each member of the university's academic staff received an email with a link to an online survey. The survey, which was distributed to 847 academicians, was completed by 233 academicians in total.

2.5. Instruments

9-item Individual Workload Perception Scale (IWPS) (Cox, 2003) which was specifically designed for work environments where workload pressures and urgencies are dominant, was used to measure the workload perceptions of the academic personnel. According to this scale, as the mean score is increased, the workload perception becomes more positive, in other words, the employees feel more satisfied with their workload. Turkish translation of this scale was completed by Saygılı (2008) and the reliability and validity analysis were also conducted by the researcher. Job satisfaction was measured by Job Satisfaction Subscale of Job Characteristics Model (3 items) by Hackman and Oldham (1975) and translated into Turkish by Bilgiç (1999). Intention to stay was measured with 3 items by (Gellatly et al, 2006: 338). 3-item affective commitment scale by Allen and Meyer (1997) was used to measure affective commitment. The translation and reliability analysis of both intentions to stay and affective commitment scales were conducted by Karadeniz (2010).

2.6. Results

By using the convenience sampling approach over the internet, 233 participants were reached over the months of February and March in 2021. In accordance with their preferences, the participants responded to the survey's questions. The demographics of the participants are explained in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographics

		N	N%
Gender	Female	138	59.7%
	Male	94	40.3%
Age	21-30	70	30%
	31-40	94	40.3%
	41-50	28	12%
	51-60	22	9.4%
	61 and above	19	8.2%
Academic title	Professor	17	7.3%
	Associate professor	7	3%
	Assistant professor	91	39.1%

	Research assistant	47	20.2%
	Lecturer	71	30.5%
Academic tenure	1-5 years	196	84.1%
	6-10 years	37	15.9%

A total of 139 persons, or 59.7% of the participants, are female, while 94 people, or 40.3%, are male. Participants between the ages of 31 and 40 make up 40.3% of the sample group, and 30.0% of them are between the ages of 21 and 30. 19 participants in total are over the age of 61. Assistant professors make up 91 participants, or 39.1% of the total. Of them, lecturers make up 30.5%. 196 individuals, or 84.1% of the academic staff in the sample, had employment experience ranging from 1 to 5 years. ANOVA and independent t-test results revealed no significant difference on any of the dependent variables due to the participants' age, gender, academic title, or academic tenure.

Cronbach's Alpha values of four different scales used in the study were calculated and the reliability of all four are found to be quite high as shown in Table 2. "Combined Reliability (CR)" and "Average Variance Extracted (AVE)" values of all scales were calculated separately. The AVE values of the scales were greater than .50 and the CR values were greater than .70 as represented in table 2. Additionally, in every dimension, CR values are higher than AVE values. With these results, the scales satisfy both the convergent validity condition and the combined reliability condition.

Table 2. Reliability values

Scale	items	r value	AVE	CR
Workload	9	.921	.611	.936
Intention to stay	3	.775	.501	.872
Job satisfaction	3	.876	.620	.923
Affective commitment	8	.805	.566	.856

All scales employed in the study were correlated in a positive, significant, and high degree. Correlation analysis supported the H1, H2, and H3 as represented in Table 3.

Table 3. Correlations

	AO	SS	1	2	3
Affective commitment	3,9265	1,04854			
Job satisfaction	4,7568	1,21925	.541**		
Workload	4,5260	1,14255	.664**	.590**	
Intention to stay	4,1931	1,30699	.654**	.530**	.730**

As the IWPS items are all positive and the higher the score, the more positive the workload perception is, the correlation analysis reveals a positive and significant relationship between people's intention to stay at work and their workload ($r = .730$; $p < 0,01$). In other words, when academicians have a more positive perception about their workload, they are more likely to stay at their current organization. Accordingly, "H1: Workload has a significant impact on the intention to stay" is supported.

In this research, Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediating effect analysis method was employed. With mediator variable analysis, it is intended to foretell the causal relationship as the independent variable has an impact on the dependent variable. The SPSS procedure, a macro created by Hayes (2016) to be applied to the SPSS program, was used to assess

the impact of the mediator variable. In the analysis, the bootstrap method with 5000 resampling choices was preferred. To validate the established study hypotheses, the values within the 95% confidence interval in bootstrapped mediation analyses should not contain the zero value (MacKinnon, Lockwood, and Williams, 2004). Table 4 displays the findings of the regression analysis carried out.

Table 4. Mediations

Model			coefficient	
		workload-intention to stay	.6052	
H2: mediating role of affective commitment	Direct	workload-affective commitment	.6638	
		affective commitment-intention to stay	.3028	
	Indirect	workload-affective commitment-intention to stay		.2299
		workload-intention to stay		.7322
H3: mediating role of job satisfaction	Direct	workload-job satisfaction	.6300	
		job satisfaction-intention to stay	.1634	
	Indirect	workload-job satisfaction-intention to stay		.1029

The results show that the model meets the fit criteria (NFI= .867, CFI= .888, RFI= .831, $\chi^2/sd=4.276$, RMSEA= .037). In the established structural equation model, it was determined that workload explained 53% of the intention to stay at work. As a result of the analysis, it was found that workload positively predicted commitment ($\beta= .664$; $t=13.49$; $p< .05$) and commitment positively predicted intention to stay ($\beta= .3028$; $t=5.33$; $p< .05$). All paths shown in the model were found to be significant (NFI= .796, CFI= .834, RFI= .782, $\chi^2/sd=4.514$, RMSEA= .073). The overall result illustrating the correlation between workload and the intention to continue working grew from ($\beta= .6052$) to ($\beta= .8351$) in the final stage of the mediation study. The statistical significance of these values indicates that affective commitment contributes to a partial mediation relationship between the workload and the intention to stay. The model developed for the mediating role was found to have a good fit (NFI= .801, CFI= .843, RFI= .772, $2/sd=3.851$, RMSEA= .091).

The research revealed that workload significantly ($p< .05$) predicted intention to stay ($\beta=.7300$; $t=16.24$). The findings demonstrate that the tested model has a good fit (NFI=0.867, CFI=0.888, RFI=0.831, $2/sd=4.276$, RMSEA= .037). According to the model, workload significantly predicted job satisfaction ($r= .630$, $t=11.117$, $p< .05$), and job satisfaction significantly predicted intention to stay ($r= .1524$, $t=2.77$, $p< .05$). All the model's routes were determined to be statistically significant (NFI = .983, CFI = .994, RFI = 0.969, $2/sd = 1,562$, RMSEA = 0.049). The final stage of the mediation study reveals that the overall value illustrating the correlation between workload and the intention to continue working went up from ($\beta= .7322$) to ($\beta= .8351$). The statistical significance of these values suggests that there is a partial mediation relationship between the workload and the intention to stay mediated by job satisfaction. The model created for the mediating role was found to have a good fit (NFI= .873, CFI= .902, RFI= .846, $2/sd=3.824$, RMSEA= .087).

The bootstrap of the coefficients was standardized for the significance of the mediating roles of commitment and satisfaction values, and it is seen that the value ranges do not contain zero (Table 5). This result shows that commitment and satisfaction variables play a mediating role between workload and intention to stay at work, and this mediation is significant.

Table 5. Bootstrap analysis

Mediation models	95% confidence interval
H2: workload-affective commitment-intention to stay	.1250 - .2806
H3: workload-job satisfaction-intention to stay	.0296 - .1619

3. Conclusion and discussion

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between workload and intention to stay, which is mediated by affective commitment and job satisfaction. This could help university administrators to develop policies to resolve turnover problems due to heavy workload. The data analysis's findings support the idea that academicians' intentions to stay is undermined by their workload, hence Hypothesis 1 was validated. The current result is consistent with earlier studies (Anees et al, 2021; Rizka et al., 2020); Tulangow, 2018). When academicians perceive that their workload is above reasonable levels, they begin to consider leaving and enrolling at a different university.

Hypothesis 2, claiming that affective commitment mediates the relationship between workload and intention to stay was supported as well. These results support previous research by Nabahat et. Al (2022) and Erat et al (2017). The findings also supported Hypothesis 3, which was that job satisfaction mediated the association between workload and intention to stay. This finding, which is consistent with other proposals, shows job satisfaction as a workload-intention to stay mediator in an academic setting (Anees et al, 2021). In other words, academicians who feel like their workload is very heavy first have an emotional detachment from their job and have less favorable feelings about it, and then begin to consider changing their workplace.

When workload is considered, the type of work is an important factor as well. Teaching for the sake of society, science or society lies at the core of teaching (Struyven et al, 2012). The amount of time devoted to a variety of teaching and research responsibilities, as well as to organizing extracurricular events and participating in meetings, constitutes the specialized workload of a lecturer (Rahman and Avan (2016). Any other expectation other than these like record-keeping, paperwork, planning, and general publicity can be experienced as an unnecessary burden (Van Droogenbroeck et al, 2014). As the non-teaching professional workload increases, the attention, care, energy, and emotional capital that the teacher will spend on teaching may decrease (Chen, 2016). Previous research revealed that non-academic workload increases the workload perception of teachers more than academic workload (Kazak, 2019; Kim, 2019).

The literature review revealed no other research about the relationship between the workload, intention to stay, affective commitment and job satisfaction intentions of academicians in neither state nor public universities in Turkey. This study can be carried out in different universities to understand if any significant difference between state and private universities' academicians' workload, affective commitment and job satisfaction is there. By this way, the conditions can be equalized or even improved for both. If the universities want to attract and keep high qualified academicians, it is important to understand their distress and find satisfying resolutions for all parties. Being an academician is an occupation that requires free time and a calm state of mind. Those who feel peaceful at work, would be more productive and efficient. Moreover, they would be more willing to stay where they are happy and peaceful.

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